

PROGRESS IN
CHRISTIAN CULTURE

SAMUEL CHARLES BLACK, D.D.

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PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE

BY

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“Plain Answers to Religious Questions
Modern Men Are Asking”

“Building a Working Church”

Etc.



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TO THE HALLOWED MEMORY OF MY

Father and Mother

WHO GAVE ME FIRST MY LIFE AND
THEN, BY PRECEPT AND BY EXAMPLE,
MY CLEAREST AND BROADEST CONCEPTION
OF CHRISTIAN LIVING, THIS BOOK
IS HUMBLY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

This book bears a close relation to "Plain Answers to Religious Questions Modern Men Are Asking." The earlier volume bore on salvation,—how the individual and his associates may be saved. "Progress in Christian Culture" bears on sanctification,—how the saved Christian may acquire the graces of his Lord.

Christian Culture has never yet had the attention it must have before the days of ideal Christianity arrive. We have rightly emphasized the vital nature of redemption. Many have felt that the Christian, assured of eternal life by his confession of faith in the Saviour, could disregard lesser things. We do not think so to-day. We are insisting that Christian men shall be Christian gentlemen in the best sense of that old-fashioned word; that they shall commend the Gospel they profess to believe by the life they lead.

Growth in grace comes in old-fashioned ways. Soul culture comes not from worldly experiences. Bible Study, Prayer, Self-Sacrifice and Christian Service are four pillars by which the chaste structure of Christian Culture is upheld; they make up the rich soil out of which the blossoming, fruit-bearing tree of Christian Culture grows. There are other

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contributing elements, many of which I have endeavored to set forth in the following pages.

The active Christian should possess a very attractive personality. Faith should make him strong. Altruism should make him unselfish. Self-control should make him temperate. Prayer should make him spiritual. Bible study should give him possession of the best thoughts of God and men. Certainty of eternal life should make him happy in all situations. The Christian who has not these virtues should strive after them continually. It is the earnest hope of the author that the chapters in this book will help.

Technicalities have again been avoided. The book is for the people who, in the main, are not versed in the theological aspects of the subjects treated but who wish, in all their reading, to be well within the limits of orthodoxy.

In vision the author beholds a church transfigured by the strength and beauty of our Lord. If she is the bride of the Lamb, let her put on wedding garments. If sobriety and fidelity are factors in her world conquest, let her know that to acquire the graces of Jesus will add infinitely to her drawing power. Paul knew the value of this and evermore admonished his spiritual sons: "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." The next forward step of the church should be in Christian Culture.

S. C. B.

Toledo, August, 1912.

Progress in Christian Culture

CHAPTER ONE

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY SELF-EXAMINATION AND CORRECTION

Every human life, no matter what its state, is visited by frequent convictions that it is neither as strong nor as noble as it ought to be and that wholesome corrections are in order. The frequency and force of these convictions will depend somewhat upon age and condition; they may be entertained or instantly rejected, but they come, making their own silent appeal for better things.

Life is rarely one gradual rise from infancy to age. It is rather a succession of ascents, often rapid for an hour or a day; then comes a long, level roadway along which no elevation can be discovered. Ascents usually follow times of careful self-examination. "For a man to know his faults and errors," says one, "is the first step toward what is better and nobler." As the sight of sickness and disease

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always moves us to seek health, so the consciousness of personal weakness or sin drives us toward strength and righteousness.

Self-examination often fails of beneficial results because the examiner is sure to be more generous with himself than anybody else would be. His judgment is warped by his desires. He is wont to allow himself indulgences which he would deny others. Mohammed contended that, because of the arduous labors he was asked to perform, Allah allowed him many special indulgences and multiplied his powers of enjoyment. The result of this self-favoring is seen in the sensuous and material pleasures promised the faithful in the Moslem paradise.

It is so easy to persuade oneself that hereditary encumbrances or enforced relations in society entitle him to more than the average mortal receives of what we are wont to call "the good things of this world." A western banker—on trial for appropriating a surplus to his own use, when by law it belonged to a body of stockholders—said he believed himself entitled to the money inasmuch as he had built up the business. Many a man, looking at his own life, has a similar feeling. He asks all other men to be scrupulously honest, commendably pure, humble and self-effacing, self-denying and filled with brotherly kindness, but because he has built up his own fortune, and because of his peculiar circumstances, he believes he is entitled to shade these re-

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quirements noticeably in his own case. Deep down in his heart he knows this is little and mean and he feels ashamed, but he keeps a bold front and will defend his selfish indulgences with loud voice and the air of one who is being unjustly persecuted by the world.

To be of any value self-examination must be carried on in a spirit of absolute candor. So far as possible the personal equation, and particularly the selfish equation, must be eliminated. While we should not be unjust, we should be as exacting of ourselves as we would be of another. We should be the cross-examiner for the prosecution and not the favoring lawyer for the defense. If we are Christians we should follow the admonition of the great poet and do the work, "As ever under our great Taskmaster's eye."

And now, if we are ready to proceed, what shall the examination cover? For purposes of clearness and convenience we may divide the work into two or three parts, considering first the question of our conduct. By universal agreement we understand this to cover "our mode of performing our ordinary life duties; the character of our relationship with others; the wise use of our opportunities for serving others; the proper occupation of our leisure hours; the worthy meeting of our life responsibilities."

Let us imagine a man who has been allowing his life to drift with the social current of his day. He has been easy and generous with himself, inwardly

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contending, although never openly stating, that he believes he is entitled to the best things he can procure. He works hard and so argues that he has a right to exact a good deal of others. The graces of life he has neglected to cultivate, and he is magnanimous for revenue only. He makes an occasional sacrifice, but only when it is sure to be witnessed by a large and sympathetic audience.

Naturally he is not oversensitive about his personal conduct, and—while he lauds purity and personal virtue as necessary for the safeguarding of our moral and ethical standards—he does not allow this to stand in the way of his own selfish desires. Such a man is usually successful in business and therefore has money in sufficient quantities to supply all his wants. His standing in the community is very good. True, the prudish reformers look with horror on some of his selfish indulgences, but that is their fault and not his. He has never committed murder and he has committed theft only in harmony with the most approved twentieth century practices. He is a healthy, free-and-easy, self-gratifying, God-neglecting sort of individual, such as can be found in large numbers in every city.

If such a man ever begins to examine himself on his own initiative he usually begins to compare his life with that of other men whom he knows. How vastly superior he is! Like the Pharisee in the temple, he thanks God that he is not as other men, extortioners, blackmailers, adulterers. He

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pays his bills regularly, never fails to vote as his party managers dictate and talks much of patriotism. While he does not follow the outgrown custom of fasting twice in the week or paying tithes of all he possesses, he is careful about what he eats lest he suffer from ptomaine poisoning, and he does not gormandize for fear of the gout! Altogether he is a most commendable fellow whom God should be very glad and proud to have among his creatures in this runaway world!

The first mistake this man makes is clear: he has compared his conduct with that of other men, and they not the best that could be found, instead of with the great Example whom God sent as the standard for all lives. Any standard lower than the life of Jesus is sure to be faulty and lead us into error. He is the only model the sculptor of life dares to follow. Follow his faith, his conduct, his spirit of helpfulness and sacrifice, and your life will be as God wants it to be; follow those of other men and it is sure to fail.

But the second mistake this man makes is quite as bad: it is the spirit in which his self-examination, or rather his comparison of self with other men, is made. He has been a biased witness; he started out to acquit himself and he gloriously succeeded. When the prodigal son came to himself in the far country it was to cry out, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more

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worthy to be called thy son." It was the great, generous-hearted father who acquitted him.

When David was driven to self-examination he began:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness:

According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,

And cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions;

And my sin is ever before me. . . .

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

And at another time, equally moved, he cried out:

O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known me.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising;

Thou understandest my thought afar off.

Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,

And art acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word in my tongue,

But, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before,

And laid thy hand upon me. . . .

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:

If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning,

And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me,

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And thy right hand shall hold me. . . .
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.

This action on the part of David is full of suggestion for every one of us; open up your life frankly before God and let him do the examining. There will be no mistake made. While he will condemn all that is bad he will rejoice in all that is good and you will at least feel that you are on good terms with him, as a child after chastisement is happy to be again on good terms with an earthly parent.

Most of us will need also to examine ourselves at the point of our faith. This is the power by which we take hold on God. Spiritual things will not all submit to the processes of reason; the great things of the soul,—life, death, immortality,—cannot be worked through and understood like a mathematical problem. Many men are making their greatest mistake right at this point. They are insisting that before they accept Christ and become Christians they be made to understand everything connected with it. They refuse to allow their children to enter the church because, they say, they do not understand all that is involved.

The answer can only be: Nobody understands everything about God, about Christ, about the Christian life. They all transcend human under-

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standing; but that is not to say that they are not exactly as presented in the Bible and as revealed in the experiences of Christians of all ages. These great facts of the spiritual world we must accept by faith. God has never yet failed a soul that freely accepted him and he never will, for his nature does not change. Instead of insisting upon a complete physical or mental demonstration of the existence of God and the deity of Jesus Christ we should occupy the position of the poet who so confidently sang:

I do not ask to see the way
My feet will have to tread;
But only that my soul may feed
Upon the living bread.
'Tis better far that I should walk
By faith close to his side,—
I may not know the way to go,
But, oh, I know my Guide.

And also of that early singer who cried so exultantly:

O gift of gifts! O grace of faith!
My God, how can it be
That thou, who hast discerning love,
Shouldst give that gift to me?

How can they live, how will they die,
How bear the cross of grief,
Who have not yet the light of faith,
The courage of belief?

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The crowd of cares, the weightiest cross,
Seem trifles less than light;
Earth looks so little and so low
When faith shines full and bright.

O happy, happy that I am!
If thou canst be, O faith,
The treasure that thou art in life,
What wilt thou be in death?

There is only one way to leap the chasm of mystery between man and God, between temporary physical life and eternal spiritual life. That is by faith. Believe the Bible. Believe what it says about the plan of salvation, about immortality. You want these things to be so; the Bible says they are so; all human experience points toward their verification. Then kill all doubt by openly and frankly accepting them and believing them.

But the vital thing in our religion is our personal relationship to Jesus Christ. At this point we may well examine ourselves as Paul challenged the Corinthians to do. If we demand fine things in others do we have them in our own life? If we demand that others have Christ in their lives can we prove that we have him in ours?

An enlightening story is told of a young man from the middle west who entered a great eastern university. His preparation had been exceptional. Entrance examinations were taken with ease and the word went around that here was the best pre-

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pared freshman that ever entered the university. Added to this, the youth was a devout Christian. He was handsome and well mannered and at once began to attract unusual attention.

It is hardly to be wondered that such a man would stir up some envy and jealousy. Professors openly commended him; the pastor of the church he attended referred to him as the most promising man he had ever met. His triumph seemed assured when to his amazement erstwhile friends began to look askance at him and some to treat him with unmistakable coldness. Clearly there was a change of attitude in his associates for which he could find no explanation.

At the time this remarkable youth entered the university another young man from the same town matriculated. He was the son of a rich and overfond parents who had done everything for their boy except give him enough attention to raise him right. He was small-souled and dull-witted and immediately began to have trouble in making his grades. He saw the humble youth from his own town sail past him as a cup-winning yacht passes a mud scow, and his small soul was enraged. So he began to insinuate: "If I should tell all I know, my fine young man would not hold his head so high. I could make his boasted Christianity hang its head in shame. If these professors and church people knew what I know they would withhold their flatteries

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and guard their daughters." When particulars were demanded he wagged his head and said he thought he had better say no more. Seeing at last that his vague insinuations were falling harmless, he came out openly and charged the brilliant youth with the ruin of a simple-minded orphan girl who had subsequently died of humiliation and a broken heart.

At last the strange and groundless tale reached the ears of the brilliant freshman. It was like a blow from a woodman's ax. Stunned at first beyond speech, he did not even deny the accusation, but started in the early evening to the room of his townsman to ask him quietly what he meant by it all. When the lying youth opened his door and saw the man he had wronged standing there in all the majesty of his unspoiled manhood, he cried out, "My God, Stimson, don't kill me!" and started to rush past him and escape. "No," said the honest youth, "stay here. I want to have a talk with you." Frightened beyond self-control the weakling turned into his room, rushed through an open French window and leaped two stories to the ground below. He fell among shrubbery which scratched and tore his tender skin and, striking the ground head first, suffered a broken arm and shoulder blade.

When he regained consciousness Stimson was standing over him. "What in the world did you do this for, Johnnie? I did not come to harm you. While I have noticed a change in the attitude of all

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around me, I was unwilling to believe you were telling the story they say you were telling and came to find out from your own lips. Come, let me carry you to the hospital. We must have these injuries dressed." "No," said the suffering youth, "call a doctor and start me for home. When you tell what you know about me, I had better be dead than be here. I have said you were guilty of the crime I committed back home two years ago."

"But, Johnnie," said the Christian, "I do not intend to tell what I know either here or back home. Why should I blast your life? I think you have suffered enough already at the court of your own conscience. I am ready to nurse you back to health and keep my lips closed."

As the stricken youth came slowly back to normal strength in the university hospital he had time to think much and long. Calling a classmate to his cot one day he said: "George, tell the boys for me that what I said about Stimson is not true. He is a man from the sole of his foot to his crown and he is the best Christian I ever knew. He beats the good Samaritan, for he not only saves a man's body, but he saves his soul also. He is an incarnation of Christianity."

Would your Christianity reveal itself similarly in a crisis time? The phrase of Dr. Grenfell is significant: "When you start out to commend your gospel you are not simply to announce it as a good

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thing, or to urge others to adopt it that they may be more agreeable to you, but to commend it to them by what it has obviously done for you." Are you proving to the world that you have Christ in your life by what you do as well as by what you say? Are men drawn to Christ by what they see he has done for you?

When the self-examining here proposed is finished, are you going to stop there? If you do, all your hard and unwelcome work has been for naught. Self-examination lends itself to progress only when you immediately act upon what you discover about your life. If your conduct is not up to Christian standards, bring it up. Do not wait for outside forces to work the change. Do the good work yourself. If your faith in God and his providence is weak; if it does not support you in time of crisis and make all life beautiful and your hope for the future radiant, go back to your Bible and to the lives of the saints. Read what the Book says and note how the saints lived. Test God at the point of his promises and see that he never fails. Dwell with him in communion; work for him in meeting the needs of his earthly children. Leave transcendentalism and German philosophy alone. They are as empty as the rain barrel in midsummer and as lifeless. Spend much time with God and do much work for men, and your faith will grow as a garden in springtime and its fruits will be as rich and nourishing.

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If you find your hold on Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world is weak and unfruitful, go back to his life on earth and study it deeply. In his marvelous little book recently reprinted, Peter Bayne says Jesus Christ is the best witness for Christianity. You cannot know him intimately and still reject him. He is rejected only by those who do not know him or by those whose knowledge of him is superficial. Those best qualified to speak join eagerly with Paul when he says, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Get more and more of Christ's fine spirit into your life. Study the prophecies concerning his coming; study his life and his matchless teachings; study his influence on society for nineteen hundred years; compare Christian nations with non-Christian nations and account for their superiority; be honest in the acceptance of obvious conclusions and then determine that, since Christ is what he is, since he has done what he has for individuals and nations, you will stop quibbling and doubting and accept him openly as your Saviour.

Do not allow a few unanswerable questions or the fatuous harangues of a few blatant infidels to rob you of your Lord. Accept Abraham Lincoln's advice to Joshua Speed about the Bible, "Take all of this Book that you can on reason and the rest on faith and you will live and die a better man." Determine that your religion is going to mean something to you and every life you can influence; plunge into

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the work of the church, saying that, while you feel your weakness and inability, you are willing to try, being determined to do what you can for the uplift of men and the advancement of the kingdom of God while your powers are fresh and keen, and all your life will become beautiful and yourself a growing factor in Christ's conquest of the world.

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CHAPTER TWO

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY BIBLE STUDY

The ambition to go higher which our Creator has planted in every man moves him to search on every hand for forces that uplift. One is not enough. He has discovered that there are many. Night and day he plies hand and heart and brain that he may possess again the godlike qualities of knowledge, righteousness and true holiness which he had in such large measure on the day of his creation.

Every instructed mind is sure that among the forces that make for higher righteousness none is so powerful as genuine Christianity and that, to be a right Christian, he must be possessed of the marvelous contents of the Word of God; its supreme revelations; its examples of lofty righteousness; its stern calls to duty; its sublime utterances of faith and worship; its matchless story of the Saviour and his appeal to men to walk in his footsteps. No man, possessed of all this wealth of divine truth, can withstand its upward pull.

And all this is by no means to deny that other literature has a high cultural value. The moral

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teachings of Socrates and the lofty life philosophy of Plato have done much for the uplift of the race. Pagan literatures from all nations yield many gems of great moral value, but it is far from heartening to observe that where a people have had nothing but these they have declined rather than advanced in higher culture. One can hardly go into ecstasies over the literature of Buddhism and Confucianism when the result of them is modern India and modern China.

James Freeman Clarke in his "Ten Great Religions" tells of an enthusiast over pagan sacred writings who said that while he kept all of these non-Christian writings on one side of his desk he kept the Bible on the other side, and that for solid value and cultural power the Bible far outweighs them all.

In harmony with this is the statement by a now lamented Bible scholar¹ before the Ecumenical Council a few years ago:

The Christian apologist may fearlessly invite the comparison which is being already so widely made between the Bible and other sacred books. He need not fear it. The Bible does evidence itself as such a revelation as God might make, while the sacred books of other religions run off into metaphysical abstractions or grotesque puerilities or mere ethics. We need to press the comparison, only being careful that the whole Bible with its progressive and unified system of

¹George T. Purves, D.D.

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truth is put into the hands of the pagan world. Testimony is abundant that there is no better defense of Christianity than the Bible itself.

Discussing the question of the elevation and Christianization of the Mohammedans, Rev. C. T. Wilson, a missionary from Palestine, said at the same conference: "First of all, we should press the circulation of God's Word, especially in the sacred Arabic tongue. The rapid growth of education in the East is enabling many people to read it for themselves, while the efforts of the Turks to stop its circulation have been overruled to facilitate it."

Missionaries in every quarter of the world are telling us constantly of natives who come to them from distant parts of the countries in which they are working already converted and asking for Christian baptism. On inquiry it is found that in some way the converted ones came into possession of a leaf or a portion of the Bible. The marvelous story, read in their own tongue, has laid hold upon their hearts and the Holy Spirit has led them to the Saviour.

But we are hearing of cases where the Bible and other Christian literature is affecting the life of whole nations—and these the nations one would least expect. Rev. George Owen, a missionary to China, told a wonderful story a few years ago which I give very largely in his own words:

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What I have to tell you I can tell you at first hand from my own experience and observation. The year 1898 will, I think, be one of the most memorable in the long history of China. A great reform party arose, with the Emperor at its head, and took in hand the reconstruction of China after foreign models and under Christian influences. Among the leaders of that movement were some of China's most brilliant scholars and a few of her ablest and highest officials. The bulk of the party consisted of the young literary men, officials, merchants and gentry. Young China rallied to the cry of reform. Early in January, 1898, we were startled in Peking by the report that the Emperor had sent to the American Bible and Tract Depot and ordered a copy of the Bible and a copy of every tract and book that the depot could supply him for his own reading. These books were passed into the palace, and early and late you might have seen the Emperor of China, the master of four hundred millions of men, bending eagerly over those books and absorbing their contents. The report that the Emperor had become a student of Christian literature soon spread through Peking, and from Peking was carried to every part of the empire. The news gave great joy to all Christian workers, and from all parts of China wherever there was a Christian man or woman there went up an earnest prayer on behalf of the Emperor that, as he pored over the sacred page, or read some of the books explaining it, light from God should shine upon it. As we prayed an answer in part fell, for at the end of January an edict was issued sanctioning the establishment of a great national university in Peking based on foreign models and equipped with a staff of foreign professors. Many edicts followed, all breathing a liberal spirit and creating an atmosphere new in China. Among those edicts was one in which the Emperor lamented the frequency of attacks on Christian missions, and the officials were instructed to see that those attacks cease, and, moreover, to see that his Christian subjects should not suffer for their faith in Christ. Some

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of the leading reformers would fain have gone further, giving full toleration to Christianity on a level with Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism; and some of the stalwarts went so far as to urge the adoption of Christianity as the national religion.

This reform movement, and the example of the Emperor, was widely followed among the literary men, and there sprang up a demand for Christian literature. Men were eager to get books on the religion, the history, the science, the politics and the institutions of the West. There arose a new cry out there, "Light, more light!"

Many will remember that the Empress Dowager, encouraged by conservative supporters, soon rose up against these reforms, but it was the folly of Chanute, who would stay the incoming tides of the sea. By a strange coincidence she and the Emperor whom she had so completely dominated died within a few hours of each other and the long-bound empire passed into younger and more progressive hands.

Now the monarchy is overthrown and the most conservative of nations begins her career as a republic. She will not have an easy time. Enemies within and without will continue to make trouble, but as Greater China gathers strength from her growing knowledge of God's Word her power will increase until, before the present century is past, the "Sleeping Giant" will be well to the fore among the leading nations of the world.

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Without doubt the most notable instance of national transformation and regeneration by the power of the Bible the world has thus far seen was that of England. Liberated from the close guardianship of Rome and the restraining bars of the Latin tongue by its translation into the vernacular by Wycliffe in the closing years of the fourteenth century, the Bible began to undermine the faith of the people in the cardinal doctrines of the Catholic faith: transubstantiation, the mass, the confession, indulgences, absolutions, pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, worship of their images, worship of the saints themselves. These doctrines were successively attacked by Wycliffe and his followers and repudiated by thousands.

“A formal appeal to the Bible as the ground of faith,” says the historian Green, “coupled with an assertion of the right of every instructed man to examine the Bible for himself, threatened the very groundwork of the older dogmatism with ruin.”

But the power of church and state, both opposed to the individual liberty fostered by the Bible, soon suppressed the Wycliffe heresies and for nearly a century and a half they lay smoldering in the hearts of a rebellious people. Early in the sixteenth century the work of Luther began to shake again the foundations of Rome. Then William Tyndale arose and put the New Testament into the hands of the common people. “He perceived,” says the historian, “how impossible it was to establish

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the lay people in any truth except the Scriptures were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue." "If God spares my life," he said to a learned controversialist, "ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost." So great was the hostility of Rome to the young scholar's plans that,—from 1524 to 1526, when his efforts were crowned with success,—Tyndale passed through "poverty, exile, bitter absence from friends, hunger and thirst and cold, great dangers and innumerable other hard and sharp fightings."

In 1526 six thousand copies of the New Testament reached England and instantly created the greatest consternation. King and priest alike denounced the Book, but the people took it to their hearts and the liberation of men's mind and soul at once began.

The Bible became the most studied book in England and at once began to raise the people from serfdom to sovereignty. Of a slightly later period the historian says further: "For a hundred years past men had been living in the midst of a spiritual revolution. Not only the world about them but the world of thought and feeling within every breast had been utterly transformed. The work of the sixteenth century had wrecked that tradition of religion, of knowledge, of political and social order which had been accepted without question by the middle ages. The sudden freedom of the mind

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from these older bonds brought a consciousness of power that had never been felt before; and the restless energy, the universal activity of the renaissance, were but outer expressions of the pride, the joy, the amazing self-confidence with which man welcomed this revelation of the energies which had lain slumbering within him. . . . From that hour one dominant influence told on human action; and all the various energies that had been called into life by the age that was passing away were seized, concentrated and steadied to a definite aim by the spirit of religion."

The popularity of the Bible was growing every passing day. When copies were set up in St. Pauls scores flocked to their reading, listening intently to anyone who could make their meaning plain. The small Geneva Bibles now began to appear and one was found in every awakened home.

No less was the influence of the Bible on the intellectual life of the people. "So far as the nation at large was concerned, no history, no romance, hardly any poetry, save the little-known verse of Chaucer, existed in the English tongue when the Bible was ordered to be set up in the churches. Sunday after Sunday, day after day, the crowds that gathered around the Bible in the nave of St. Pauls, or the family group that hung on its words in the devotional exercises at home, were leavened with a new literature."

But far greater than the effect of the Bible on

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literature or social life was its effect on the character of the people at large. "The Bible was as yet the one book which was familiar to every Englishman; and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm. The whole moral effect which is produced nowadays by the religious newspaper, the tract, the essay, the missionary report, the sermon, was then produced by the Bible alone, and its effect in this way, however dispassionately we examine it, was simply amazing. The whole nation became a church."

This enthusiasm for the Bible resulted in the Puritanism which gave to the world modern England and the American republic as well. The influence of the Bible in producing the highest civilization the world has yet reached simply cannot be measured. The Bible is the foundation, structure, capstone; aye, it is the very essence of the highest life the world has ever seen.

The Bible has lost none of its power. What it did for our ancestors in Europe four hundred years ago it will do for any man to-day who will give time to its mastery. All its wealth of revelation, all its nobility of thought, all its richness of song and story, all its upward pull on the heart are open to him who will devote a few moments a day to the study of its pages.

First of all we should study the life of Jesus and the teaching of the Epistles to learn how to live.

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Strange that man is so slow in learning that which means most to his progress and culture. Jesus knew how to live. We may safely accept him as our model. He is the one man that ever walked the earth who fully satisfied the heart of God. He is God's idea of what a man should be.

From the example and teaching of Jesus as given in the Bible we learn that it is the will of our Creator that we live simply and keep our bodies and our minds pure. Jesus was no ascetic, yet he dressed simply, ate the plainest food and often slept with only the canopy of heaven for a covering. When Martha of Bethany was struggling to get up an elaborate meal in his honor and complained that Mary left her with all the work to do, he gently rebuked this woman that he loved, saying that one simple dish would be enough and that many things were more important than a superabundance of food.

According to the teaching and example of Jesus, the highest achievement any man can boast is to retain to the period of life's storm and stress the purity and innocence of childhood. Let us not forget that when the rich and powerful crowded around him Christ took a little child and, setting him in the midst of the company where all could gaze into his unclouded eyes, said that except they became as little children they should not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Passing by the physical, the Bible again teaches

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man what his attitude should be toward other men. Hatred, jealousy and envy filled the world when Jesus came into it. Every man's hand was against every other man. To his friends even man was treacherous and toward his enemies a flame of fire. Men knew not the meaning of brotherhood.

Jesus said: "I know that the old teaching has been eye for eye, tooth for tooth, blow for blow, life for life; but it is all wrong. God has made of one blood all nations of men; we must live together in peace and unity, each concerned for the other's welfare. Therefore I say unto you, Love not only your friends, love your enemies and do them good. Be like God in the magnificence of your loving and forgiving." A right following of Jesus would stop man's inhumanity to man and put an end to ingratitude. Universal love would mean universal joy and an end to social unrest and discord.

But the love-life emphasized by Jesus benefits not the object of the affections alone; it helps quite as much the life that loves. Hatred is an acid that eats out all the finer qualities of life. Modern lithographers have an acid so keen that it eats away lines stenciled by the sun on the hardest granite. Cherishing of hatred cuts the keen edge off of character as rust dulls the razor's edge. Great as he was, Michelangelo would have gone higher but for the hatred he cherished for certain artists and rulers of his day. The one flaw in his great painting of the Last Judgment is the distorted face

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and figure of an enemy which he painted in for spite. A man may paint his enemy as the Devil, but a worse devil is the enmity that prompted the deed.

From the writings of Paul we learn more particulars touching our daily living. The twelfth chapter of Romans is a veritable mine of good counsel. We are to live peaceably with all men; we are to speak no evil word; we are to extend all Christian hospitality to those about us. No form of theft is to be tolerated, whether by house-breaking or by law-breaking, but all are to work honestly for daily bread, earning enough for ourselves and having something to give to the less fortunate around us who may be in need. From Paul's Epistles we learn also that our bodies are temples for the indwelling of the spirit of God; that they must not be defiled but kept pure for the service of the soul.

Every social question that may arise will find its answer, if one will but look with knowing eyes, in the Word of God.

To quicken and enlarge one's devotional and spiritual life there is no writing so effectual as the Psalms of David. As upon unseen wings the soul soars as the student repeats and meditates upon:

O Jehovah, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth,
Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens!

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Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength,
Because of thine adversaries,
That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.

An uplift of the soul cannot fail to be to him
who joins the sweet singer in his soliloquy:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come?

Or to him who reverently reads:

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So Jehovah is round about his people
From this time forth and for evermore.

No guilty soul that reads the Psalms of David
can refrain from crying out with him and securing
cleansing thereby:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness:
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin. . . .
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.

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As the bather, caught on the beach by the swiftly rising tide, is lifted first to his knees, then to his feet, then to the tips of his toes, until he is finally swallowed up in the all-engulfing sea, so the soul on the arid plains of life that begins to drink at the fount of divine revelation will soon be caught in its larger waters and borne upward and onward toward the great harbor of God.

There remain histories and prophecies that speak of God's dealings with Israel and his plans for the future that stir the heart of the student to measures of faith and confidence of which he had not dreamed. Recall the majestic measures of Genesis, which declare the power of God in creation; the marvels of Exodus, which make the blood to stand still as one reads the tragedy of Pharaoh's court and then run on like a mill race in hope and anticipation when the cruel monarch lets God's people go. Read of nation-building as well as character-building in the wilderness; battle-winning on the plains of Jericho; city-building in Judæa and Samaria,—all so obviously in some infinite plan for the advancement of the race that one is forced to believe an all-powerful God is back of it.

Then there is the heart-wringing story of Joseph, at first repulsive and yet alive with human interest; then arresting, as incidents thicken; then inspiring, as the young hero resists temptation and climbs the ladder of success; then faith-building and strengthening, as the hand of God appears in the saving of

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his people. Soon the student begins to see that back of all human events there stands a purposeful and all-powerful God.

When, through the eyes of inspired prophets, one looks toward the future and sees that God's plans are infinite, eternal and unchangeable, he cannot but cry out like Thomas of old, "My Lord and my God."

Behold, then, this matchless volume as it rests in your hands to-day. The Bible has healed more broken hearts, restored more ruined lives, stirred to new measures of activity more arrested careers, given hope to more penitent hearts, lifted man more definitely toward God than all other known forces put together. Can you afford to neglect it? It opens its sacred pages invitingly before your eyes; it bids you, like Lord Tennyson, drink deep at the open fountain of divine truth; it reveals to you the method of the new birth and opens a broad pathway to the matchless city of the soul, whose builder and maker is God.

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CHAPTER THREE

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY PRAYER

It is with the greatest hesitancy that one begins to write openly of a thing so personal and precious as communion between a worshiper and his God. Of many things in our religion we may speak freely and much, but of this inner thing, this thing which makes religion a reality and by which we take hold on a spiritual God, one may not so speak. It cannot be minutely defined or fully bounded. While genuine prayer is always sincere, its quality will be determined by the faith and consecration of the worshiper; its power by his faith; its richness, not by his education, but by his consecration and devotion.

But sacred as the whole subject is, there are certain things which may be said about prayer, and perhaps which should be said. Rightly understood it is the most powerful possession of the Christian and—one despondently fears—is the least used. If a fuller understanding of its nature and place will help in the development of any Christian, then

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these words on a subject so transcendent will perhaps be pardoned.

History and travel reveal to us that the practice of prayer is universal; every race, in every age, has had its form of adoration and communion with unseen higher powers. With the people of Jehovah it has been foremost from the time of Abraham.

This patriarch and founder of a religion and a race literally wrestled with God in prayer. His fervor and importunity and the answers he obtained have been the inspiration of all students of the Old Testament in every age. When Jesus entered upon his earthly work he began at once to pray; not to talk about prayer as a good thing, or to urge others to engage in it, but to pray—constantly, fervently, without ceasing. His example almost makes the duty and privilege of prayer an ordinance. It certainly drives the Christian to his closet to study the whole subject, that he may discover its power and how much of prayer there should be in his life.

If now we ask the direct question, What is prayer? we shall get an answer that will doubtless surprise many. "Prayer," cries one devout student, "is not the ignorant outcry of a clamorous soul seeking to have its own way, but the calm, deliberate utterance of intelligent righteousness coming into entire sympathy with the mind of God."

Similarly, Henry Ward Beecher once said:

I know there is in prayer a great deal more than question

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or answer. If prayer were but a mere order sent to market, expecting to bring back so much in a basket every time, I then might enter into account and have commercial dealing on that subject. The barrenness of prayer is, I am afraid, somewhat exposed by the low state in which it too often exists.

Dropping out, as we may say, the lower elements of it, what is prayer but the conscious lifting of a man's soul into the invisible realm, into the presence of the invisible Father? What is it but shutting out for the moment, with the closing of the eye, all conscious sensuousness and secularity and rising by the effort of the soul through silence up into the region where God sits, and dwelling—though but for a moment—out of the body, in the presence of the eternal God.

To the author personally the element which has seemed vital in all true prayer is that expressed by our word contact. Prayer is contact between the worshiping soul and God. This contact may be long or short, but no soul can come into actual touch with God and not be better ever afterwards.

Many of the great prayers of the Bible contain no petitions for personal blessings. They are mighty pæans of thanksgiving, glorious anthems of praise. Note the victorious shout of Moses and of Deborah. Others ask for no material blessings, but pray for cleansing and refilling with divine power. Many students feel that the Fifty-first Psalm is the greatest prayer in the Old Testament. Here David is on his face before God:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness:

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According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,

And cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions;

And my sin is ever before me. . . .

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness,

That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins,

And blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;

And renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence;

And take not thy holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;

And uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;

And sinners shall be converted unto thee.

A hasty analysis of our Lord's prayer reveals that, while there are many petitions, only one has any bearing upon material blessings:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The first sentence declares God's universal fatherhood and the place of his abode. Then follow three fervent petitions that his name may be

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glorified, the coming of his kingdom hastened and that his will may prevail, "as in heaven, so on earth." Next is the single petition for material blessings: "Give us this day our daily bread." Probably that was to include all like things—home, shelter, health, food. Three terse petitions for spiritual blessings follow: "Forgive us our debts, lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil"; things only God can do for us. Then follows the conclusion, which declares that all glory, praise and honor shall be given to his name forever.

What does this brief analysis reveal? Clearly that when we pray we are not to spend all our time and strength asking God for material blessings. The proportions of this model prayer teach us that for every single petition we put up to God for material things there should be at least three that more glory shall be given unto his name and three that our sins may be forgiven and that we may escape the subtle snare of the Devil.

By reasonable activity we can provide food, clothing and shelter. Let us take more time in our prayers to thank God for the opportunity to secure them, which is a gift from him. Let us ask him for the things we cannot provide ourselves: forgiveness of sins, spiritual insight, vision-power, escape from the enemies of our soul life. These things are really worth praying for. We are to pray much and ask for many things, but our chief concern should be that God's name shall be glorified, his

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kingdom spread and ourselves delivered from all kinds of evil.

But even this lofty conception of prayer is not the highest. A still higher position is to look upon it as simply communion between the worshiping soul and God. Protesting against all formalism, Beecher said:

I remember that it was a long time before I could get back to the habit of my childhood and kneel down and pray with any comfort. The moment I bent my knee I also lost my thread; and the mechanicalism of attempting to pray morning, noon and night would ruin my soul, I think. If I had to pray by the clock, if I had to have a mechanical order, it would derange all my spiritual tendencies. I could not do it. Little by little I came to the feeling of wanting to commune with my Father.

“To me,” said the great preacher, “prayer is not stairs by which you always start at the same place and reach the same place . . . but to my thought prayer is wings by which a man may go just where his own will wants to go. . . . You never fulfill the apostle’s injunctions, ‘Pray always,’ ‘Be instant in prayer,’ ‘Pray in season and out of season,’—those things cannot be done, if prayer is a set act instead of an evolution of feeling or a holy ejaculation.”

In its very highest sense, then, prayer is communion with God. It may be likened to that companionship which marks ideal unions between man and woman. In such companionship the one is not

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constantly asking the other for something, but rather is telling of his love and praising the virtues of the loved one; trying to find out the other's will that he may do it.

Petitions are not foreign to such communion but they are infrequent and, when the worshiper is praying to God, they usually urge only that his will may be done. Fortunate indeed are they whose absolute confidence in God makes it possible for them to pray with the ancients:

Great God, grant us, we beseech thee, those things we stand in need of, whether we ask them or not, and withhold those things which would be hurtful to us even though we crave them of thee.

This is to reach the heights of our Saviour in Gethsemane:

If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Happy indeed the Christian who is not afraid to tell God that he wants what God knows will be best for him even though it means the giving up of some things to which he is clinging most tenaciously.

With keen discrimination S. D. Gordon says that, while the term prayer is commonly used for all intercourse with God, it should be kept in mind that the word covers and includes three forms of intercourse: communion, petition, intercession.

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Communion is fellowship with God. Not request for some particular thing; not asking, but simply enjoying himself, loving him, thinking about him, how beautiful and intelligent and strong and loving and lovable he is; talking to him without words. That is the truest worship, thinking how worthy he is of all the best we can possibly bring to him, and infinitely more. It has to do wholly with God and a man being on good terms with each other. Of necessity it includes confession on my part and forgiveness upon God's part, for only so can we come into the relation of fellowship. Adoration, worship, belong to this first phase of prayer. Communion is the basis of all prayer.

Petition is definite request of God for something I need. A man's whole life is utterly dependent upon the giving hand of God. Everything we need comes from him. Our friendships, ability to make money, health, strength in temptation and in sorrow, guidance in difficult circumstances and in all of life's movements; help of all sorts, financial, bodily, mental, spiritual—all come from God and necessitate a constant touch with him.

True prayer never stops with petition for oneself. It reaches out for others. The very word intercession implies a reaching out for some one else. It is standing as a go-between, a mutual friend between God and some one who is either out of touch with him or is needing special help. Intercession is the climax of prayer. It is the outward drive of prayer. It is the effective end of prayer outward. Communion and petition are upward and downward. Intercession rests upon these two as its foundation. Communion and petition store the life with the power of God; intercession lets it out on behalf of others. The first two are necessarily for self; this third is for others.

There has ever been among men a small per cent who scoff at the idea that the requests of a weak human being upon this small earth will influence the

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action of the great God of the universe. Their skepticism has kept alive a question that is still asked in certain quarters, Does human prayer influence God? In answering the question I wish to quote again from the keen chapters of Mr. Gordon.

Prayer does not influence God's purpose. It does influence his action. Everything that ever has been prayed for, of course I mean the right thing, God has already purposed to do. But he does nothing without our consent. He has been hindered in his purposes by our lack of willingness. When we learn his purposes and make them our prayers we are giving him the opportunity to act. Our willingness check-mates Satan's opposition. It opens the path to God and rids it of the obstacles. And so the road is cleared for the free action already planned.

A swift journey through the Old Testament reveals the fact that many blessings came to men in response to the prayers of the faithful. Only one or two instances in several classes will be cited: Abraham prayed and children were born into the household of Abimelech. Gen. 20: 17. In response to the prayer of Moses God quenched the fire that burned the children of Israel at Taberah. Num. 11: 2. And again, in response to similar prayer, he provided escape from the bites of the fiery serpents in the land of Edom. Num. 21: 7. Hannah prayed and God gave her the motherhood of Samuel, the wise judge of Israel. I Sam. 1: 15. The earnest prayer of Hezekiah added fifteen years to his useful life. Isa. 38: 3. James, the apostle,

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supporting his contention that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, says :

Elias was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. James 5: 17, 18.

Surely, with our present intelligence, we will not be offended if answers to our prayers involve a suspension or even an alteration of what appear to us to be "the laws of nature." We know so little about those laws that we find we have been led into childish error about them every day. Only a few years ago we said with vehemence that it would be against the laws of nature for the sound of the human voice to reach from New York to Chicago, but now it is done over the telephone a thousand times every day; we used to say that no man could see through solid flesh or an inch of wood or other opaque substance, but now the X-ray is unchecked by them; we said only a few months ago that it was against the law of nature for man to fly through the air, but recently we have witnessed a flight from the Atlantic to the Pacific. If what we call the laws of nature are a part of the purpose of the great God then it is no violation for him to manipulate them as he wills for the welfare of coöperating children.

But God is not limited in his working to material things. He has quite as complete sway over minds

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and hearts. It is on record that the prayers of an aroused wife in the State of Iowa issued in the conversion of her unbelieving husband in Washington who was at the time a member of Congress and engrossed in getting through several special measures; also that a friend in Missouri began to pray for the conversion of a skeptical professor in one of the great universities of Europe, and that, after the prayer had been answered, a comparison of experiences between the friends revealed the fact that the very day the American friend began to pray the European friend began to think more favorably of God and the Christian life. No intelligent man will say that all of these things, and countless others that might be cited, are coincidences. They are too unusual, too striking, too clear. There is but one reasonable conclusion: God does hear and God does answer the fervent prayer of his righteous children. Prayer is the most powerful force the Christian possesses.

Old though it be, this well-known word of Lord Tennyson, in his *Idylls of the King*, is too fine to be omitted from the study we are making here:

More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day;
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?

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For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

There is simply no limit to the power of prayer. All depends on the faith and importunity of him who prays. If he convinces God of the sincerity of his desires and his willingness to coöperate in making their answer possible all the power of God is on his side and this power no earthly forces can withstand.

For the purposes of this study it surely is not irreverent for us to ask, What is the value of prayer to the individual? Are there reflex benefits of which the Christian has the right to take account? Has prayer a value in Christian culture? To these questions there can be but one answer and that answer is strongly affirmative. If there were no direct answers prayer should be the daily practice of the Christian for its reflex benefits.

Earnest prayer always enriches the life of the worshiper. Prayerless lives are generally crude and sensuous. The lifting up of the thoughts to God, the very coming into his pure presence, rebukes man's sins and leads him to pray much for forgiveness. Communing much with God prevents elaborating personal desires. God becomes more and more our ideal and we long to be like him in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness. American Church history is full of instances wherein men and women, denied the privilege of education

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and association with cultural forces, have grown fine in mind and heart by much communion with God.

Beecher tells of a colored woman in the South whose power in prayer was one of the wonders of her day. In ordinary conversation she broke every rule of grammar and used the most commonplace words; when aroused in prayer she seemed to share the gift of Pentecost. Her very language was changed. As her spirit rose she lifted the whole audience with her. She fell into the majestic language of the Old Testament and so swayed men's hearts as to lead them to say as Jacob said at Bethel, "Surely Jehovah is in this place." If as Dr. David Gregg says, "A grand, bold life will produce grand, bold prayers," we are led to say, "Grand praying will produce grand living; the Christian who communes much with God will rapidly become god-like."

But this is not all. There is nothing which so widens a man's life and gives him world visions as does prayer. No man who prays in earnest that God will bring his kingdom to fullness on the earth can stay within the limits of his own city or even his own country. Prayer leaps all boundary lines whether of nation or race. The praying man soon ascends the highest mountains and, looking out over the whole world, prays for it all and throws himself into winning it.

For the growing Christian daily prayer is a neces-

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sity. It is, in a sense, the food of the soul, and the prayerless soul soon starves. If Christianity has failed to beautify your life, if you have not grown richer in character and stronger in faith, question yourself concerning your prayers: have they been what they ought to be? have they had a large place every day? Jesus tells us to pray much. To ask in his name for the things we desire at God's hands, and to this command he has added this glorious promise: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

We join the company of earth's great lives when we begin to pray; not only the great in religious realms like Abraham and David and Jesus and Paul, but the great in material realms as well. Washington wrestled with God at Valley Forge as Franklin had at the calling of the Constitutional Convention. Lincoln prayed for guidance and victory during the awful days of the Civil War, and McKinley prayed likewise during the war with Spain. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, never began a great work without praying for divine guidance and never achieved victory without giving all praise and honor to God. The mercantile world recently united in honoring John Wanamaker for his half century in successful business, but his religious devotion is as prominent as his business success.

Do not make the unpardonable mistake of thinking that you are too learned or too prosperous or

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too brilliant to pray. The greater truly great men become the more are they able to understand the greatness of God and their own need for guidance. The greater they become the more able they are to see what really great things God stands ready to do as soon as man is willing to coöperate by removing obstacles, and they begin to pray that this may be done, that man may be filled with heavenly wisdom and moved to labor for the welfare of the whole race.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, "Behold, he prays."

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer.

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O thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.

—James Montgomery.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY SACRIFICE

On the very threshold of Christianity the aspiring heart comes face to face with a necessity as hard and unyielding as it is at first unwelcome. He is anxious to enter the heavenly community but he draws back from entering it through a fiery furnace as a gateway. There, over the archway to this twofold paradise, stands the inexorable edict, "Terms of Entrance—A Living Sacrifice." "But," cries the haughty soul, "I will not sacrifice." "That is yours to choose," replies the angel that keeps the gate, "but without sacrifice you cannot enter, and without entrance you can have none of the blessings enjoyed by those who dwell herein."

Christ has never yet deceived a soul that knocked for entrance at the door of his kingdom. Instead of covering up its austerities and trying to make it all seem like a garden of roses he almost ruthlessly, it would seem, tears away the covering and lets all the hard facts stand forth. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." How strangely similar

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sounded the voice of the Italian general, Garibaldi, eighteen hundred years later, when, leading his soldiers to a forlorn hope, he cried, "I have nothing to offer you but hardships: hunger, cold, the drenching storm, disease, the dangers of battle, death." And yet just as those heroic patriots braved all for their love of Italy so do men everywhere count it a privilege to sacrifice for Jesus Christ. How evident it is that notwithstanding this law that stands as an unyielding frame through which every candidate must enter Christianity is rapidly overspreading the earth, while the religions that do not require it have no virility and are gradually pining away. On its face the fact seems unexplainable and every enquiring mind is eager to discover the secret.

Seeking the origin of the law of sacrifice one must go back of Christ, the most perfect example, for sacrifice was the chief element in the Jewish ritual; he must go back of the tabernacle, for something moved Abraham, the father of all the faithful, to offer up his only son to God; he must go back of Abraham, for the first sons of Adam brought their sacrifices to Jehovah. Can it be, then, that the law of sacrifice is not arbitrarily imposed by Christ upon his followers—that it is one of the laws of the universe, like adhesion and gravitation? All the scientific investigations of the day proclaim this to be a fact. No life exists that has not been preceded by other life that made sacrifices to bring it into

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existence. The first cell of a living thing grows by taking sustenance until the center is too far removed from the walls to gain the food it needs. Only two courses open before it: The cell must either die or sacrifice its individual life that two smaller cells may live. To these in turn the unyielding alternative is presented, and the process goes on in infinite series until all the organisms of the universe come into being.

There is only one farther step in this investigation which man can take, but it is the step which instantly clears the mystery and makes us fly to sacrifice as to a precious privilege: Back of Christ, back of the temple, back of Abraham, back of the sons of Adam, God sacrificed before the foundations of the earth were laid; and—because man is in the image of God, in all the higher elements of his nature, and in proportion as godly qualities are allowed to act within him—he also sacrifices, that God's kingdom may come and his will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.

O subtle evidence of the spirit of God in man! O exalted appeal to the highest instincts in man's soul! What man is willing to be selfish when being so is an open indication of how far he is from God! When being so proclaims him an ingrate in face of God's infinite sacrifice for him! When being so is to shut in his own face the doors that open an exalted and noble life here upon earth! How fully Carlyle caught the secret of this exalted mystery:

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It is only with renunciations that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin. In a valiant suffering for others, not in a slothful making others suffer for us, did nobleness ever lie.

Whyte Melville says:

“You talk of self as the motive to exertion. I tell you that it is abnegation of self which has wrought out all that is noble, all that is good, all that is useful, nearly all that is ornamental in the world.”

Dr. Hillis says:

“Speaking not as an amateur but as a master, Christ affirms that he who would save his life must lose it; that he who would be remembered by others must forget himself; that the soldier who flees from danger to save his body shall leave that life upon the battle field, while he who plunges his banner into the very thick of the fight and is carried off the field on his shield shall in safety bear his life away. Hard seem the terms; they rebuke ease; they smite self-indulgence; they deny the maxims of the worldly wise. But in accepting Christ’s principle and forsaking their palaces that they might be as brothers to beggars, Xavier and Loyola found an exhilaration denied to kings; while each Sir Launfal, in his ease denied the Holy Grail, has in the hour of self-sacrifice discerned the Vision Splendid. To each young patriot and soldier, looking eagerly unto the tablets that commemorate the deeds of heroes, to each young scholar aspiring to a place beside the sages, comes the word: ‘Life is through death, and immortal renown through self-renunciation.’”

To what extreme limits did our Saviour go in accepting the necessity of sacrifice! nay, how abso-

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lutely did he rob necessity of its chains and by the alchemy of love change its very nature into welcomed privilege! Not even where it cost him most did he put his children forth to an experience he himself had not tasted. "Come," cried the world, "and we will give you crown and scepter! You have the presence, you have the powers; we have the allegiance wherewith to make you king of Israel." Was ever such flattery and temptation brought to bear upon a man who did not yield? What visions of luxury and power! No more coarse food, no more nights without a pillow, no more rags, no more abuse from the idle rich, but in their stead splendor, adoration, a scepter whose slightest movement is obeyed, while the glory of Israel is gradually restored. Why not? Would this not accomplish his purpose just as rapidly and as well? Oh, no! Here is a Master who insists upon tasting the experiences of his humblest servant. Shall he who knows so well the weakening influences of luxury, the strengthening cordial of sacrifice, take the luxury and fail, while he may take the sacrifice and gain immortal mastery? "Get thee behind me, Satan." "Man shall not live by bread alone." And then steadily, step by step, he trod the path of sacrifice until it ended on Calvary and Christ tasted death for every man.

When you ask what it is that draws all men toward Christ the answer is not far away. We admire his manhood, we revel in his ability to be

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natural, we cannot turn away from his exercise of love and mercy, but we see in a moment that none of these could be were it not for a more glorious virtue that is the mother of them all—his sacrifice of all things for those he loved. And let it be said plainly wherever this story is told, whether men ever acknowledge Christ or not, whether they ever take advantage of his service or not: Christ has sacrificed enough for every man to open for him the way to heaven on its godward side. It only remains for man to take down the bars on his own side.

So dark and bloody is the page of religious history in Spain that we grasp at every ray of light as the drowning man grasps a straw. The idea that dominated Spanish Catholicism in the middle ages was penance rather than repentance. Penance would save the soul though surrounding it with gloom, bodily torture, isolation, withdrawal from the world's helpful activities. Forbidding as were the conditions many souls, weary of life or weighted down by a sense of sin, withdrew from the world, entered the convent and gave themselves up to holy meditation.

In the midst of this gloomy atmosphere a young girl, Theresa, determined to become a nun. She was young, beautiful, fond of society, even giddy and worldly; but seized with fear of eternal punishment she determined to renounce the world and strive by endless penance to regain the favor of God. It was a long and weary struggle. Weak-

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ness and disease added to her torture, yet so servile was her fear that she would not quit the convent and venture again upon the life of the world. Her sins were never mortal—they were chiefly those of a wayward nature wishing for experiences out of harmony with the elevated life she craved—yet so sensitive was her conscience that these childish sins gave her more misery than theft or even murder would more callous souls. Twenty years passed by,—twenty years of self-renunciation and sacrifice,—when suddenly the whole aspect of her life changed. The “Confessions of St. Augustine” falling into her hands she eagerly read of his conversion, and for the first time the idea that God loves a child while that child is still in rebellion flashed upon her soul. Then God loved her now—had been loving her during all these years of sacrifice made to gain, not his love, but barely his forgiveness! The idea transformed her, softened her nature, sweetened her life and multiplied her natural power of song. In ecstasy she sang:

Absent from thee, my Saviour dear!
I call not life this living here,
Oh, Lord, my light and living breath!
Take me, oh, take me from this death!
And burst the bars that sever me
From my true life above!
Think how I die thy face to see,
And cannot live away from thee.

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Henceforth she was bathed in the glory of her Lord and her face shone with the radiance of heaven. She was beloved by everybody, venerated for her virtues as well as for her spiritual elevation. Her intellectual gifts became as remarkable as her piety, her conversation was charming and she drew the greatest people of the age around her. She never claimed perfection, but the age in which she lived loved and venerated her only second to the Holy Virgin.¹

Twenty years of self-renunciation to gain a character that charmed and elevated the world and won the signal favor of God! If the price seems large, consider the glorious possession; an immortal name on earth; a fadeless crown in heaven; the eternal favor of the Prince of Peace.

Sacrifice brings out and increases the beauty of character as cutting and polishing reveals the glories of precious stones. A diamond worth between two and three millions of dollars was recently found in South Africa, but in its present form it is unsalable. To give it commercial value it must be mercilessly cut, though each division reduces its total value thousands of dollars. The more it submits to the lapidary's chafing the greater will be its utility and glory when it finds its way into the marts of trade. There are many diamonds among men and women of our state. They have a worthy an-

¹Condensed from the lectures of John Lord.

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cestry, noble bodies, minds capable of marvelous achievements, but at present they are of little value to society because of crudeness or of some glaring defect.

Perhaps the defect is pride—not the noble pride in the fact of divine relationship and self-consecration to the needs of men, but that petty, shameless pride in place or birth or present possession, that of all things makes one ashamed of the race to which he belongs. How one feels like crying out to such with Wordsworth:

Know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful ever. Oh, be wiser, thou,
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of thought.

Or mayhap the present defect is selfishness that makes the possessor one of those spongelike characters that suck in every adjacent thing but give nothing forth until they are squeezed; heavy, soggy, borne along by the servants of men as a boulder is

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borne on the surface of a glacier, doing none of the work, only adding to the burden of the toiling masses. How they do need to be shamed out of their sin! Selfishness always leads to self-indulgence, and that which might be both beautiful and useful is instead hideous and valueless.

Some of us ought to pray to God for chastening instead of more caressing. He has blessed us and blessed us and blessed us, and we have become more and more self-centered and hateful, until nothing but deep experiences will correct our errors. Perhaps Holland was right when he sang:

Hearts like apples are hard and sour
Till crushed by time's resistless power
And yield their juices rich and bland
To none but sorrow's heavy hand.

Let us not draw back from the sterner experiences of life. They often contain the very grains of gold we crave. As we advance from youth all is lightness and gayety. We would not have it otherwise, for the instincts drawing us toward it are God-planted, but as we go from youth to middle age a change creeps over us which, even if we do not see it, is nevertheless very evident to our friends. Some go on until their gayety becomes frivolity and life for them is either a round of pleasure or an insufferable bore. Others through disappointment become crabbed and morose. Life to them has be-

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come a treadmill and men are disposed to let them tread alone.

But there are others who, spoiled neither by much joy or by bitter disappointment, are wont to fulfill their duties honorably from day to day, the unpleasant as well as the pleasant ones. They bear sorrows and share joys as the days may bring them. These are they toward whom we are drawn irresistibly. It requires no skilled lapidary to discover beauty in a rich character. Cover it as he will the glory shines forth, as did the glory of the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. Watch the beauty creep into the life of that devout woman to whom falls the care of an aged invalid. She has had trials enough before, say some—but perhaps they do not know. God may have larger things in store for her as her life becomes richer. Oh, the endlessness of those arduous duties. Now the patient is petulant and exacting, now ungrateful, now complaining, then sweet again and yielding as an infant. But the life at that bedside! Why does she stay? There are pleasanter places and more welcome duties, and surely she is entitled to them. She stays because she is a bit of God incarnate. She has caught the Master's spirit; and though many would take her and make her a queen, she prefers to renounce it all and be a servant. The love in her heart is showing more and more in her face, for we can no more conceal good qualities than we can bad ones.

Said an aged mother, during the last days of her

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life, to a faithful friend who had cared for her for twenty years as a mother cares for a baby, "I will tell mother how good you have been to me the moment I meet her in heaven." It would be worth some sacrifice, do you not think, to have your good works spoken of in heaven? "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

But there is one other phase of this whole subject upon which I wish to touch. Originally sacrifice involved the death of the victim. It was so in Israel. Christ so practiced it. In all cases it is supposed to mean the giving up of much.

Does it not seem, in face of what we have just seen, that what Christ asks us to give up to become Christians hardly deserves the name of sacrifice? Is it not more like saying to man: "Throw away the dirt that is in your pocket and I will fill it with gold"? He asks us to give up unbelief; all uncleanness, all evil speaking and thinking; to give up those practices only that injure us. In place of these he binds himself to give us a home in heaven, peace on earth, increasing worth in character and life.

When the wild orange was brought from the woods into richly cultivated gardens it chafed under the limitations existing there. It had little room to spread itself, the space given to its roots was so small, but—worse than this—the gardener ruthlessly cut away its branches; under the sharp pruning knife it was forced to give up half its leaves; it was

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also forced to furnish sap to alien sprouts grafted into its lacerated sides. The sacrifice seemed unbearable. But hardly had the second season passed until that chafing shrub began to notice the richer fragrance of its own blossoms and fruit. Sacrifice for one season had transformed its life and turned barrenness into fertility, a useless thing into a treasure. Why can we not look upon the sacrifices required of us as blessings in disguise, and allow their enriching influences to have their perfect work?

Is it not after all a question of recognizing God's superior wisdom and love and the desirability of the best gifts? With what poor possessions most of us are willing to be satisfied! A mind half cultivated and poorly stored; a heart all selfish and unsympathetic; a soul groping in the dimness of limited spiritual vision, while all around us stand noble virtues knocking for admission into our lives through the gateway of sacrifice!

If the student must sacrifice much to gain the knowledge he craves; if the artist must sacrifice to add nimbleness to fingers and steadiness to his nerves; if the statesman must sacrifice to gain power and influence that he may shape the policies of nations, why should we complain if to secure the best gifts in God's kingdom we are asked to give up some of the things to which we have been clinging, things which, if we hold on to them, are sure to bring us injury?

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The church of Jesus is suffering to-day because the law of sacrifice is being disregarded by so many of her children. How few are willing to sacrifice a personal comfort that the treasury of the Lord's house may be less barren. "A tithe is mine," saith the Lord, and the man who withholds it is guilty of robbing God. How pathetic the picture of the rich young ruler who, seeking larger life, was told that to gain it he must put away his vast possessions, take up his cross and follow the Saviour. He went away sorrowing, and we can only conjecture what came after; but we can see in mental vision the lines hardening around the mouth, his nature becoming more grasping, his disposition more miserly until the once promising youth has become a selfish and brutal old man, interested only in the things which perish with the using. He kept his money, but he lost the image of his God.

How few are willing to sacrifice personal comfort that the Lord's house may have workers in every field! Has an hour's lounging become more to us than the nurture of childish life or the joy of a lonely heart made glad by our presence and interest? Well, we may stay at home and lounge about all day if we will, but if the kingdom of God loses a little, we lose infinitely more. Surely there is nothing more pathetic than a barren human soul. An unlighted lamp-post is a paradise beside it.

Even Jonah on his way to Tarshish must pay the fare. The palaces of the New Jerusalem may

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tower above us invitingly and seem only a step away, but no man may enter in without self-sacrifice. The rich characters of the world charm us and in our aspiring hours we cry out to them, "Reveal to us your secret." Then do they whisper: "If we are worthy, it is because we have kept our bodies under, because we have given free reign to our souls, because we have sacrificed the present comfort for the future glory, because we have performed the unpleasant as well as the pleasant duties of our lives with equal readiness and fidelity. We simply let the godlike impulses in us act."

Shall we not change the wording of our prayers just a little? Let us not pray only and all the time that God shall bless us, but that he will give us the courage to sacrifice for him. Shall we not with Phillips Brooks cease to pray for duties equal to our powers and begin to pray for powers equal to our duties? Shall we not cease asking for easy lives and ask rather for natures ready to meet whatever God in his providence shall send, allowing each experience to have in us its perfect work? Shall we not ask God to teach us the full meaning of that mighty word of Jesus: "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"?

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CHAPTER FIVE

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY SERVICE

There are, in each human life, two spheres that may be distinctly bounded and defined. They bear a vital relationship, the second really growing out of the first, and yet they no more mingle than the soil mingles with the plant; they are no more one than the rose and the earth out of which the fragrant flower so luxuriantly grows. I speak of the spheres called thought and action. Thought is internal and wholly personal. Action, though growing out of thought, is external and usually bears upon other lives.

The sphere of man's thought is glorious to contemplate. It is as large as his knowledge and experience and its eye has the ease and swiftness of movement of the electric spark. In the sphere of thought every educated man is a millionaire; the four quarters of the earth are his, the sea and sky and all that is in them. He delves into the mines and caves of the earth and weighs and measures suns and worlds he may never touch; from Etna to Vesuvius is but a span which the mind clears in a hundredth

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part the time it takes the halting tongue to give it utterance. All known truth, too, is his, and the mind plays with those mighty forces called Morality, Duty, Faith, Obedience, as the child plays with dolls and blocks and is by them no more dismayed.

After contemplating this majestic sphere of thought which, in each man's life, is bounded only by his largest learning and experience, how pathetic it is, in the vast majority of cases, to view the sphere of his action. Many a man who in thought is a millionaire girdling the earth with swift and certain stride, in action is a poor pauper tilling only his acre and his barnyard! One is led to think it was to this last class that James addressed his well-known injunction, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." For in his day men were hearing and giving mental assent to the loftiest principles and sentiments, but no evidence of them appeared in their daily actions; the ponderous and majestic history of Moses; the exalted life philosophy of Job and of Solomon; the inspiring spiritual songs of David and the sons of Asaph; they heard them all and pronounced them excellent and then went forth to break every command and disregard every injunction.

One fears that the men and women of America are guilty of the same sins. In no nation do men hear more truth or more freely confess that it ought to be observed; in no nation is this same truth so universally disregarded. In his own heart every

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man confesses that man ought to observe the Sabbath day; that he ought to live a pure and unspotted life; that he ought to be sympathetic and generous and "do unto others as he would have others do unto him," but alas! he soon turns from the mirror and forgets what manner of man he is! To all such James cries: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."

Consider for a moment what this Word is you are called upon to observe. It is not a bundle of nursery rimes nor an opinion from a judge's bench; it is not the effusion of a modern daily newspaper; not even the minutes of a session of Congress. It is a Word that transcends all other utterances as the gold transcends the rock in which it is embedded; it is the all-embracing, unchanging, life-giving Word of Almighty God, Creator and Governor of the universe.

The wise man will give this Word the place in his life to which it is entitled! It is not enough that we receive it and give mental assent to its commands; it is not enough to recognize and rave over the beauty of its diction or the loftiness of its philosophy; it is not even enough to confess that it is the Word of God; it is our duty, it should be our highest privilege, to obey this Word, to study its bearing upon human life, to apply its lofty life philosophy to our every action.

James makes very clear what we are easily persuaded to believe, that man is the very pinnacle of

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God's creation, "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."¹ How ready we are to believe this and to assume command in accordance with it! On the physical side, ever since the Creation pictured in Genesis, man has considered himself lord of creation and has acted accordingly, and yet, so far short do we fall of what we might be, morally and spiritually, of what God intended we should be, that our failure fairly stuns the thoughtful mind and fills it with shame and with confusion.

Unable to make man what he desired him to be by precept, God added to his glorious precept a more glorious example. The thinking mind does not doubt for a moment that Jesus of Nazareth was God's idea of what a man should be. Perfect in his faith, pure in his life, boundless in his sympathies, constant in his devotion to the welfare of society and the uplift of mankind. No man can study intently the character of Jesus without a fuller comprehension of what God's message to his life should be.

The amazing thing about man is that, entering the sphere of thought as far as Jesus did, his entrance into the sphere of action, as compared with Jesus, should be so poor and beggarly. It is certainly no irreverence to say that man understands the value of sympathy as fully as Jesus did and yet how little he exercises it! that he comprehends the

¹James 1: 18.

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possibility and desirability of human virtue as fully as Jesus did and yet how crude and imperfect he allows his life to be! It is not a fault of understanding; it is a fault of execution.

Shall we not enlarge our sphere of action until it shall, in fuller measure, harmonize with our sphere of thought? The question of Christian living in this day is not whether we believe this disputed doctrine or that, but, are we living up to the full measure of what we do most surely know and do most freely confess? not whether we believe this little point or that in the meager report we have of Christ's life on earth but, rather, are we confessing the great fundamental fact of his existence and his lofty mission, and are we doing our best to continue in his word and finish his work.

I know of no man in America whose sphere of action harmonized more perfectly with his sphere of thought than did that of Phillips Brooks. Over and over and over again he said to the vast company that hung upon his words :

Be the noblest men your present faith, poor and weak and imperfect as it is, can make you to be. Live up to your present growth, your present faith. So and so only, as you take the next straight step forward, as you stand strong where you are now, so only can you think the curtain will draw back and there will be revealed to you what lies beyond. And then live in your positives and not in your negatives.

In the working out of this positive life, in striving to do the things we hear and know to be true, two

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forms of activity will be very prominent: first, we will do all we can with our own hands and brain to help those in need, we will try to be Christlike in kindly service; and second, we will give all we can of substance and material strength that our arm may be lengthened to do a larger work.

The teachings of James have been charmingly put in verse by Edmund Vance Cooke:

So he died for his faith. That is fine.
More than most of us do.
But stay. Can you add to that line
That he lived for it, too?

It is easy to die. Men have died
For a wish or a whim—
From bravado or passion or pride.
Was it hard for him?

But to live: every day to live out
All the truth that he dreamt,
While his friends met his conduct with doubt,
And the world with contempt.

Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
Never turning aside?
Then we'll talk of the life that he led.
Never mind how he died.

Originally all service was face to face. The good Samaritan tied up the wounds of the broken body on the Jericho road. That was his first duty. Only after he had done all he could with his own hands

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did he give of his money that others might render similar service when he was far away.

I have seen a Christian woman go into the home of squalor and want and render the noblest service known among men. The sick child was taken out of the arms of the ignorant and shiftless mother, made clean and sweet and comfortable, satisfied with wholesome food, and then rocked to the first normal sleep it had enjoyed for weeks. I have seen this angel of mercy go on then to scrub and garnish the unkept house, wash dishes caked with refuse from many hasty meals, air the bedding saturated with the smoke and the smell of poorly cooked food, let God's sunshine do its cleansing and purifying work in rooms long shut up like tombs. I have seen such pathetic abodes transformed by the sacrificial touch of Christlike women and I have said with joy, "These women are doers of the Word, and not hearers only." "Angels of mercy" is the right phrase, and, thank God, selfish as the masses are becoming, there are thousands of them throughout the Christian church.

But not every woman can go thus and with her own hands minister to the needy; sometimes her own imperious duties prevent and sometimes the case of need is too far distant. Must she stand by helpless and let the world's need go on unrelieved? By the grace of God, no! If she cannot go she can give such—and in such quantities—as she has, and some

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other women, released by her bounty, can go and do.

Out of this second privilege has grown the whole benevolent scheme of Christendom. Generosity in giving has made possible the vast propaganda of foreign missions, which is not only winning the race to Christ but is rapidly transforming crude and even barbarous nations. Generous giving has planted Bible schools and churches by the thousands on our distant frontier, whose subtle and persistent influence has often transformed a wild and godless mining camp into a Christian village in a single generation; generous giving in America has taken the black man as a slave and developed him into a useful, self-respecting citizen; it has founded and maintained academies and colleges in which sixty-five per cent of the nation's present leaders were educated; it has supplied the "sinews of war," enabling reformers to fight intemperance and every enemy of the moral welfare of our people. No man can picture the backward and unhappy state in which our own nation and the nations of Asia and Africa would have been to-day had not countless Christians been "doers of the word, and not hearers only"; had they not sacrificed many personal comforts that the "other sheep" of our Father's creation might hear the Shepherd's voice.

Twenty-five years ago the Bulu people, on the west coast of Africa, were naked, ignorant, repulsive savages. They had no law but might. The

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men were lazy, quarrelsome and self-indulgent. The poor women and girls were bought and sold, like cattle, for a few cents each. Polygamy was universal. Fathers sold their daughters when mere babies to be the wives of any man who could pay a fair price. The suffering of these girls endured at the hands of their sensuous, brutal owners is indescribable.

A year or two ago Dr. A. W. Halsey, of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, visited this territory. He found the people with language and textbooks. He found them reading the Scriptures and following, as best they can understand them, the teachings of Jesus. Among the Christians polygamy has been banished and a semblance of domestic happiness is creeping into their homes. Hundreds of boys and girls are gathered into schools. Their bodies are clothed, their minds are being filled with ennobling thoughts. They are building homes and cities and are tilling fields which for centuries have lain idle. This transformation has come about through the money gifts of the Christians of America, chiefly from the Presbyterian Church.

The knowledge that the money you are contributing to the cause of home missions is helping hundreds of churches to maintain services in outlying districts which otherwise would be entirely without the Word of God; that thousands of children are enabled, by similarly generous Christians, to study

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systematically the Word of God; that scores of new churches are organized every year; that the remnants of our fast disappearing Indian tribes are being taught all the elements of Christian truth and Christian civilization by your generosity; that the immigrant, landing upon our shores, is met by friendly hands and introduced to the best life by Christian workers; that you are helping to bring the laboring world and the church into closer relationship; that your contributions are making possible the preparation of scientific surveys in city and country which shall be the basis of future benevolent work,—however small your part in the vast enterprise may be,—this knowledge will surely react upon your own life, for the consciousness of duty well done enriches the soul as a strengthening cordial enlivens the body.

Considering, for the purpose of this study, the retroactive benefits of Christlike service and generous giving, both for the relief of distress and for evangelizing the non-Christian peoples of the world, we are impressed with the force of a remark by J. Campbell Whyte, directing head of the great Laymen's Missionary Movement, "No man ever reaches his maximum local efficiency until he enters into his inheritance as a citizen of the world"; also the keen observation of Jacob Riis, made after investigating the causes of a revival of religion in his native city of Copenhagen, "Every dollar contributed to foreign missions releases ten dollars'

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worth of energy for dealing with the tasks at our own doors."

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." Christ put that promise into the heart of Christianity and it has never been recalled. If "the gift without the giver is bare," a gift without a sure reward to the giver is unknown. If men are careless and forgetful, God is not, and no smallest sacrifice made for his poor or for the advancement of his cause, is ever forgotten. Truly, "the heart grows rich with giving" and he is poor indeed who hoards all his money to spend it upon himself.

A notable example of enrichment by giving is that of D. K. Pearsons, Chicago's best known philanthropist, who died in April, 1912. Years ago Mr. Pearsons determined to be the executor and distributor of his own estate. Christian colleges appealed to him as being especially worthy of assistance. He gave them money on condition of their securing a similar, or in some cases a larger, amount, thus multiplying manyfold his own gift. Mr. Pearsons was a wise steward. In enough cases to provide for his old age, he asked for a small annuity during his lifetime. Having provided thus for all normal wants to the end of his days, he reveled in the joy of giving away his entire fortune of something more than fourteen million dollars. He testified that

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in thus providing for the continuance of Christian education at the sacrifice of his own fortune he experienced the keenest satisfaction of his long life. His friends testified that his heart grew richer with each passing year until he became one of the choice spirits of his age.

But giving service is even more enriching than giving cash. Half a lifetime ago a young medical missionary named Joseph Plum Cochran went out to Persia. With an abandon of zeal he threw himself into relieving bodily distress, while all the time he strove to put the religion of Christ into the hearts of his patients. In his recently published book, "The Foreign Doctor," Robert E. Speer says, "In the midst of turmoil and hate, Persian officials, Moslem ecclesiastics, Turks, Nestorians, Kurds and Christians shared alike in his ministry of love."

But while the Christian doctor was giving himself to Persia he was all unconsciously enriching his character until he built for himself an imperishable memorial. Continuing, Dr. Speer says, "Decorated by the Shah for his services to the country and exercising a powerful influence upon the political life of the people, it was yet the sterling Christian character of the man, rather than his skill as a physician or his wise council in political affairs, which won for him the respect and favor of people of every race, creed and rank."

Christianity is a religion of sacrifice, but of sacrifice which brings a rich reward. From out its

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gracious lips there sounds evermore an imperative command with but one alternative: "Serve or give that others may be released to serve; go or give that others more favorably conditioned may go."

The true Christian will not hesitate; it will be simply a question of wise stewardship and the great Father, seeing the sacrifice and evidence of love, will send his reward openly.

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CHAPTER SIX

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY SELF-CONTROL

Self-control has long been recognized as the chief factor in earthly success, the conqueror of temptation and the keynote of character. Excess in eating and in drinking, in working and enjoying, has thrown the blight of early decay and death over millions of the most promising youths and maidens in every age. "Standing with reluctant feet where the brook and river meet," they have ever been the objects on which this insidious foe has concentrated his efforts.

It is the moment when the animal in man is most alive and when wisdom has not yet taken the helm to guide the life-ship safely; when the false promises of the self-indulgence fiend are taken for truth; when, to vary slightly Emerson's thought, it seems as if the whole world had been created to give pleasure to one man. Added to these natural tempters, one confesses with shame and confusion, society has set up others. How unpardonable it is that any boy should ever be allowed to feel that he is not a man until he begins to smoke! that he is setting himself

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up for a saint if he will not drink with his friends! while modern society, preening itself constantly upon its intelligence and culture, has little with which to entertain a youth if he holds back from the variety theater or will not play cards and gamble a little on the result.

Perhaps it is not strange that so many of the darlings of our homes go down before this onslaught. It requires a heroism as great as that of the early Christian martyrs for able-bodied young men and women, tingling with life, to defy the edicts of modern social customs, subdue temptations from within and live the pure, clean, honorable lives their Maker would have them live.

If older people are eager to help them, there are two special things, among many, which they can do. First, let them strive to break down these false notions selfish and self-indulgent society has set up. We know that instead of making him appear more manly, smoking his first cigar and taking his first drink of liquor is to a young man what tearing off his epaulets and breaking his sword is to an army officer. It is the beginning of his degradation. Not only this, but in our day it shuts the doors of many of the best lines of labor against him.

“Several of our leading banks and mercantile houses,” said an experienced New York merchant recently, “are making an absolute rule of engaging no clerk who smokes, whether pipe, cigars or cigarettes. We find the young fellow who takes to

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smoking takes to blundering and idleness and wasting his time, besides very often going to questionable places of amusement out of office hours. We simply will not take a young man who may be efficient in every other way but who smokes. If he won't give up tobacco, we give him up. Young men and youths have no need of opiates; a busy, overtaxed merchant or banker may perhaps receive benefit from a cigar after luncheon or at the end of the day's work, but young fellows have no right to drug their energies with tobacco."

"There is no question but that the habits of a boy count with his employer," said a railroad man of prominence. "A watch is kept on the boy, and if he is found smoking it counts against him; if he keeps late hours he is at a discount compared with the boy who goes to bed early; if he drinks or gambles it is fatal to him. A boy needs every ounce of his strength in order to succeed, and these vicious habits are a waste of power."

Thus has the great world of commerce risen up against these false standards social custom has set up. If now the fathers and mothers and the mature friends of these young men would take an equally strong stand, perhaps after a while the truth would appear so clearly that even a youth would be forced to know that he is tearing off his own epaulets and breaking his own sword when he begins these hurtful habits of self-indulgence.

The second way mature friends may infinitely aid

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youths of to-day is by helping them in the cultivation of self-control. This is what Benjamin Franklin in his homely philosophy would call "putting meal in the sack to make it stand upright"; what the business world calls "stiffening a man's backbone"; what we may call "giving substance to a youth's character."

In boyhood, during the spring floods, I used to watch a river overflow its banks and spread with damaging tides over acres of fertile farms. So swift was its current that all weak things bent and broke under its onrush. Only the strongest trees stood the awful test. It was inspiring to see the oaks and hickories endure the strain. When a great wave would roll against them bending them over for a time one would fear they were gone, but in a moment they would lift their heads, shake off the encumbering water like a living thing and stand up again as straight and fearless as sentinels.

Often have I watched floods of temptation sweep over a city. They come, as a rule, in the autumn, when the days shorten and the evenings grow long; when the frivolous and self-indulgent suggest excessive pastimes that rob youth of the choicest hours for self-culture and fasten habits that weaken the body and stupefy the soul, that nurture disobedience to parents and neglect of the church.

Right-minded youths of to-day really do not wish to yield to these temptations and they prefer to conserve their energies, to obey their parents and be true

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to the Saviour they have confessed, but the moment they begin to practice these things they find that society wants them only for what they can contribute to it; they discover that they are being left out of many parties and pleasant companies where the questionable pastimes they oppose are freely indulged. Their pride is touched and they suddenly feel very lonely! Ah! do we not know that they are in the flood tide of temptation? Will they endure like my oaks and hickories of long ago, or will they yield and be swept away like the tall weeds of the meadow? This hour of all others they need our help. If they win now the rest is easy; if they yield, then a lower level for the whole long life before them!

Happy those youths who have gathered strength in the time of peace; who have been surrounded by manly and womanly examples; who have heard it evermore asserted that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"; that though it costs the most in labor and self-denial, character is worth a thousand times more than flashy accomplishment; that to arouse worthy ambition toward emulation has greater reward in the end than the ability to arouse laughter for a moment; that to be master of yourself makes you master of every situation in which you will ever find yourself.

Recognizing the necessity of self-control in the face of danger, it is said Japan submits her young cadets to serious and nerve-trying tests. Among

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these is the mounting of a loaded cannon on a revolving frame in the center of the mess table. A long fuse is lighted and it is known that some time during the meal that cannon, whose mouth is on a level with the young officers' heads, will be discharged. With its load of death waiting only the moment of contact with the fire in the fast-burning fuse, the cannon points in turn to each man's head a hundred times during the evening. Not until they can stand this test unflinchingly are men counted ready for service.

With the same end in view, let us reverse the method, surrounding our youths not with dangerous temptations but with such examples of righteousness and self-control as shall strengthen them for all time, that they "may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."

Self-control must be cultivated in youth. Like many growing things, it flourishes and brings forth abundant harvests if planted early. If neglected until the midsummer of life it languishes and provides no strength. One readily confesses that difference in temperment makes the task hard or easy, yet all experience proves that self-control may be cultivated successfully by every life that determines to do it.

Surely Charles Kingsley was right when he said that "any man or woman in any age, under any circumstances, who will, can live the heroic life and exercise heroic influence." So I believe any man or

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woman who will can cultivate self-control until it becomes a dominating and helpful habit.

The formation of any habit by which we do things unconsciously requires a longer or a shorter period of conscious effort. That young woman who plays the piano so charmingly without seeming to even look at the keys—how many days and years of hard, mind-directed practice were put into her accomplishment? or that young man who so easily and swiftly runs the linotype machine in a downtown printing office—do you think for a moment that his present proficiency required no weeks and months when mind and will were centered on every movement of the fingers while they gathered their skill?

Good habits are not indigenous to the average youth. If he would have them they must be cultivated, and the sooner he becomes master of himself the sooner will he be able to direct his efforts in the gathering of every coveted virtue.

A few years ago a young man called at my home and asked to see me on very urgent business. I was amazed at the nature of his errand: he asked for money that he might go to an institution and be cured of the cigarette habit. I do not remember ever taking part in a more pathetic conversation. His imagination was vivid and his experiences had evidently been extensive.

“I am willing to provide the necessary funds,” I said at length, “but I will gladly provide twice

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as much to start you in some legitimate work if you will rise up in the strength of your own manhood and stop this thing that is so cursing your life."

"I stop it?" he cried. "I can no more stop smoking than I can stop breathing—I tell you the Devil has got me down. I try to stop, I throw away all my supplies, I resolve that never again shall the damnable stuff enter my nostrils, and before an hour is gone I will steal if necessary to get a new supply. I haven't any mind and I haven't any will. The brute in me is in control and I will have to have help from the outside."

Full well do I know that many a youth in every city is forming habits that will prove as great a curse as the cigarette habit was to this young man, habits that will weaken and stultify every faculty and send him halting and infirm to maturity and old age. In some it is the habit of giving full vent to envy and anger and the letting fly of cruel and heart-stinging words. In others it is the satisfying of fleshy appetites that are fast becoming abnormal and will soon begin to weaken both body and mind. Still others, to one or both of these are adding habits of laziness and disobedience to parents that are fitting them not for society but for the reformatory or perhaps the penitentiary.

If only it were possible to force upon the attention of such young people the example of the Great Teacher in his boyhood. After that memorable scene in the temple in Jerusalem, when the attention

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of the whole nation had been drawn to him, when he might have become conceited and refused to submit to parental restraint, he still returned to Nazareth and was subject unto his parents, growing in wisdom while he increased in stature and in favor with God and man.

We do not know the process of his cultivation. We may only infer it from the ripened fruits; for when Jesus emerged from the obscurity that had surrounded his youth he had such command of every faculty and such perfect control of himself that kings were amazed and rulers stood abashed before him. "Behold, the man!" cried one who found no fault in him. And we cry, "Behold him, indeed! A man without bad habits, a man weakened by no excesses, a man in perfect control of himself; surely such a man may well be the example for all men who shall come after."

O that young men and young women could know what those know who have reached maturity. How clean they would keep their lives, how free from hurtful habits, how eagerly they would strive to remain in perfect control of every faculty! Are you not moved when you see that only those who do these things have earthly happiness, only these lead normal lives, only these really help the world?

When a youth has mastered arithmetic all higher mathematics come easy. Let him neglect this preliminary work and algebra, geometry, trigonome-

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try and calculus prove a labyrinth through which he must be led as one blind and senseless. Let a youth approach maturity,—the work period of his life,—with no bad habits and complete master of himself, the world readily yields him fortune and a place.

Such a man or woman can say with the poet :

It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

He is like a Solomon assuming rule of the kingdom he has inherited; no man can now unfit him for it, no man can take it away; at least no man but himself.

Over against this glowing possibility how many men and women do we see reach maturity with the blight of intemperence thus early marring their lives! Already many are weakened by needless disease, many minds are muddled now from the mass of unwholesome reading and sight-seeing they have allowed themselves, many a once pure soul is smirched by evil-thinking that has all too often led to evil-acting, while a number so great as to appall the bravest heart reach manhood and womanhood already writhing in the meshes of that quintette of vices called dancing and card-playing and gambling and smoking and drinking, so much alike in their effects and tendencies that one is

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forced to believe they are all children of the same hideous mother.

Perhaps the last of these is the worst, although, so far as my own comfort is concerned, when carried to excess, as it so often is, I had as lief talk to a man befouled by whisky as to one befouled by tobacco, and I cannot but pity the pure, clean women who are forced to endure constant association with men who carry about evermore all the evil smells of a smokehouse.

But the blight of liquor is twofold—it weakens and brutalizes the body and it snuffs out the soul. The world says plainly, “No man weakened and stultified by liquor shall have a place in the larger activities of society,” and the Bible just as plainly declares “no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.” Have you forgotten, men, the eternal consequences of the sin with which you are trifling? which, by your vote sustaining the saloon, you are making it so hard for weaker men to avoid?

The story of John B. Gough is typical and not so unusual as to lack value as a warning example. He arrived in America from his English home as promising a young man as his age produced. He was gifted with voice and presence and a marvelous power to sway and influence men.

In the early years of his life in America he was tempted by companions to liquor and excess and at last reached manhood totally unfitted to assume

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its duties. In a single paragraph of his autobiography he tells the story of his start in sin. After the death of his mother he became separated from an only sister and soon found himself alone and penniless in New York, and this is the story of his fate:

I boarded in Grand Street at the time and soon after laid the foundation of many of my future sorrows. I possessed a tolerably good voice and sang pretty well, having also the faculty of imitation rather strongly developed and being well stocked with amusing stories, I was introduced into the society of thoughtless and dissipated young men, to whom my talents made me welcome. These companions were what is termed respectable, but they drank. I now began to attend the theaters frequently and felt ambitious of strutting my hour upon the stage. By slow but sure degrees I forgot the lessons of wisdom which my mother had taught me, lost all relish for the great truths of religion, neglected my devotions and considered an actor's situation to be the *ne plus ultra* of greatness.

From this start John B. Gough's fall was swift and absolute. He drifted from place to place, a shiftless, worthless drunkard. In an hour of prosperity a beautiful young girl had married him, but she soon died in childbirth from neglect and a broken heart. He tried to reform but, following their usual fiendish practices, the saloon-keepers would seek him out and tempt him to drink again. Excess was followed by delerium tremens and the poor wretch was face to face with death, when, as he staggered along the street one day, a man tapped him on the shoulder.

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I want to give the turning point in the life of John B. Gough in his own language, with the hope in my heart that the example of the individual worker who reached him may be full of suggestion for everyone who reads his story touching his own future attitude toward drinking men.

The month of October had nearly drawn to a close, and on its last Sunday evening I wandered out into the streets pondering, as well as I was able to do, for I was somewhat intoxicated, on my lone and friendless condition. My frame was much weakened by habitual indulgence in intoxicating liquors and little fitted to bear the cold of winter which had already begun to come on. But I had no means of protecting myself against the bitter blast, and as I anticipated my coming misery I staggered along, homeless, aimless and all but hopeless.

Some one tapped me on the shoulder. An unusual thing that to occur to me, for no one now cared to come in contact with the wretched, shabby-looking drunkard. I was a disgrace, "a living, walking disgrace." I could scarcely believe my senses when I turned and met a kind look; the thing was so unusual and so entirely unexpected that I questioned the reality of it, but so it was. It was the first touch of kindness which I had known for months, and simple and trifling as the circumstance may appear to many, it went right to my heart, and like the wing of an angel, troubled the waters in that stagnant pool of affection and made them once more reflect a little of the light of human love. The person who touched my shoulder was an entire stranger. I looked at him wondering what his business was with me. Regarding me very earnestly and apparently with much interest, he said:

"Mr. Gough, I believe."

"That is my name," I replied and was passing on.

"You have been drinking to-day," said the stranger in a

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kind voice which arrested my attention and quite dispelled any anger at what I might otherwise have considered interference in my affairs.

"Yes, sir," I replied, "I have."

"Why do you not sign the pledge?" was the next query.

I considered for a minute or two and then informed the strange friend who had so unexpectedly interested himself in my behalf that I had no hope of ever again becoming a sober man; that I was without a single friend in the world who cared for me or what became of me; that I fully expected to die very soon, I cared not how soon, or whether I died drunk or sober; and in fact, that I was in a condition of utter recklessness.

The stranger regarded me with a benevolent look, took me by the arm and asked me how I should like to be as I once was, respectable and esteemed, well clad and sitting, as I used to, in a place of worship, enabled to meet my friends as in old times and receive from them the pleasant nod of recognition as formerly—in fact, become a useful member of society.

"Oh," I replied, "I should like all those things first rate, but I have no expectation that such a thing will ever happen. Such a change cannot be possible."

"Only sign our pledge," remarked my friend, "and I will warrant that it shall be so; sign it and I will introduce you myself to good friends, who will feel an interest in your welfare and take pleasure in helping you to keep your good resolutions. Only, Mr. Gough, sign the pledge and all will be as I have said and more, too."

Oh, how pleasantly fell those words of kindness on my crushed and bruised heart! I had long been a stranger to feelings such as now awoke in my bosom. A chord had been touched which vibrated to the tones of love. Hope once more dawned and I began to think, strange as it appeared, that such things as my friend promised me might come to pass. On the instant I resolved to try at least.

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The rest of the glorious history of this remarkable man, who probably led more people to sign the temperance pledge than any other man who ever lived, is well known. It did not go easily with him for years. Several times he fell and once flagrantly broke the pledge, but he signed it again and rose to his work stronger than before. He gained control of himself at last, not only becoming a Christian himself but leading thousands to like resolution and service.

One word more of warning which he spoke in his maturity I would give. It will make its own pathetic appeal. Said he :

A man can never recover from the effects of such a severe experience, morally or physically. Lessons learned in such a school are not forgotten, impressions made in such a furnace of sin are permanent; the nature so warped in such crooked ways must retain in some degree the shape; lodgments are made by such horrible contacts and associations that nothing but the mighty spirit of God can eradicate.

Young man, I say to you, look back at the fire where I lay scorching,—at the bed of torture where the iron entered my soul; yes, look back at the past, standing, as I trust I do, under the arch of the bow, one base of which rests on the dark days and the other I hope on the sunny slopes of paradise,—I say to you, in view of the awful evil spreading around you, "Beware, tamper not with the accursed thing,—and may God forbid that you should ever suffer as I have suffered, or be called to fight such a battle as I have fought for body and soul."

In one of his choicest comedies (As You Like

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It) Shakspeare presents a strong old man who, in explanation of his power, is led to say:

For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood,
Nor did not, with unbashful forehead, woo,
The means of weakness and debility,
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly.

In these words the great poet has given us the only key to a strong and happy old age. If we would, as Job's friend promised him, "come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of grain cometh in its season," bearing our best and fully ripened fruit in the last years of our life, then must we guard well the years called youth and maturity. We must gain that control of the body that will make it the servant and not the master of the soul; we must submit to no temptation, however promising, that may finally put the ball and chain of destructive habit upon our life. God grant that no soul who reads this page will ever be obliged to say as Macbeth was, when life's sun is near its setting:

My way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath,
Which the poor heart would feign deny, but dare not.

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Over against this may we all so live, so control the life and so serve God and man that when our summons comes to join the innumerable caravan we may without irreverence or falsehood take the words of the great apostle as our own and say:

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

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CHAPTER SEVEN

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY FORGETTING

In the intellectual world every man is a king. As one in authority his soul says to one servant, go! and he goeth; to another, come! and he cometh. If his servants are not other human beings they are equally capable of ministering to the soul's necessities and of contributing to its happiness. I speak of the servants called Conception, Thought, Memory. At the direction of the soul these servants hurry forth everywhither and bring in from their journeyings things new and old for the enrichment of their royal master.

Not least among these helpers is the servant called memory. Without her man would remain a helpless infant. She keeps an unfailing record of the past. The lessons of yesterday would be valueless to the life did not memory treasure them up in her stout granary and hold them ready for delivery on the slightest intimation of her king. Learning would be impossible without the constant aid of this faithful agent. Likewise choice would have to be given up, for without memory there could

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be no comparison. Man's happiness would be largely curtailed if memory refused to bring to the mind the experiences and delights of the past.

But valuable as is this servant of the soul, she sometimes serves man all too well. The moment memory, by her faithful treasuring up of past sorrows, causes her master to become downhearted and depressed; the moment she causes him to stop all effort, and rely upon past achievements for present glory; the moment, by a detailed review of the words and actions of others which one has looked upon as an injury, she causes the heart to refuse forgiveness,—that moment does memory cease to be a help and becomes a hinderance to man's progress. "Forgiveness," said the ancients, "is better than revenge."

If it is well to cultivate the power of memory it is also well to bring to perfection the power of forgetting. When Simonides offered to teach Themistocles the art of memory he answered, "Oh, rather teach me the art of forgetting: for I often remember what I would not and cannot forget what I would."

Coleridge held that knowledge is indestructible, that once entering the mind it would ever remain there; and from this he derived a strong argument for future retribution. Ancient thinkers conceived of the mind as a kind of plaque over the face of which was spread a thin coating of soft wax. By the use of a stylus this wax was written over with

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some fact which it was desired should be held in remembrance, and then all was allowed to harden, thus making a practically indestructible record of the fact inscribed. In some such way, said they, the mind is impressed with whatsoever comes before it and the record becomes permanent.

Leaving aside the possibility of the truth of such an hypothesis, we are aware that, whether or not it is possible to obliterate absolutely from the mind those things which have come before it, we can at least so put from us hurtful memories that they shall not hinder our advancement; and this becomes the imperative duty of every man and woman who would advance in Christian culture.

By many who have tried it, it has been found most helpful to forget experiences that tend to hinder present progress in differing degrees. Some are to be as nearly obliterated from the mind as possible, others are to be so forgotten that their remembrance will only impel the mind to avoid them, while still others are to be so forgotten that they shall not be made a ground for present inactivity.

In the first class;—those experiences of the past which are to be put entirely from one and never for a moment entertained when by any means they are brought before the mind,—we must place first, all injuries, real or supposed, that may have been done us by others. There is perhaps no one thing that so puts an end to all growth of the soul

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as the cherishing of these memories. The splendid maple tree that has for so many years befriended a household with shelter and shade one day receives a great gash in its side from a member of the very household it has so long benefited. As if shelter and shade were not enough, it must now give of its very life's blood that the taste of a thoughtless boy for maple syrup may be favored. Does the tree now, because of this real injury from one it has ever benefited, refuse longer to give shade and shelter from the storm? Does it treasure the memory of that old wound, shriveling up its leaves and refusing the next spring to bring forth foliage? Not at all. Such actions are never seen in nature. It is only among men and women, who have been so highly favored of God, who are twice as far above the tree as the tree is above the stone, that such actions are found. No matter if God has forgiven them more a thousand times than any grievance they can possibly have against a neighbor, they will still go on grieving him and hindering the advance of themselves and the community while they refuse to forget what in all probability is nothing at all if fully known, or at most, insignificant when the growth of the soul is being considered.

As the barbarous custom of the Flathead Indians of binding a board upon the head of their infants hindered the proper development of that member and the advance of intellectual life, so the binding upon the soul, by the power of memory,

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of so-called injuries from others, hinders the growth and full development of what is the very center of man's being. Forget the things which are behind and reach forward to the things which are before. Will you stay behind and gather weeds when by going forward you may gather roses? Are you willing to remain where you are, cherish all your old memories, eating husks and wasting to a skeleton, or will you cast those old concerns from you, advance to your proper place in the world, grow to be a broad, generous, robust Christian and member of society, and in the kingdom of God partake of a banquet which the Father will gladly prepare?

Second. One who would progress must put away from the mind all memories of self when those memories urge us to forsake every other interest that self may be advanced. A man had better be a snail than be utterly selfish if he wishes to advance. The selfish man is not only chained to a thousand unseen anchors behind but he is pushed back by a solid mountain of opposition on the part of those in front to whom he is refusing to do his duty. The man who is able to forget himself and work for others realizes at last that during this period of self-suspension he has been rushed forward by those he has endeavored to serve to a point far beyond his thought or expectation. Forgetting themselves at El Caney during the Cuban War, Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders made

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their names immortal while trying to serve their country. Forgetting themselves, eight men who had never been heard of before outside of their immediate circle of friends floated on the old collier Merrimac to a position in the estimation of the world they could never by any means have attained were they trying to serve themselves.

A certain man of old, about to go from his home on a long journey, called one of his servants to him and gave him two talents without any instructions as to what he should do with the money. He might naturally have thought at once of himself. "This money will buy me many pleasures. It is hardly large enough to put into any speculations, besides my lord may have meant for me to use it in pushing myself forward, in adding to my own happiness." But instead of this he forgot about himself entirely. He took these two talents, small as the amount was, and put them to the exchangers. Little by little they grew until, when the lord of that servant finally did come back, the money had been doubled. The master at once recognized his servant's faithfulness. He realized that he had been guarding his master's interests instead of his own, and the words came gladly, "Thou hast been faithful to thy trust, faithful in looking after the welfare of others, faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

"Of all that have tried the selfish experiment,"

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says Dr. Johnson, "let one come forth and say he has succeeded. He that has made gold his idol, has it satisfied him? He that has toiled in the fields of ambition, has he been repaid? He that has ransacked every theater of sensual enjoyment, is he content? Can any answer in the affirmative? Not one! And when his conscience shall ask him, and ask him it will, 'Where are the hungry to whom you gave meat, the thirsty to whom you gave drink, the stranger whom you sheltered, the sick whom ye ministered unto,' how will he feel when he must answer, 'I have done none of those things—I thought only of myself.'?"

As the heart grows more public-spirited it grows in grace. As a man forgets self and thinks of serving others will his whole nature expand and himself become beloved and honored by all who know him.

A second class of memories which must be forgotten if we would progress are memories of our sufferings and sorrows. A modern French author says:

Feeble natures live in griefs instead of changing them into the apothegms of experience. They saturate themselves with them and use them to retrace their steps daily into past misfortunes. To forget is the grand secret of strong and creative natures—to forget as nature does, who never regards herself as *passé*, but recommences every hour the mysteries of her indefatigable births.

But these memories are not to be forgotten as

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the first class—utterly cast out from the life—but rather forgotten as sources of depression and sadness. The soul bound down by weight of woe can do little in winning new victories. It is as though one would swim to a distant shore with a millstone about his neck. Sorrow and suffering are sent to us not to hinder us but to help us if we but rightly comprehend them. They are as balloons to lift us upward, not millstones to drag us down.

Says Mrs. Campbell, that gracious soul in "Stepping Heavenward," who had lost her husband and all her family and was herself an invalid: "Husband, family, friends are indeed links in a chain by which we are bound to God, but as these links are one after another removed the chain becomes shorter and we come closer to God, until at last nothing intervenes and we are ourselves united directly to him."

If this be the office of our sufferings and our sorrows why should we allow them to make us sad? Joy should be the only feeling found in the heart approaching nearer and nearer to God. Joy and progress are firm friends, and they love each other's company. The people who are the most truly advancing are the people on whose faces a smile is most often seen. If then sorrow is depressing you and making dark a world that is bright to others, the admonition of Paul is for you. "Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forth to the things which are before"—larger growth in

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spiritual things, richer experiences in the Christian life, higher joys in the life that is to come; remembering these things, "press on toward the goal unto the prize."

Experience proves the truth of the contention of Dr. Edgar:

The city of God could ill spare this river of forgetfulness. Indeed, it is only in the city of God that it flows in crystal purity and can be drunk without danger. There are muddy streams which ingenuity provides, intoxicants which rob mankind through the senses of their memory; but the waking-time comes and the furies are afoot once more. In the Lethe of God, on the contrary, we may drink and forget a painful, imperfect past, so far as this would keep us from a nobler future.

Still another class of experiences must be forgotten in still another way as we go from the less to the greater; I speak of those which are to be so forgotten that their only recurrence will impel the mind to avoid them.

Among them may be classed past failures, evil companionships and past pleasures and indulgences that are ever inviting us back. In the "Autobiography of a Criminal" that appeared recently in one of our prominent religious journals, the author tells us of many times when through the intercession of friends or by his own efforts he had straightened up and tried to start a new life, he could get along well until by some chance he fell in

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with old companions; then everything was thrown over and he sank down lower than before.

Past failures, too, stand like a "Giant's Causeway" before many capable men and women. Although happening in the past they in some way shift their position to the present and stand as impassable barriers to effort or success. And yet past failures may argue more for future success than for future failure. We do not forget that Demosthenes was hissed from the stage when he first began to speak. It seemed like failure, but it was the cause of his success. Nearly every writer of any prominence had his first manuscripts returned unused by publishers. Mr. Moody was strongly advised not to try to speak in public but to be content with being a respectful hearer of others.

I join Dr. W. J. Dawson in saying: "The courage of forgetfulness is not only an act of faith, it is the one source of moral progress. We must be perpetually cutting ourselves free from the past if we are to push on to a larger and better future. The artist forgets his early failures, the author his first grotesque experiments in literature, and the saint his first stumbling steps for the same reason, a reason which is imperative, that no progress is possible to a mind clogged by the weight of past errors."

The man, therefore, who so cherishes the memory of past failures as to be hindered in his progress

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is being hindered by the very things that have urged other men onward. He will be more careful at this point next time, will guard small leakages, small mistakes, small losses which, although small, often make the difference between success and failure. In seeming failure "Moses grew into one of the princeliest of men, while Paul in the humble trade of tentmaker reached the sublime in character and service."

Headley says of General Ulysses S. Grant: "A strong man by nature, he had to learn by failures how to win ultimate success. We find that both he and Sherman, who at the close of the war stood up as our foremost generals, came very near being removed from command for their mistakes, or at least want of success." Abraham Lincoln was defeated when he first ran for the Legislature. The American Revolution, gloriously successful as it was at the last, began in ignominious defeat.

Time was when Christianity itself seemed already passed into the shades of oblivion. Its founder was nailed to a cross, its early adherents were dispersed, those who dared to advocate its principles laid themselves liable to instant death, but that early defeat was quickly forgotten when the risen Christ appeared before them. What, has he power over the grave? Can strong sepulcher and Roman guard not hold the body of the Lord? Surely then his spirit is free to go whithersoever it wills. So, taking heart, those early fathers gave

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root to the seed, gave permanence to the Christianity that blesses the world to-day. If the past has held only failures for you, forget the past, look not mournfully into a time that comes not back again, but, taking advantage of the glorious present and the auspicious future, create success for yourself and be an inspiring example to others.

A fourth class of memories that must be forgotten before any large progress can attend our efforts are those successes which, while they need not be entirely obliterated from the mind, must not be relied upon for present advancement or given as an excuse for present inactivity.

The man who in present idleness is all the while dilating on what he has done in the past soon loses the respect and homage of his associates. A truly great man never does such a thing or one who has intentionally done a really great service. No more notable or timely illustration of this truth could be named than that of Assistant Naval Constructor Hobson in the Cuban War. His heroic exploit at the mouth of Santiago Bay gave him the homage of the world and entitled him and his seven brave men to retirement from active service, but instead of choosing such an alternative and relying upon past achievement, Hobson went right on faithfully discharging the duties of his subordinate office and displayed no anxiety about the conferment of honors by the government. The man who has done one brave deed is the man best prepared to do

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others. So the man who has attained one success should not rely upon that success, but forgetting those things which are behind press forward to more and larger successes.

Reliance upon conditions of birth is also fatal to progress. The history of any generation in free America bears full record to this well-known truth. Grateful as are the blessings an ample purse may supply, one had better be born a pauper than a millionaire if he desires to take a place in the world. It has been decreed that effort alone will bring a man into prominence. All those reared in the cradle of luxury are averse to effort. Many of them have been educated to consider it degrading, and as a consequence they are doomed to eat, drink and be miserable and to-morrow die and be forgotten. If birth has given you noble ancestry or wealth, have a care lest your blessings entangle your feet as a net and forbid your going forward in the estimation of God and the world.

In the ancient times God spake by the mouth of his prophet to the children of Israel: "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing." In the march of man from Eden to the millennium the old things must ever be superseded by the new and for present necessity the new will ever be superior to the old. Therefore it is right that the old shall be forgotten. Old ways of life, old methods of work, old ideas that are too narrow for to-day, and new

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ways, methods, ideas substituted that will do most to promote the advancement of the race.

The case of two college professors may well illustrate this contention: The one is crowded full of some other man's thoughts that he is intending to recite, parrotlike, to his classes. He remembers the past only. The other has gone into his laboratory or into his library and has discovered something new. When he steps before his class it is to give them something in vital touch with the present, something that lives and breathes and grows. It has been well said, "One is a taskmaster, the other an inspiration."

Travel by foot or horse was well enough perhaps before the interests of man became so complex, before families became so widely separated, but with the advance of interests came the demand for some new methods of locomotion and Yankee ingenuity and skill responded with steamboat and locomotive. The hand loom furnished sufficient clothing for the members of a single household but when others, occupied by other interests, called upon their neighbor for cloth he was compelled to enlarge his loom and run it by steam power. Formerly it was only necessary to announce a service and open the church door and an audience would quickly fill the building; to-day doing this alone the preacher is rewarded with empty seats. "Old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." The nation, the individual, the church that fails to recognize and

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act upon this principle is standing still and will stand still until it awakens to the demands of the present.

The command is imperative. Forget those things which are behind. All past failures, all past mistakes, all past injuries, all past experiences, all past methods that tend to hold us back, and, reaching forth to those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize.

Both the method and the object of Paul's activity are to be commended: "It is essential to enthusiasm," says an able student, "to have our action unified into a single glorious purpose. Hence Paul could say, 'One thing I do.' He would not allow the past to distract him from proper concentration. One purpose of perfection dominated his whole life and conduct. Hence his draughts of the Lethean river fitted him for the sublime and single purpose of attaining the ideal of Christ. The soul who refuses to be distracted by the past and sets himself steadily to fulfill the mission God has given him will find in his concentration the secret of power."

Best of all about Paul's endeavor was the glorious prize he sought: "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." If the end does not justify the means it often suggests and consecrates them. The man who is ready to make growing into the likeness of Christ the sublime goal of his life will find all work glorified and all time precious. He will forget

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all that hinders his progress, he will remember all that helps. To cherish hatred and envy and revenge is to sink downward toward a demon; to forgive and forget and serve is to rise upward toward God. Which way are you going? There are only two.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY REMEMBERING

After half a lifetime of wise observation and study Hamilton W. Mabie said, "The past is gone and cannot now be altered; the present is largely governed by what we were in the past; only the future is really in our control."

As we move out into this mysterious and uncertain period we should do so with the full exercise of every faculty we possess. The true man and woman will approach the future in the spirit of the old maxim:

Work as though you would live forever;
Live as though you would die to-morrow.

For all who go forward in this spirit the future holds only the richest successes.

We must remember that however dim and uncertain the future may look to us to-day, when it finally becomes "the present" it will be very much like the time through which we are now passing. It will call for sacrifice, it will call for altruism, it will call for intense activity. Man will no more be

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permitted to stand still in the next decade than he is in this. The utopian haze that enshrouds the future largely vanishes as we approach it and present anticipations become realities only when the most strenuous effort is put forth during the days that intervene. Hence the possessions we greatly desire in the future will come to us only if we now set and keep in motion forces known to be productive of them.

The tiller of the soil, wishing a crop of corn in the autumn, appreciates the necessity of starting in the springtime with the right materials and of expending a certain amount of labor during all the intervening period. A picture is in his mind, not visible to the uninitiated. Upon mental canvas he spreads materials we call earth, seed, rain, sun, human labor, and a rich picture of a full granary rewards him. But that picture becomes a reality not because the future becomes the present, but because during the time that intervenes every detail of the first ideal is carried out; ground is prepared, seed is sown, rain falls, sun shines, labor is expended. As we perfect the roseate-hued canvas of our future let it be done with some such appreciation as marks the course of these honest sons of toil.

If man does not live by bread alone, neither does he progress by the exercise of one power alone. Powers of body, mind and spirit are set in motion and each one does a share. Of the powers of the

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mind, conception, thought, imagination do much, but memory performs a full, if not a lion's, share. It is only because of her that conception, thought, imagination, possess any value for the soul. As grains of sand become valuable to the builder of a palace only when millions of them have been gathered together, so thoughts, conceptions, imaginations, often microscopic in proportion, become valuable to the soul only when memory gathers them together and presents them in large numbers and in their true perspective.

But how shall memory, which is denied any contact with the future, which is doomed to content herself with an unchangeable past which comes not back again, assist man in progressing? If this question is ever put it is before serious thought has had a chance to give her weighty answers. Memory is as essential to man's progress as wind to the sailboat, as steam to the locomotive, as electricity or gas to our motor cars.

Like a mighty engine, memory pushes man forward by reminding him of past failures and the shortness of time. Like a powerful dynamo, she pulls him forward by reminding him of what other men have accomplished and of how pleasant it is to have material substance for the needs of the passing hours; as a coy maiden, she coaxes him onward with the recital of honors conferred upon others for bravery and service; as a frightful witch, she scares him into activity by reminding him of the

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awful doom of the slothful servant. Every day, every hour, does memory come in to assist man in his passing from the less to the greater. However faulty the memory may prove to be as touching dates and names, she never fails in accurately bringing before the soul those thoughts and experiences that effect man's progress. The causes of one failure are never forgotten, the attendants of one success are readily recalled when another is promising.

Without controversy man's progress in life would be more rapid if he followed the instructions of John the Divine to the Church of Ephesus. "Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works."¹

With this suggestion the memory carries us, through the inspired page, back to the days of man's creation and we see him fresh from the hand of his Maker, a magnificent specimen in body, mind and soul, capable of all things high and noble. Having been brought to the highest perfection of animal creation, man stood as a perfect engine stands, waiting for the introduction of steam. Helpless now, it will become a giant then. So man, in all the perfection of form and feature, waited the in-breathing of the breath of life. With that divine breath there came into him knowledge, righteousness and true holiness; all attributes of God himself. When it pleased God to make man after his own

¹Rev. 2: 5.

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image it would only be following the usual course for him to make the image perfect—an exact reproduction, in finite proportion, of the perfection of God himself. Behold thy natural and federal head springing forth, a Hercules, from the hand of God! In his first estate Shakspeare's picture is a true one, "What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"

Useless now your efforts to blot out the picture. Faithful memory cherishes it as one of her rightful possessions. Instead of endeavoring to blot it out, bring forth rich pigments and retouch the faded canvas; make bright every feature that has become dimmed and gaze with yearning eye upon that perfection which, if never again fully attainable, is at least nearly approachable. "Remember therefore whence thou art fallen."

"Repent," comes the word of the prophet, "repent and do the first works." The preliminary work—the righting yourself with God—in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness and now, with effort continuous, unabating, you may go on toward perfection during the days that remain to you in this life. Touching indeed the moan of the poet in Hyperion's pages:

Alas! it is not till time, with reckless hand, has torn out half the leaves from the Book of Human Life to light the

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fires of passion from day to day that man begins to see that the leaves which remain are few in number.

With equal concern we cry, haste you, man and woman of the world. That picture of one-time perfection held before your wondering soul by memory's power is sent of God to rouse you from your state of self-satisfied inaction to one of striving to regain what once was yours. The wildest flights of quick imagination will fail utterly to produce a picture that will draw you from before as this splendid production of memory pushes you from behind. The one is man-made, tinged with all his weakness and imperfections; the other is of God, the infinite Father of all; to whom all colors of light and shade are as familiar as the noonday sun and who, with consummate skill, has blended all in the création of a perfect man. "Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works."

The wisdom of the Preacher led him in days now three thousand years ago to yearn over the lives of boys and girls and to admonish them in words of love: "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth."¹

"O wad some power the giftie gie us" to see in youth what present practices will yield by the time old age is upon us, to see that if we remember our Creator in the days of our youth he will remember

¹Eccl. 12: 1.

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us in the days of our maturity. It is the bane of the age that thoughts and scenes of the world so quickly discolor and finally well nigh blot out the pure teachings of youthful days. The fault lies less with the child than with the parent. To remain intact, against all the crowding influences of the world, instruction by word and example must be straightforward and unfaltering. It is utterly useless to spend three or four hours on Sunday instructing our children to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy if the next hour we desecrate it ourselves. That one act of ours will have more of an influence upon the child's life than the instruction of a whole afternoon. Neither is it fruitful of good to instruct children concerning God and the Christ-life in a halting, half-critical, plainly doubting sort of way. The world's lessons are delivered from the shoulder. They are planted with the force and positiveness of an armor-piercing shell. If Christian truth is to strike, if children are to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, lessons concerning him must be given with the same positiveness and force. Let the instructors do their work right and the results will be far more satisfactory to teacher, taught and God.

Always keeping before the mind the memory of our Creator has a wonderful effect upon our lives. It is the same effect that is produced upon the statue by the sculptor always keeping his eye upon his model. The perfections of that model are sure

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to be found in more or less degree in the statue thus molded.

So faithful is memory that even when the eye is withdrawn from the model for a moment every line, every curve still stand before the mind in exact proportion. So true does this become in the case of the artist that we are not surprised to hear Doré tell us that "after driving through Windsor Park he could recall every tree he had passed and draw every shrub from memory." Once get the image of his Creator firmly fixed in the heart and mind of the child and memory, that truest servant of progress, will keep it there, ever urging her master to imitate the divine perfection.

Nothing can be remembered that has never passed through the mind; hence, if the youth is to remember his Creator, a clear cut, positive, perfectly drawn picture of this Creator must be given him by his instructors. This perfect picture of God comes to older minds from experience, from nature, from the inspired Word, from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. When each has added its part the picture is ready to be transferred to others who cannot see so fully or so well. Small fears need be entertained for the children when parents and instructors give them true conceptions, by word and by example, of God and his law.

No man or woman lives to-day who does not have large cause for remembering, with gratitude, past blessings and, with the vast majority of us, these

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have been so many as to make their coming resemble a stream flowing from a never failing fountain.

These memories assist progress in two ways. First, when, like Ariel, we remember "from what torment we have been freed" we are gladly willing to go on serving our Master so long as he can use us, and with every exertion, short of violence, we become more strong. The binding torture of cloven pine tree or imprisonment for twelve long winters in the knotty entrails of some giant oak are tortures light indeed compared with those from which many men have been released by God. The awful sense of flagrant sin from which so many have been freed surely puts them under lasting obligations to do God's will so long as he honors them with his directions. Lost souls in purgatory cannot be more wretched than the man awakened to a sense of his guilt in the sight of a righteous God. When, in the unrivaled exercise of his mercy, God makes provision for his release, such a soul must ever profit from a memory of that from which he has been freed and be glad to serve his Saviour all his days.

Others from an evil imagination, from an unruly temper, from bodily pain or weakness have been set free by the generous hand of the Father God and such release should make them willing servants of Immanuel. Unlike the labor of the slave which deforms and stultifies, work for God ennobles and makes strong. The meanest service "in his name"

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adds bone and sinew to the spirit's life. Let him therefore who would progress remember past blessings and this in turn will lead to clear remembrance of him who gave them, whom to serve is in itself unrivaled blessing.

The second part of this same benefit lies in the remembrance that this same God has other blessings in reserve and that, after the first great free favor of loving us when we were in rebellion, blessings have a strict relationship to the worthiness of the receiver. The more we make ourselves worthy of the blessings of God the more will he fully and gladly bestow. For Caliban, Prospero had only further punishments because of his unworthiness, while for Ariel, the dainty sprite that served him well, he had increasing commendation and final liberty. It is the duty of every man and an imperative necessity for everyone who would progress to make himself worthy of the smile of God. His physical being should be made strong and beautiful that it may be made meet for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. His mental powers should be brought to the highest development possible to the man that he may be the better able to understand God's will as he has made it known in nature, experience and the written Word, while the soul of man which looks upon a kingdom unknown to eye or mind must, in the exercise of worship and meditation, draw near the great divine Example.

It is to choice lives made more beautiful and

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perfect by human effort that God delights to come and pour out such a blessing that man is unable to contain it all. After years of struggle Paul found himself able to keep his body under, and immediately his great mind and soul strode forward in wisdom and experience until he became an intellectual and spiritual giant. George Müller, the patriarch of Bristol, had in youth an almost uncontrollable tendency to flagrant sin but, becoming convinced that God had a work for him to do, he began the long struggle of making himself a fitter servant, and no man of the last century was more blessed than he. If it is important to trust in God it is just as important to keep your powder dry! God blesses man's efforts to help himself. If you would become stronger than you are to-day make yourself more worthy of God's blessing, a work that is largely in your own hands, and he will gladly grant you larger and richer blessings, a work that is entirely in his hands.

In his march toward success the average man will be largely benefited by remembering his parents and friends. He owes them so much that to forget them is to sear the emotions as with a hot iron and render them stiff and inactive. So important in the sight of God is the remembering with honor our parents, that it is the only commandment in the decalogue to which he attached a promise. The man who deliberately forgets or dishonors his parents has, as it were, let out a part of his life-

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blood that gives him strength for his duties. He has cut loose from a part of his inheritance that is not less than capital stock with which he is to earn his livelihood. He has himself severed his branch from the vine and heart and soul decay is the only thing possible for him as he goes on through the world.

Because of his myriad pressing duties as the chief executive of a great nation, the people would have excused President McKinley from making repeated journeys to the bedside of his sick mother, at least until the last hours had come, and he would have retained the same high place in their affections, but his great heart, seeking not the plaudits of a nation but loving that saintly mother with a true son's devotion, he, time after time, left his seat at Washington—a place higher than any throne in the world—and hastened with the speed of the wind to be with her and give her some word of comfort and cheer during her last days on earth. Yes, in view of his position and its pressing duties, we would have excused him from making so many visits but, doing as he did, President McKinley advanced himself in the estimation of the American people a hundredfold. Not only did he grant her an occasional visit but every single day during a long period of years that son sent some word to his loving mother. A letter, a message, some way, no matter how greatly pressed by affairs of state, this noble son sent some evidence of his love to

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the one who bore him. Tell me not that when people become great they often do such things! Only the people who do such things from the heart ever become great!

A full remembrance of parents, the great services they have done us, the sacrifices they have made for us, the love they bear us, keeps alive a fire in our souls that gives us power. Allow that fire to die down and man becomes more and more hardened, he ceases to remember wife, children, home, friends, and becomes a selfish, crabbed, hard-shelled egotist who is doomed to die in the confines of the very shell his faithless life has bound upon him. In their care for the aged, for the fathers and mothers of the tribe, the American Indians furnish a worthy lesson. Even the poorest and lowest of the Chinese give the place of honor both at table and upon the resting benches to those advanced in age.

The man with a warm heart toward those who bore him, who cared for him before he became able to care for himself, who love him more than they love their own selves, has a fire burning within that will keep him warm toward all mankind, and only those who have such a love does mankind urge to the front.

You see then how large a part memory has in man's progress and as yet we have looked at but few instances. No stride forward but has its complement in the past and the past is brought before us

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by memory alone. It is as though man had a great treasury into which he could put his hand at pleasure and take out that which would help him forward. Memories of failures come to make us more careful in the future. Memories of sins drive us to righteousness, memories of blessings and of where they came from, memories of what other men by human effort have accomplished, memories of lessons learned in the school of experience, memories of parents, memories of friends, all so much gold that will buy our passage on the railway called Industry to the city called Success.

Come, then, take passage. Thousands are going and you should be among them. Lack of effort means lack of reward. By mere chance present inaction may yield present comfort, but present activity will yield riches and honor both present and future. Open the doors of ready memory and take out those thoughts, conceptions, imaginations, experiences that you have been all the years of your life gathering; lay them out before you. They will instantly become chart and compass, making plain the way into the days called future. Far better meet these days halfway by having something marked out for each one of them than be compelled to drag through their lonesome hours with nothing to do that makes for more strength and a higher place in the world.

Take advantage of this heaven-born helper. She longs to serve thee and but waits thy call. Bid her

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bring forth the richest pearls of her storehouse and, touched by the smile of God, let them light thy pathway into lands unknown. Each shore explored will increase your knowledge of the world we live in, each victory new will add its trophies to the sum until at last, allotted time expiring, enriched by service and made strong by love, thy Father, Maker, God, will call thee home.

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CHAPTER NINE

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY THOUGHT AND MEDITATION

In this workaday age, when rapid and unceasing action seems to be the only thing that will meet the demand, a slight seems to have been thrown upon the powers of thought and meditation as elements in man's progress. To the extent that this is true man is injuring himself. It was never intended that the body should supersede the mind, and the man who arbitrarily inverts the natural order is sure to lose heavily.

Isaac Watts, the sweet singer of Christian hymns, translating the Lyrics of Horace, strikes firmly upon the truth when he sings:

Were I so tall to reach the pole,
Or grasp the ocean with my span,
I must be measured by my soul;
The mind's the standard of the man.

Daniel Webster, at the laying of the corner stone of Bunker Hill Monument, standing in the midst of so much marble and bronze that must be handled by physical power, said in his notable address,

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“Mind is the great lever of all things: human thought is the process by which human ends are ultimately answered.” Ovid, in the early dawn of our larger knowledge, saw and said, “It is the mind that makes the man, and our vigor is in our immortal soul.”

As well try, by building bonfires, to make the night brighter than the day as to make the body of more value than the mind in the process of advancement. A man of three hundred pounds weight is as quickly forgotten as a man of one hundred pounds, but the man of three times the mental power is remembered long after his weaker brother has been forgotten.

In our study of aids to human progress it is therefore imperative that we give consideration to the powers of the mind called Thought and Meditation, for to neglect them would be to neglect steam and electricity that we might consider wind and horse power.

Behold how like the mind is electricity. See that boat yonder filled with happy people riding the water like a swan. Not a sail to the wind, not an oar in the water, yet going swiftly and silently to its goal. How is it propelled? Electricity!

Behold that great man going straight toward the goal called Success. No showy effects, no long list of counselors, no bolstering up by friends. How is he propelled? Mind!

That was a profoundly significant retort made by

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the great painter when asked by the youth what he mixed his paints with. "With brains, sir," said he, "with brains." Utensils, equipment, materials are nothing compared with the human brain that is behind them all.

To think is to exercise the mind actively, especially toward new ideas; to meditate is to exercise the mind actively in the consideration of ideas already possessed. To think is to exercise the mind in a straight line, to meditate is to exercise the mind in a circle.

Thought is the pioneer who discovers new territory; meditation is the civilian who settles and enriches it. Thought discovers new truth; meditation enlarges, classifies and labels this truth to make it of value to the life. Both are necessary to permanent progress, either religious or material. Let us fortify the position, first with reference to the necessity of thought.

I. You desire to occupy new territory which for convenience we may call "Success." This determined upon, you are led to see that action is necessary. What will you do? Will you first rush in yourself, all unprepared and unfamiliar with conditions that you will find there, or will you send ahead some trusty agent who shall explore the new territory, discover its boundaries, its productiveness, discovering what will be required of you when you come?

Moses, the leader of Israel, believed this to be the

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best plan and so sent spies to the land of Canaan. They were to work quietly, studying both the land and its people; the crops, the water supply, the places of danger and the places of safety. They were to study the food supply, the roadways, the defenses of the walled cities. When all had been discovered they returned and laid before the great leader a mass of facts that instantly familiarized him with the new country and effected his whole plan of campaign.

Eighty years ago our fathers in Pennsylvania and Ohio thought this the best plan and sent agents into Illinois and Iowa to discover what manner of states they were. When the forerunners returned telling of timberland and rolling prairies, of abundant moisture and favorable climatic conditions, they soon went on themselves fully equipped and prepared to occupy the new country, bring it into subjection and force it to yield them both sustenance and fortune. So every wise man desiring to occupy the territory called "Success" will send forth a trusty agent to explore the land and come and report to him conditions.

Of all possible agents, Thought is the most efficient. High walls and iron gates are no impediment to his going. Into every city we wish to occupy he goes and explores. He enters the city called art and comes back to tell man if he would occupy that city he must have a trained eye and nimble fingers and a perfect knowledge of form and color.

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He enters the city called letters and returns to inform man that if he would take that city he must have a ready mind and a tireless eye, a sympathy for historic fact, for rime and meter. He enters the city called science and returns to inform his master that to occupy that city he must have the eye of the microscope and the telescope; that he must be able to break open rocks and read history that was written by God centuries before the present age; must be able to hear sounds that were uttered before the voices of that heavenly host sang peace on earth good will to men; must be able, from fragment of bone or footprint in the clay, to reconstruct the whole body of giant whale or mammoth. Apprised of these requirements, man is doubly wise and now sets about preparing himself for the larger activities upon which he is to enter.

Just as a general who has sent spies into the territory he determines to capture has the advantage of the one who has not, so the man who has sent forward his thoughts into the new realms he wishes to occupy has the advantage over his less active neighbor.

This being true, it follows that the thinker must ever be the man of power. One man who wishes to move a stove weighing one thousand pounds, knowing that it is too heavy for him to move alone, goes for four neighbors to help him. Another man has a stove of similar weight to move. He, too, feels that he cannot move it alone, but he stops and

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thinks. In a moment we see him approaching with fulcrum and lever and the next moment the stove is moved! For all practical purposes such a man is five times as powerful as his thoughtless brother.

To the man who thinks, the future becomes real weeks and months before the actual day approaches. To his keen mind there appears a picture of conditions on that future day very much like what the reality will prove to be. He weighs influences that will have a bearing, takes every known element into consideration, and then he does a wiser thing yet; he allows a certain amount for unknown elements—something for the unusual, and the result is he is seldom surprised and meets each oncoming day as an old friend.

A tourist stood one day at the entrance to the Cave of the Winds on Williams Mountain in Colorado. He had heard of the cave many times. Through stones and earth and every obstruction he pushed his mind until there stretched out before him long avenues, deep gorges, high domes, glistening stalactites. When he went in, it was to say, Surely I have been here before. These avenues and arches, these glistening domes and sounding caves seem like old friends.

So it will ever be with the man who thinks. He will rarely be taken unawares. Forewarned by careful thought, he is fully armed. The man who has sent his servant called Thought into the new fields he wishes to occupy has time and opportunity

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to prepare for their requirements and so goes to them as their master and not as their slave.

My appeal, then, to all who read these words is, think! think! think! Do you wish to become wiser? think! Would you be stronger? think! Would you become a better Christian? think! Think not alone on the problems of daily life: think on the deep things of God and the measureless possibilities of the human soul. Think not only of man's need; think more of God's abundant provision. All life will grow sweeter and richer.

II. The work of the pioneer would be of little value if it were not followed at once by the settler. New thought must be re-thought many times before it shall attain its maximum value. The first thought is the rough proof of the manuscript which must be gone over and corrected—perhaps supplanted entirely—before the article is ready for the press.

But without the first thought there will be no second thought, hence thought must ever precede meditation. Thought brings advancement in relative position; meditation brings solidity and certainty. If to think at all is valuable, to think much is priceless.

Meditation is a council called to consider weighty problems. All the powers of the mind are summoned: Conception, Memory, Imagination.

Conception lays hold upon and makes to the council a plain statement of the case. Memory then

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speaks out and introduces expert testimony as to what has been the experiences of the past with relation to the problem in hand. Imagination lays a number of alternative possibilities before the mind, some of which must be at once guarded against and some must be striven for until at last, when the council adjourns, the mind has the problem in all its phases well in hand.

Meditation is a meeting of the Cabinet. The Secretary of War suggests fighting the matter out. The Secretary of the Interior urges peace. The Secretary of Agriculture suggests that a few experiments be made. The Secretary of State urges arbitration. The President puts all these suggestions in his mind and weighs them—for he is a fair man and wishes to do that which is right—and after many days he issues a proclamation full of wisdom and welcomed by all concerned.

Meditation is a consultation of physicians. Dr. Conception gives his diagnosis of the case. Dr. Memory, who knows the patient well, recalls similar attacks in the past and the remedies used for his restoration. Dr. Imagination suggests awful possibilities if help is not secured at once and dares to speak of the probable effect of certain drugs. The patient has the benefit of the experience and prescriptions of all these experts.

Meditation takes the facts that have been brought before the mind by all her faculties, thought, conception, imagination, memory, and makes them meet

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each other in friendly combat. Each contribution will have its full value. Thought is cast in over against imagination; memory challenges the new conception and makes her prove her right to a place. Back and forth the conflict wages, each contribution being challenged in turn by every other until that which has a right to stay emerges a victor and all else is driven from the mental arena.

Meditation is a process of selection. The mind is a lover of flowers going into a wonderful garden. There are blossoms of every hue and some exhale the fragrance of violets and the essence of roses. What would the gardener do to-day, charm a child or thrill a maid or calm a mother? Having determined upon his purpose and weighed the contributing value of every petal the selection is made that perfectly meets the call.

Meditation makes a wise man; it makes a man sure of his ground to the point of defending it and dying for it if necessary. Both are badly needed, but from myriad evidences there is greater neglect of meditation than of thought in the modern world. It is evidenced by the number of wrecks one sees upon the shores of time. Theirs are the bleaching bones of pioneers. They had just enough thought to start them out, but not enough to count the cost or consider the consequences or to be able to bear up when trials came. Men sometimes see more by looking into a well than by looking into the sky. The bent head of the man wrapt in meditation is

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one of the permanent improvements to any city. More than its paved streets, its playing fountains, its marble temples, do these men give a city wealth. One head bent for an hour in earnest meditation has many times in past years done more for the advancement of the race than armies of men and years of time.

The thoughtless man looking into a laboratory, seeing the master in his chair, his head buried in his hands, asks gruffly why is this man not at work earning his share of bread and meat. He is not less than a society parasite. In a moment some Edison raises his head, takes pencil and paper and draws a diagram showing how streets and homes may be turned from darkness into day by the use of electricity.

Let us frankly confess that to active thought and earnest meditation we are indebted for the thousand conveniences and blessings of present-day life. "I will think about it" honestly said and faithfully followed is one of man's most valuable utterances. It often supplies the lack of family inheritance or rich dowry. It lifts a man from an object of charity to independence and plenty.

Be admonished therefore to turn the rectifying power of careful meditation upon all the activities of your life: your efforts to advance, your loves, your hates, your jealousies, your refusals to help upbuild righteousness, your efforts to help mankind. They will all be vastly benefited. You will leave

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them all richer, more true, more in harmony with perfection than they have ever been before.

Thought and Meditation. Two trusty, ready servants. It costs you nothing but time to use them; they may provide you both fortune and everlasting life. "Think on these things."

Think on the deeper problems of life and of the hereafter. The squirrel and the ant and the bee make provision against the need of an oncoming winter. Will the child of God show less wisdom than these humble creatures? We know the time of need is coming; that life on earth will not go on forever, and we are very sure that in some very definite way the life we are living here is to effect the life we are to live hereafter. How can we prepare? "Think on these things."

Think—not to make yourself sad, but to make yourself wise; to lead you to make such preparation against the future as shall insure the soul eternal felicity. The life that once gets the true conception of Christianity and its possible returns to the soul will go on as far as the mind will carry it toward the infinite God and then, in the light of sure revelation, will take the short leap of faith that will land him on the threshold of the Father's house. Let us obey the apostle's injunction and earnestly and devoutly "think on these things."

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CHAPTER TEN

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY PERSEVERANCE, EXPERIENCE, CAUTION, HOPE

Every man has a well-defined aversion to being last in the race. This aversion to being behind urges men to effort no less than the hope for success. But in spite of all, the class called Mediocre is crowded while the class called Great is begging continually for acquisitions. It is due not so much to the impossibility of many of the middle class taking a place in the higher, but because they have paused in the midst of their efforts and given up the struggle.

“Men begin life,” says Dr. Hillis in “Aspirations and Ideals,” “with the high purpose of living nobly, generously, openly. Full of the choicest aspirations, hungering for the highest things, the youth enters triumphantly upon the pathway of life. But journeying forward he meets conflict and strife, envy and jealousy, disappointment and defeat. He finds it hard to live up to the level of his best moods. Self-interest biases his judgment. Greed bribes his reason. Pride leads him astray. Selfishness tempts

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him to violate his finer self. Persuading himself that the ideal life is impracticable, he strikes an average between his higher moods and his low flying hours. Then is the luster of life all dimmed." Instead of going on and winning a golden crown, he pauses and accepts instead a crown of reeds.

Responsibility for success rests to-day, as never before, on the individual life. All the world loves a struggler. To win such a character and such a place in the church as that held by Sheldon Jackson, let us say, means that all the helpful elements that go to make up life have been called into service and persistently and carefully used through a long period of years. The day came when the humble home missionary was called to the highest office in the gift of his denomination. He did not seek it, but his associates thrust the honor upon him as a partial recognition of what he had done for his Master and his church. Doing these things for others he won a signal success for himself.

Paul's admonition is always timely, "So run; that ye may attain." Many run part way in the race and stop. They never win the laurel. Others run all the way, but poorly. All run, but one wins. So run that ye may win.

On the cinder path of life the element that contributes a lion's share to victory is perseverance. An observer stood one day at the dock of the Pennsylvania Coal Company in Chicago. A huge lake steamer had recently been moored by its side. In

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the hold of the ship rested twenty-nine hundred tons of hard coal. This must be transferred to the bins above. It seemed an endless and well-nigh impossible task to the inexperienced onlooker. But as the beholder stood there, from three different points there shot down into the mysterious depths of that ship curious shaped buckets, and as they came again swiftly from the vessel's hold, each one carried half a ton of her cargo. Quietly, constantly, unceasingly those little buckets sped back and forth on their work, each trip adding to the coal in the bin, each trip taking from that in the boat.

It was the principle of perseverance worked out in practical life. To the man or woman who desires success no principle is more important. Milton, fired with the desire to write a great poem the world would not soon forget, but realizing his unfitness for the task, went to his books and for seven long years toiled, adding little by little, day by day, the learning that would give him power, and then not until an eventful life had been lived, until blindness had driven his thoughts in upon himself and upward toward God, did the now ripe and ready scholar begin his noble work. Fifty years of hidden, quiet work of preparation, but it yielded a pyramid of worth, an eternity of fame!

Let us lay down the principle, then, that while success is possible to every one of us, it is possible to no one who neglects months and years of persevering work both of preparation and accomplish-

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ment. The best advice to youth is: hold only the loftiest aspirations and the highest ideals. These alone are worthy the choice of God-made men. Better start to build a palace and produce a villa than to look no higher than a villa and end by building a hovel. You will never go beyond your aspirations. They mark the utmost limit of your advance. Therefore set them high. The artist who aspires to equal a certain master must ever remain second to him, for the master's name was first upon men's lips. It is only he who determines to go beyond what other men have accomplished that stands out a marked character among men.

Having once determined what you will accomplish, with God's approval, work as you never yet have dreamed you could work to reach your ideal. Work not for the approval of men, but for the approval of your own soul. Work during the golden hours of the morning, when each new day has arisen refreshed from the embrace of night; work when the dayspring has reached his zenith and, pouring down his beams of light and life, endeavors to bring more life and wealth into the world; work in the cool of the evening when the burning eye of Titan has been closed by earth's swift turning; work in the quiet hours of the night when, undisturbed, you may commune with the best source of thought and experience. The familiar saying of the poet is ever new:

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Heights by great men gained and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

You know well what you ought to do, what you wish to attain. Never stop trying to win all you aspire toward, especially in those things that bear on character and achievement in behalf of others. Oftentimes the very fact that one keeps on working even against opposition and is ready to take full advantage of every chance benefit is the largest factor in success. The fable of the hare and the snail is not to be despised, for it carries in its heart an immortal truth.

Perseverance in preparation is the first rule in progress. Fortune smiles only upon those who have smiled upon her. Only the man who is prepared for it is called to take the high position, to assume the larger responsibility. Restricted by no caste and with the wealth of all the ages as an inheritance, each youth and maiden of America may go on and up until the highest and best has been attained.

Valuable and necessary as is the element called Perseverance, let no one think that it alone will yield the fruits desired. It must be upheld and aided by many friends. No matter how vigorously the blind man might walk, if he had not some one to guide him past obstruction and excavation he would never reach the distant goal. Even so must Perseverance walk in the light shed by Experience.

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From behind like a great sun doth experience shed her rays upon the true man's pathway, and if he be wise it will be of a twofold power.

The first will be lent by the experience of others, which, upon solicitation they have given or by observation has been discovered. It is a strong arm on which the wise man will lean during his journey through life. Oftentimes the youth fails to make use of the most valuable part of his inheritance by rejecting the counsel of a parent that is based upon long years of experience. One's reverence for silver heads should become greater every day. What years they have spent! What obstacles have been overcome! What victories have been won! We need to know of them. From every life one touches, be it humble or great, he can gain somewhat that will help him in his struggle toward success.

Upon every struggling youth, therefore, one urges the value of the experience of others. If your father has learned by a life of experience that perseverance is necessary to success, you can start where he leaves off and your chances for success become one hundred per cent higher than his. If past ages have taught men that honesty, both in business and in social relations, is necessary, base your life upon this wholesome principle. Never strike out in defiance of what all men have proved to be an unchanging law. It is hard to row against a rapid current, but with it distance is quickly annihilated.

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My son, hear the instruction of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:
For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head,
And chains about thy neck. Prov. 1: 8, 9.

The second light shed upon the wise man's path by experience will be that of his own. Not less valuable than the wisdom others have gained is that we gain ourselves. The burned child shuns the fire, but all too often the youth punished by the blighting nature of vice flies into it again as quickly as relieved from its first effects, only to be more severely rebuked. A visitor to one of the large industries of America, a few months ago, talked with the superintendent of the iron department. At one of the forges worked a man of middle age who gave evidence at a glance that he was an expert. In response to the visitor's questioning eyes, the superintendent replied: "He need not be there. That man was at the head of the iron department in the construction of buildings at the World's Fair. He is a genius in his line." "Then why is he there?" "Whisky" was the terse reply. "It will kill the best of them."

How amazing it is that so many lives go on doing the things their own experience has told them are destructive of their own best interests and that will positively prevent them from ever winning a notable victory! How many are going on in a futile effort to overthrow laws that have been in operation since the world began!

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With open and attentive gaze, therefore, review the past. Note every lesson that has been learned and bring its fruits to your service in your present struggle. It may be the one thing needed to yield you victory. If it is the part of wisdom to move forward, it is no less the part of wisdom to go in the strength that past years have given you. Better a foot along a safe path than a mile along one that may land you in failure. Call, then, upon the past and in her pure light pursue your way. New views will open before you, new conquests appear for heart and brain. Plant your feet firmly upon the path others and yourself have proved safe. You may then move forward with confidence.

“If you wish success,” says one, “make Caution your elder brother.” Caution is the ballast in the hold of life’s ship. It is the shield we carry even when no arrows are seen to be flying. Caution is the coat of mail unseen by the world yet protecting its wearer from attack of blade or missile. It is the element, undefined by yourself, that leads you when possible to make your journeys by land instead of by sea, or if by sea to take the vessels known to be the safest and best.

To the youth on the road toward success it is an invaluable aid. Dangers and temptations infest the path of youth as reptiles the jungle, and it is only by the exercise of extreme caution that he is enabled to escape unharmed. Even the briefest delay cuts off from the amount to be achieved and the moments

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your achievement may be enjoyed, while the great danger is that, having once touched the life, they will stop all progress and success will never be attained.

The words of the mill superintendent ring in one's ears, "It will kill the best of them." Therefore let the compass called Caution be aboard every craft and may it be consulted every day during your journey through life. The mariner who would disregard his compass would expect loss or wreck and would be condemned by the world. No less will the youth who disregards life's compass, who neglects to post Caution at the wheel, suffer loss and shipwreck whether in the things of the body or in the things of the soul.

But above the compass there is a star toward which its needle points. To the mariner it is the star of the North. To the sailor on life's sea it is the star of hope.

A sailor of small experience once found himself on a yard arm being rapidly raised to great heights among the vessel's rigging. His eyes riveted upon the ship and the waters below, his head began to swim and he gave evidence of losing his hold. Seeing his dangerous state and knowing at once the reason, the captain shouted, "Look aloft, my lad, look aloft!" Raising his eyes from the fast receding decks and scenes that changed, his eyes rested upon the calm, unchanging heavens and immediately

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all looked natural and the dizziness gave place to calm assurance.

In our journey toward what we please to call life-success there must be a permanent, unchanging element toward which we can cast our eyes in moments of defeat and distress, and in all the world there is not a better than that which the Father has provided and which men call Hope. Hope never faileth, but as the changeless hills remains one solid point on which our eyes may rest.

As a strong raft will fulsome hope bear up when life's storms break upon you. In the distress born of the possibility of death in a watery grave, passengers on a storm-driven vessel often cast overboard everything that they have hitherto held dear: goods, wealth, family heirlooms, everything that adds an ounce to the burden of the stricken vessel. When times of defeat and distress come upon you and you are led to cast away things hitherto held dear never let hope go. She is no burden, but rather a buoy to your floundering ship of life. Cherish her as you do your own life and she will reward you a hundredfold. Obey the confident Psalmist in the words he spoke to his own fainting heart:

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him
For the help of his countenance.

Toward what goal may the right-living man or

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woman strive to make progress? Shall it be for success in material fortune? It has many dangers and few chances of ever being won. Shall it be for earthly fame? You will be led to do men some service in gaining it and this is good, but the enterprise is full of danger to your own soul. Shall it be toward self-gratification? It is an ignoble end and unworthy a man of strength.

There is a success above all these and yet it includes every element of worth found in all of them: Being a successful man in the sight of God. Strive now for riches, strive now for culture, strive now for fame, strive now to enrich yourself, but use all to add glory to God and lighten the burdens of men. Successful in his sight let all the unworthy standards of self-seeking men be despised and, moving onward and upward, approach the divine ideal given us in the earthly life of our Saviour, Redeemer and untiring Friend—Jesus Christ.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY RESISTING TEMPTATION

In the opening verses of the general Epistle of James there is this strange and startling admonition, "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations." Nothing could be further from other New Testament teaching concerning this danger, which we are admonished to avoid and to pray that we may escape. Reading further, in the hope of catching some explanation of the unusual advice, we find: "Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing."

We catch the secret in this further reading. James does not diverge so far from the spirit of New Testament teachings as at first appears. He is writing to Christians who are widely scattered among hostile people. Undoubtedly he has heard of persecutions; of temptations to abandon the new faith and return to idolatry or to fly into a rage and revenge themselves upon their persecutors. Neither would be Christlike. In an effort to cheer and encourage

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them, the apostle urges them to turn these temptings into generators of more power and faith. "If you are tempted and endure," he says, "you have reason to rejoice in the temptation, for it not only gave you an opportunity to display your faith but it also gave you the struggle that develops more faith. It develops patience also, and when this has reached perfection you will be an acceptable follower of Jesus, wanting nothing."

From this somewhat restricted treatment of temptation I should like to move out to a broader treatment which will include temptation to personal sins as well as to forsake one's religion and turn again to paganism. In this broader sense temptation is universal. From the first transgression in Eden down to the latest infraction of God's laws both men and women have been wont to say, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." The apostle James insists that we shall not charge the temptation upon God. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man." God may leave people to the temptations of Satan once in a while that they may be tested, proved, to discover whether they are strong enough to resist Satan's appeals and are worthy of the confidence of Jehovah, but God is never the author of the temptation itself nor does he coöperate with Satan in bringing it about. Satan is always watching, hoping to catch some Christian when he is weak and draw him into his net.

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Fully half of our temptations come from the outside. Here the tempter works through other people. Some unscrupulous companion who wants our time or our money or our strength tempts us to deviate from the path of rectitude and eat, drink or act in a way to debase our manhood.

A few years ago I was visiting the Brooklyn Navy Yard when one of our splendid men-of-war came home from a long cruise. The sailors had several months' pay in their pockets, and already abnormal appetites were crying out to be satisfied. As the boys poured out of the yard they were met by a company of "cappers," almost as large, that literally laid hold upon them and pulled and dragged them into saloons and disreputable houses that lined the street. They were promised all they wanted for nothing, but I was told by Y. M. C. A. workers near by that few of them would have a cent in their pockets when they at length emerged. Sometimes the debauch lasted for days, until body and soul were smirched and the poor boys were literally kicked into the street because they had no more money. The generous gifts of Helen Gould have helped conditions there somewhat, but our government would honor herself if she would provide protection for the soldiers and sailors everywhere from these harpies that would suck their very life's blood.

Our temptations will not perhaps be so severe nor to such flagrant sins, but they are none the less real and insistent. Modern society invites both young

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men and women to drink and smoke and gamble and to make many other infractions of the law of rectitude that, however simple they are in the beginning, often lead to weakness and disgrace. Older men and women are tempted to adopt questionable business methods or to countenance social practices that both weaken and degrade if they do not at last bring them into disgrace.

In addition to these fierce temptations from without there are temptations from within that are quite as severe. Here Satan works through our normal appetites and desires. Many a youth who would scorn to yield to such outside temptations as I have just referred to falls an easy victim to temptations from within his own life to which he thinks he can yield and the world will never know it. These will include both thoughts and actions and their injury to the moral nature is as great as that of open sins.

Neither are these inner temptations from God. The apostle whose teaching we are following in this study says further: "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death."

In an able exposition of this passage the Rev. C. Jerdan says:

Lust may be said to "conceive" when it obtains the consent of the will or disarms its opposition. The man who dallies with temptation, instead of meeting it with instant and

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prayerful resistance. will be sure eventually to succumb to it. From the guilty union of lust with the will a living sin is born. The embryo corruption becomes developed into a deed of positive transgression. And this is not all. Sin, the progeny of lust, itself grows up from the infancy of mere choice to the adult life of settled habit, and "when it is full-grown it in turn becomes, as the result of union with the will, the mother of death. It was so with the sin of our first parents in Paradise. It was so with the sin of Achan. He saw, coveted, took and died. It is so with the sin of licentiousness, which has suggested the figure of this passage; the physical corruption which the practice of sensuality entails is just a sacrament of spiritual death. Death is the fruit of all sin. Sin kills peace; it kills hope; it kills usefulness; it kills the conscience; it kills the soul. The harlot-house of lust and sin becomes the vestibule of perdition. As Milton has it in a well-known passage of "Paradise Lost"—a passage suggested by this very verse—Sin is:

"The snaky sorceress that sat
Fast by hell-gate, and kept the fatal key";
while Death, her son, is "the grizzly Terror" on the other
side, which stood
"Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell."

In an agony of despair we are disposed to cry out with Paul, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" But wait a moment. Severe as these temptations are man does not have to yield to them. In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the

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temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.”

You could have withstood any temptation that ever came upon you, even the most severe, if you had wanted to. Aided by God, man's will is sovereign and nothing takes place in the life to which the will does not first give its consent. While God does not prevent Satan from tempting you he does make a way of escape if you want it. Indeed, you can turn your temptations into sources of power if you will. This is the contention of the apostle James. Since temptations are sure to come into our lives we had best try to discover his secret.

Temptations to impurity may be so met as to make the tempted one more pure and more sure of remaining pure. The life that has never been tried may be innocent, but it has not developed strength and therefore is in danger of being overcome and crushed. Many a young woman has gone from the security of a country home into a great city assuming that everyone was as pure as herself, only to find herself ensnared by lustful tempters who preyed upon her innocence. She was pure, but she was not strong. She accepted false promises or gave her love to a traitor and her life was soon crushed in the awful stress.

Or take the more striking case of the temptations of our Lord. He was in all points tempted like as we are. Why? We may get some light on the question by studying God's treatment of Israel in

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the day of their removal to the promised land. He had a great work for Israel to do. He wished them to be a receptacle for future revelations; he wanted to prove to surrounding nations that man could withstand temptations to lewdness and idolatry and live on the high plain of purity and truth. He had protected them before while they were in bondage. Now that they were to be an independent nation, standing for Jehovah, they must develop power of their own. Therefore we are told in the book of Judges that instead of driving out all the idolatrous tribes from the promised land he allowed some of them to remain, not that his people might be weakened but that they might make themselves more strong by resisting temptations. Jehovah said, "I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations that Joshua left when he died; that by them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of Jehovah to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not."

When Cromwell was in a tight place in battle he wanted near him his Ironsides; when Napoleon was in danger he wanted to have near him the Old Guard. Other soldiers weighed as much and were as fully equipped with weapons, but these old heroes were battle tested. No danger could daunt them; no startling situation cause them to turn and flee. They could be trusted. Therefore they were valuable.

The manhood of Jesus was very high, but it might

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have fallen. Did he have the strength and courage to go through the awful temptations to desert his Father and save his own life that were to come upon him? No one knew. It could only be proved by trying him, and so he was given over to Satan for a season.

First he was tempted to use his divine power to meet his own physical needs, "Command that these stones become bread." If he had yielded here he might have used his divine power and saved himself from death on the cross, thus nullifying the whole plan of redemption. Next he was tempted to attract attention and win public acclaim by bizarre methods: "Cast thyself down from this wing of the temple into the well-filled court below. Thousands will see it and at once concede that you must be the Son of God. This will simply be a short cut to what you hope to gain by a long and circuitous route." It was a more reasonable temptation since "the king's business requires haste," but had Jesus yielded he would have failed in his mission, for it required every day of the three years he labored to prove by example that a man can live the principles he taught. Failing in these two temptations, Satan made a more direct attack. "Forsake God entirely. Worship me; join your powers with mine and I will give you all the kingdoms of the world." This was the fiercest temptation of all and the most necessary from the standpoint of God. If in his human nature Jesus was ever going to turn away

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from God the sooner he did it the better. Before his work could proceed God must know.

Therefore the temptations of Jesus were a great blessing. He went into them an untried youth; he came out of them a battle-proved, triumphant veteran, ready now to pursue the greatest work ever undertaken by any man. He had denied the flesh and crucified his desires, but he had proved the truth of the contention later uttered by Tennyson:

That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

In the city of Chicago a few years ago a banking firm was testing a young man of great promise. He was quick and keen and seemed to have a natural talent for the banking business. They wanted to advance him to higher positions, but he was almost a stranger and some of the officers had grave doubts of his honesty.

He was paying teller at the time and worked in a steel cage all alone, but for one hour every day the cashier took his place while he went out to luncheon. During one of these absences the cashier slipped a ten-dollar gold piece into his cash. It was one method of testing him. If he reported an over that night, well and good. If he said nothing they would know he had pocketed the extra coin.

As closing time came those in the secret were nervous. He worked like lightning, and was always ready with his balance long before all other depart-

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ments. But this evening there was a delay. The cashier saw that he was slowly and carefully going over the day's business a second time. Then he checked it over a third time. Passing his cage the cashier called out casually, "Anything wrong, Mr. Young?" "Everything checks perfectly," he said in a worried tone, "but I'm ten dollars over in my cash." Not a word was said, but the officers put that down to his credit as an honest man.

Not long after this they subjected him to another test. A plain-clothes detective presented a check for seventy-five dollars at his window and asked for the cash. It was signed by a firm that had a large balance at the bank and that issued many checks of similar amount. Everything looked all right but, while the man who presented it claimed acquaintance, the teller did not know him. When payment was refused, the detective came close and said quietly: "Of course you have to be careful, Boss, but that check is absolutely good. I travel for this firm and am on my way to take a train that leaves in thirty minutes. I must have some cash. Give me seventy dollars and keep five dollars for yourself." It looked like easy money, but the teller refused; the customer would have to be identified.

Temptations gave this young man the chance both to develop resistance and to prove himself to others. He was soon promoted to the cashiership while the cashier went on to the presidency.

From these various examples and experiences it

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may be seen that temptation may be an allurements to entice us to sin. It is thus we usually conceive of it. But it may be a test to prove us or a discipline to improve and strengthen us. Assuming that the Christian is going to take the right attitude toward temptation, the apostle we are following therefore cries out: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations. They will give you a chance to prove the strength of your faith; they will give you a chance to strengthen yourself, for every victory won makes the warrior stronger. Use your temptations as opportunities to glorify God by revealing to the world the strength of his followers."

If anyone should still ask the question, "Why does God permit temptation?" the answer could be given in the words of James, "That ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." And again, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life." God longs for a strong and sufficient manhood. It is not easy to develop a character that will honor God in life and win eternal happiness at the bar of heavenly judgment.

Two boys started life together in a western village. Each inherited a modest fortune and entered upon life with the brightest prospects. The lure of the world sounded in the ear of each. An opportunity to invest their money in an enterprise of questionable character but large returns came to both.

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They could work together. They would be rich enough to retire in ten years.

The younger man urged his friend to invest. He argued that the business, while questioned by a certain portion of society, was recognized by law; that somebody would carry it on, and why not they? They would be careful to avoid its degrading and debasing associations and, as soon as they could do so with a competence, would sell out and come back home. But the older youth hesitated. The temptation was strong, but there was a latent sense of decency in him that made him hold back. Forced "You may think this is prudish in me but I cannot by his friend to show his hand, he said at length: bring myself to get rich at the cost of other men's welfare. It would be fine to have plenty of money but I want something else, worse. I want to be able to respect myself and I want the respect of other men."

As he expected, his friend laughed at him. He reminded him that the respect of other men paid no bills and that it was foolish to allow a tender conscience to interfere with a good business opportunity. But if he was fixed in his determination they would have to separate. He was going in, and he would soon show his friend how foolish he had been. They parted in sorrow and the older youth went back to his land.

Fifteen years rolled by before the two men met again. The avaricious youth had made his for-

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tune. The man with a conscience had enough and to spare. The brewer was fat, blear-eyed and dull-witted. The farmer was lithe, clear-eyed and keen. The brewer loathed himself. His wife and children had left him and his only companions were hired servants or sycophants who flattered him for favors. The farmer honored himself, had wife and children who loved and respected him and beyond these a host of friends who rose up to call him blessed.

After half an hour's visit and the revealing of the main facts of each man's life the brewer laid his hand on the older man's shoulder and said: "Jim, you win. You were the wise man. I was the fool. I have made money,—more than we talked of,—but I have lost everything else. I would gladly sink all my money to the bottom of the sea if I could buy back my self-respect, my family and my health. But it is too late. I deliberately chose the wrong path. Now I must walk in it to the end."

The temptation to this path was not greater to one than to the other. Both knew its danger. Both knew they should not enter it. The man who refused the lure was stronger from that day than he would ever have been without it. His friend was weaker and slighter temptations overcame him. He went from weakness to weakness while his wise friend went from strength to strength.

Force your temptations to serve you. Use them as stepping-stones to mount to higher things. If

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this world is ever saved it will be by the power of God working through strong Christians, tested Christians, proved Christians, whom all the flattery and lure of the world cannot win from the straight and narrow path.

The crown of life is the reward of wisdom in this realm. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life." This promised boon looks not alone to the future. To the man who successfully resists temptation is given the crown of the highest life in this world. He is crowned as a man worthy of honor by God himself; he is crowned by his own exacting conscience; he is crowned by his fellow men.

In increasing strength, in perfect self-control, in growing favor with God and man, the Christian who bravely resists temptation literally forces the hindrances of life to serve him, lifting him year by year a little closer to his God. May the day soon come when every Christian shall be in this blessed company.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY PROPER SABBATH OBSERVANCE

At no time in the world's history were men so conscious of the value of the passing hours as they are to-day. Every day is a treasure house stored with golden hours; every hour a jewel case filled with precious gems. An hour's study or reflection often turns the tide in a man's fortune; a day's labor turns failure into victory. Most of the world's decisive battles were fought in a single day. The power of Spain in the Western Hemisphere, which had continued for hundreds of years, was terminated in a few hours at Santiago Bay.

Emerson was but trying to emphasize the importance of time when he said, "Every day is doomsday," but I prefer another sentiment which has grown up since the age of this thinker-dreamer, "Every day is New Year's Day." Every day opens a new period of time in which a life may strive to correct its mistakes and advance its higher interests.

Oh, that we would prize every day as Browning's Pippa did her one holiday! Springing from her couch and rushing to her tiny window she cried in ecstasy:

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Day!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

O Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve-hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances,
(Be they grants thou art bound to or gifts above
measure),
One of thy choices or one of thy chances,
(Be they tasks God imposed thee or freaks at thy
pleasure),
—My Day, if I squander such labor or leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

In this study I would talk with you about a day much more precious and full of possibilities than any of these—the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. The body and the mind have six days set apart when their work and play should be accomplished. They are important to the last degree. The world's work must be done, the secrets of nature must be discovered: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work."

"But the seventh day is the Sabbath (Hebrew,

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“Rest”) of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.” That commandment has never been recalled, but following his custom of telling us what we could do instead of what we should not do our Lord, by word and by example, taught that the Sabbath is the soul’s day, on which, turning aside from our usual pleasures and labors, we are to worship and do good to men.

The glory of Christ’s teaching concerning this precious time is contained in his phrase, “The sabbath was made for man.” If the day was made for him and is not to be used for ordinary work or play, what was it made for? What was it meant to supply? It is to his everlasting shame that man, who needs so much soul culture, should have failed to use the day set apart for this very thing, but should have spent the time in other and less benefiting labors. If I should ask a man to take fifty-two days every year out of the time he gives to building up his fortune and use them in chasing butterflies he would think me crazy; and yet many a man takes the only fifty-two days a year God has given for the building up of his spiritual fortune and spends them in chasing golf balls or other equally elusive missiles while his soul starves for the bread of life.

It is not a question just now of whether it is right for you to play golf or take automobile rides or study birds or botany on the Sabbath; the question is: Do you spend your Sabbath at these pastimes to the exclusion of that soul culture positively

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needed to make you a worthy child of your heavenly Father? The permanence and continued elevation of the American people depend very largely upon their proper observance of the Sabbath day.

We must not allow the day to become secularized. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Our six days of labor bind us close to material things. We till the soil, or we barter or we adjudicate differences, in all of which our animal nature is uppermost. Yet these things must not be allowed to dominate us. How is this to be avoided? By giving the greatest emphasis to our spiritual nature on the Sabbath day. Other time might be used but seldom is, so that the soul must gather up in one day sufficient heavenly grace to make us more than animals during our six days of labor. If we fail to use the Sabbath for worship and soul culture, if we continue our usual work or play throughout the sacred period, we have lost the spiritual uplift we need more than any other thing.

Some surprising things have developed in connection with closing the post office in many cities of America on the Sabbath. Before this was accomplished and the thousands of letter carriers thus released, it was said that it could not be afforded; that so many more employees would have to be hired that the already large postal deficit would be enormous. Exactly the contrary has proved true. The men are able to give so much better service working six days than working seven, that the

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service is more efficient and the deficit less. It was said that business could not be carried on without Sabbath mail delivery, but not one house has failed on account of the change and, as a matter of fact, it has not created a ripple on the surface of our commercial and industrial life. Few firms now call for their mail at all on the Sabbath and those which do are not in a business that demands a seven-day delivery.

Instead of robbing this precious day of its peculiar nature America will be wise if she does everything in her power to preserve it. America does not need more money or more material success, but she is tremendously in need of more men and women who know God and are striving to coöperate with him in the elevation of society. Nothing will help more than keeping the Sabbath a holy day and observing it in accordance with its nature.

Further, the day must be used more and more for the specific purposes for which it was given. There should be no uncertainty on this point. Under divine direction the people of God in ancient times used the day for worship and godly service. The teachings of Christ confirm this practice and emphasize its spiritual significance.

If, for purposes of clearness, we should specify a few of these duties and privileges we would doubtless all name first: The worship of God in the sanctuary and the enrichment of our spiritual nature.

God himself established public worship when he

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was giving the world models through ancient Israel. The people were not to neglect the assembling of themselves together both for giving united voice to their worship of Jehovah and for listening to his revealed Word read and expounded.

Can reasonable men argue that there is no call for public assemblies, that men can worship God as acceptably as individuals, when the plans of God so clearly provide for public assemblies and for the preaching of the Word? The apostle has declared that by the foolishness of preaching God has ordained that many men shall be saved.

American history reveals several things that bear upon this point: Where public services are not maintained and regular preaching is not provided there are few, if any, conversions to Christianity; where public worship has been maintained in former years and is now suspended (as for example in frontier territory or in down-town districts of great cities), although the population is more dense, no conversions are discoverable and the standard of manhood and womanhood falls lower; the masses of the people never rise to a more exalted conception of God without adequate leadership, without hearing the Word of God preached and explained from week to week. Only where the public worship of God is regularly maintained do the people eliminate sin and take on the Christian graces. "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy

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him for ever," and where men do not do this they sink rather than rise in the scale of manhood.

Furthermore, man's spiritual nature is in constant need of extension and enrichment. This is the nature by which we comprehend the things of God; it is here we are in his image. When by acceptance and confession of Jesus Christ our spiritual nature is born, we are infants just as we were infants at our physical birth. We are creatures of infinite spiritual possibilities, but those possibilities will never be realized if we do not grow. For a man, confessing Christ, to feel that there is nothing more for him to do is to make the mistake of contending that to possess the size and strength of manhood it is only necessary to be born in the flesh.

I have a boyhood memory of going one Independence Day to a great celebration; at least it was great in crowds and enthusiasm and noise, which have come to stand for greatness to certain classes in America. I was fascinated by a gas machine which was being set up for the inflating of toy balloons. I had seen the beautiful blue and red baubles tugging at their restraining strings, eager to be off into the vast empyrean, and I rejoiced in their brilliancy and buoyancy, but when I drew near I was amazed to find that when started on their career they were neither large nor brilliant but repulsive little masses of wrinkled rubber no larger than my thumb. Surely those little, black, crumpled masses could never become the large, beautiful bal-

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loons that were aspiring to join the clouds! But the skilled workman stretched the mouth of one over the machine's valve and shot it full of the volatile gas. Instantly it expanded, instantly its rich color appeared. The moment it was released from the machine, sealed and its string attached, it started to mount upward, beautiful as a rainbow to a child's eyes.

My figure may not be absolutely analogous, but it is close enough for illustrative purposes. When we are born into the kingdom our spiritual nature, the most beautiful and the most permanent part of man, is a mere capacity. It is capable of infinite enlargement and enrichment but only one thing will do it. Worldly pleasures will not, material successes will not, even intellectual achievements will not, but the proper worship of God will. The proper observance of the Sabbath day, a proper part in the public worship of God, a proper study of God's Word and right meditation on sacred things, kindly service in the name of Christ; these things will expand and enrich the spiritual nature, as the gas did my toy balloon of long ago, and will give it an aspiration to ascend to God.

Every wise man knows that for the purposes of proper living his fast depleting body must be continually recreated. God provided for this recreation in appointing this one-day-in-seven rest period. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath, the rest day, of the Lord

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thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work. Thou nor thy servants."

It is not the sin of disobeying God by disregarding this commandment that I wish to dwell upon here. It may be said in passing: America will pay heavily in future years for her willingness to allow the Sabbath to become a day of picnics and excursions, of feasting and social excesses. The increasingly popular "week-end" excursion is fast becoming a curse. Instead of proper rest and worship thousands of our people further exhaust themselves by long distance travel and irregular eating and sleeping. One superintendent of a manufacturing plant testifies that it requires the better part of Monday for his men to recover from the excesses of the Sabbath vacation; but what I would emphasize is the loss the disobedient one himself sustains and the benefits that come with obedience.

The loss comes from prolonged strain without release. If we are not wise enough to see this in the physical world, the mechanical world will furnish sufficient illustration. A railroad company that sometimes seems to have no mercy on its men is exceedingly careful of its expensive locomotives. Visiting a roundhouse in the West a few years ago I saw a dozen huge monsters that had recently come in from trips of from three hundred to seven hundred miles. I asked the foreman why they were there, and he replied that they were resting. In response to my surprised look he continued: "Yes,

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indeed, these engines require rest as surely as the engineers do. After a long, hard trip it often takes from twenty-four to forty-eight hours for an engine to recover itself. Starting out afresh one of these one-hundred-ton freight engines will run perfectly for from five hundred to a thousand miles. Then things will begin to go wrong; either something breaks or they refuse to make steam and we have to send them to the roundhouse. After a 'rest day' they are as good as ever again." Many a man who says he cannot afford a Sabbath's rest is making slow progress to-day or is actually breaking down for want of the wisdom a railroad company displays in getting the highest efficiency out of its machinery.

But here as elsewhere the best side is affirmative. Many a business and professional man has quadrupled his efficiency by beginning to observe strictly the spirit of rest and change of occupation suggested by the Christian Sabbath; who says, in the spirit of the ancient singer,

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul,
For Jehovah hath dealt bountifully with thee."

It requires actual practice to demonstrate the truth of this contention.

The story is told of a certain lawyer in the West who in his early years felt that he could not afford to take a Sabbath rest. Released from office and courtroom, he would pore over his books. He wished to specialize in Insurance Law and felt that

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he had only Sunday in which to do the reading and thinking required. When Monday came there was no spring or freshness in his mind or body and he went into court a worn-out man. He began to lose cases of a class he had formerly won, and now and then had attacks of indigestion that compelled him to give up his work for days at a time. Finally he determined to try God's plan. He opened no law book on the Sabbath day. He returned to the house of God from which he had absented himself for years; he took the superintendency of the local Sunday school. In the afternoons he would visit the sick or go with his children for a quiet walk in the woods. No thought of court or law was entertained for one moment. In two months he was a changed man. He regained his health and, incidentally, the respect of his own conscience. His mind cleared and his body regained its spring. His former skill in court returned and quickly doubled. To a friend one day he said: "When I started out to practice law I thought I knew better than God did how to employ my time, but I have concluded now that he knows best. I keep the Sabbath, and from a purely health and financial standpoint,—to say nothing of its spiritual benefits,—it is the best investment I ever made."

I wonder if others are not making this lawyer's mistake. You want to get on, you want to make money faster, you want to specialize, to be a master in your line, and you think you can accomplish this

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by robbing God and your soul of the Sabbath day, by defrauding body and mind of the rest and change provided by the Creator in his infinite plans. It is a serious and a costly mistake which you had better correct as quickly as possible. Both body and mind will have ten times their spring for one complete rest day in seven while the soul, the seat of wisdom and spirituality, will be given its rightful place.

The Sabbath rest provides excellent opportunity also for the sharpening and enrichment of the mental faculties. All week long the mind must serve us whatever our work may be. In many cases its only refreshment is a hasty glance at a daily newspaper that tells of the sports and the tragedies of life. Perhaps the mind has been called upon to give out the whole week through, and has received little or nothing in return.

A right observance of the Sabbath provides a change from all of this. In the house of our Father one hears the eternal verities read from the Word of God. No minister can be so dull as to have no message for receptive minds, and the vast majority of these worthy men provide a feast for their people every Sabbath of the year. The mind grows rich also by trying to give away a knowledge of the Bible to younger lives. Teaching is always accompanied by a reflex benefit to the teacher. Workers in Sunday school often attain high mental proficiency solely from their efforts to plant the Word of God in other hearts.

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But the greatest opportunity of all comes when the long afternoon and evening open and your time is largely your own. The mind seeking riches will turn to those immortal books that contain the lives of master spirits writ in their own blood. This is not the time for magazines and the "Sunday Supplement" that usually so profanes the day. It is time for a reverent study of the Word of God. It is time for the biographies of great souls, for a fuller acquaintance with church history, for a dwelling with those Christian poets whose songs have done so much in determining the character of modern Christendom. Would you be a master of Browning? Give the Sabbath afternoons or evenings of a single winter to a study of his Christian poems and you will know more of him than the graduates of half the Browning Clubs of America. It requires slow, thoughtful study to master Browning. His meaning is clear enough if you will take time to think him through. Take John Ruskin's advice and study him "syllable by syllable, nay, letter by letter," and in any company you can rejoice in your knowledge of this great poet.

Christian biography is a field almost untouched by the great mass of Christians, and yet it offers knowledge as well as mental stimulus and suggestion that is unsurpassed. Who is responsible for the Christianization of our ancestors in central Europe? What sacrificing souls checked the rising tide of Roman Catholic arrogance and the sale of indul-

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gences for sin? Who are the students and teachers who evolved the doctrines that stand at the base of the Protestant denominations? What choice spirits broke the bonds of Christian selfishness and began the missionary propaganda of the age? In the average company echo answers, "Who?" for, alas! not one in ten of our people know!

Yet what fine knowledge that would be to possess. Would you not like to know? Your Sabbath afternoons of another winter would give you this knowledge, and you would have all the mental stimulus that arises from their heroism. By taking advantage of the freedom from week-day cares that a proper observance of the Sabbath day provides, an earnest mind can pass from mediocrity to mastery in a single decade.

During our Lord's earthly ministry he was once severely criticized for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day. He was amazed at the criticism and reminded the Jews that in crisis times in their own history the most acceptable servants of Jehovah,—those whom they took as models,—broke over all usual rules and did the things necessary for the preservation of their lives and the welfare of the kingdom. "Wherefore," said he, "it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day."

His action recalls the remark of James that pure religion and undefiled is not only keeping oneself unspotted from the world but is visiting the bereaved

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in their affliction and helping to provide for their needs.

Within the circle of each life there will be others who need both thought and care. One will not start out to inaugurate charity work on the Sabbath, but it is surely within the Master's conception of the proper use of this holy day for us to comfort those who mourn and cheer and relieve the needy and the sick. "It is lawful to do good on the sabbath day."

I have left untouched in this study the great realm of the command of God concerning this day and our duty to perpetuate its observance in honor of him, and many others of the usual arguments for Sabbath observance. These all stand and should have their proper weight. So also should the fact that history proves that the proper observance of this day as holy is necessary to the perpetuity of any nation. I have led you into the realm of privilege. Let us observe the Sabbath not because we must but because we may. Taking full advantage of its benefits our progress in Christian culture will be marked from year to year.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PROGRESS IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE: BY DECISION

Standing aside for a moment to gaze upon the passing throng on life's highway, one is attracted at once by the look of firm decision on the faces of the foremost. No uncertainty marks their gaze. If they seem unconscious of the throng against which they are jostling it is because their sight is turned inward—riveted upon a picture of action, the details of which they are each hurrying to work out. The rapid progress of this throng fairly dazzles the beholder. If the explorer must drive a line of stakes across the bosom of a glacier to discover in the course of a few hours or days that it has moved, the observer of the great river of human life must watch closely lest, in a moment of inattention, its appearance change so greatly that when he looks again he be not able to recognize his former object of study.

Decision and progress go hand in hand. They are parts of the same whole. The one is never found without the other. If the roll of thunder must ever be preceded by a flash of lightning the

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rumble of progress must ever be preceded by the flash of decision.

Man does not make large progress by the chance of fortune or misfortune. It is only after an unbending decision has been made, backed up by all the necessary exercise of his God-given power, that he progresses. Without the decision of a general there would have been no unconditional surrender of Santiago and the adjacent country in the Spanish war. Without the decision of an active brain and heart there will be no unconditional surrender of a citadel of indifference and uselessness in the life of man.

The man who decides he will do a thing has largely accomplished it, for it only remains for him to work out details and the victory is his. "Progress by decision" is a theme worthy of careful study.

Strangely enough, even in America, the question is sometimes asked, what does it mean to progress? Passing up and down the streets of our towns and villages one sees many men and boys to whom this phrase is absolutely unintelligible. By haphazard disposition of accumulated avoirdupois they are able to hold down a goods-box if no one drives them away and, once there, they exercise their spongy, perverted minds in constructing insults upon passing women and innocent children. Talk not to them of progress. There is no progress in earthly things beyond the limit of life. These men and boys are morally, and oftentimes intellectually and spiritually, dead already and should, by some legal enactment,

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be buried away where their already disintegrating lives would not contaminate those still healthy and vigorous.

But if, for the purpose of our present investigation, it be desirable to define clearly the word "progress" we will find that, though a broad word and having such a large part in the history of the world, it is still a word of a single idea. That is the idea of going onward toward perfection: to make improvement, to rise, to gain, to grow, to advance; as we say, to progress in civilization or morals. No word is more characteristic of American life than this. By it we are known around the world. To progress is to move from crude forms to perfect figures, to pass from the shadows into the sunlight, from uncertainty to sail out on the calm ocean of the surely known. It is to pass from the nomad to the civilian, from the wigwam to the palace, from a dark and uncertain past to a bright and intelligent present.

Gazing on the shores of the new world in 1492, Columbus saw only forest and wigwam and savage. Gazing on the same shores four hundred years later visitors to the World's Fair saw rich cities, splendid palaces and highly cultured men. During this short interval Yankee decision and ingenuity had made possible a progress incomprehensible to residents of the Orient. China of to-day differs not greatly from the China of ten centuries ago, while America, as clay in the hands of a skillful potter,

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has been changed from a rude mass into a splendid, soul-inspiring statue in one third this time.

To progress meant, to George Washington, to pass from an unknown civil engineer in the wilds of Virginia to the founder of the American Republic. To Abraham Lincoln, to progress meant to move from an obscure rail-splitter in the heart of Illinois to emancipator and first citizen in America. To Peter, to progress meant to pass from a fisherman on the shores of Galilee to a member of the faculty in the university of Christianity. To David, to progress meant to develop from a ruddy shepherd boy to king of Israel. To Moses, it meant to grow from a child hidden in the bulrushes of the Nile to one who received the decalogue direct from God. Such knowledge seems too wonderful for man, and yet as he sees it worked out year after year in the lives of men he is driven to realize its truth and the possibility of others making similar progress, but who, instead, are drifting with the tide.

If men do not progress it is because they do not decide. Progression waits upon decision as the fast-bound buds and bulbs of winter wait upon the slow return of summer sun. Jordan reminds us that "the world gladly steps aside to let him pass who knows whither he is going," while we ourselves are able to see that the man of uncertain step is never able to cleave a passage through the throng. Large size, deep voice, glistening epaulets give not his strength

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to the commander, but it is the decision that has been reached within. This it is that gives fire to his eye, it is this that gives strength to every movement and instantly convinces his own army and his enemy that that decision is to be carried out.

Against the thoughts of perhaps the majority of men upon the subject it should be said that true progress depends not entirely, or even largely, upon present power, either physical or mental. It is a most common thing for men and women to give as an excuse for their standing still, want of physical strength or lack of a well-stored, well-trained mind. It is a poor excuse and unsatisfactory to one who has studied even slightly the history of the world's progress. Milton was blind, Byron was lame, Pope was never entirely well. According to Bible history Paul was constantly oppressed by some physical ailment and still we see him progress from the brutal persecutor Saul to the gentle, brilliant, powerful Paul the apostle to the Gentiles and author of some of the sublimest literature the race has thus far produced. Calvin was wretched physically, perhaps never enjoying a single day entirely free from pain and bodily distress, but in spite of it all we see emerging from that pain-racked body a system of truth which attracted the immediate attention of all Christendom and which will leave its imprint forever upon man's theology. Henry Drummond had little bodily strength, but he did not allow this to stand in the way of African exploration and rich

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utterance of uplifting truth. Robert Louis Stevenson, although driven to the islands of the sea in search of health, continued to pour forth song and story to the delight of an admiring people.

Other things being equal, it is clear to all that the man of health may make more progress than his weaker brother, but all the strength possible to human beings will avail nothing without the decision of an intelligent will. The young and vigorous oak has made the decision to grow into a giant of the forest. There is but one way to stop its progress; that is to kill it. If men and women would start out with the determination to accomplish something worthy the race and the God who gave them faculties or die in the attempt, the race would shoot forward as a locomotive under double steam; we would progress more in the next fifty years than we have in the past four hundred.

Further than this, a firm decision looking toward the accomplishment of some worthy service will often do more than all possible medical attention and costly drugs in restoring strength to a weakened body. A man in the central part of Illinois, an elder in a Presbyterian church for twenty-five years, whom I knew as I know my most intimate friends, furnishes a most striking illustration of this truth. He had never been well, being obliged when twenty years of age to begin to travel for his health, but he was a man of clear-cut decisions and changeless determination. He had neither physical strength

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nor large mental training, but his power of decision was abnormally developed. Very early in life he conceived an idea in furnace construction and steam heating that promised large returns, but it had to be developed and placed upon the market, and he had neither strength nor means. In default of these, however, he had the power of deciding and determining. As a result his furnaces were soon on the market and a company with capital had put him on the road to work up a demand for their product.

Very early in his experience on the road he was in a railroad wreck which nearly cost him his life and left him a cripple for the remainder of his days. On one crutch, with frequent violent attacks of disease, he continued his work both on the road and in the working out of other plans for the progress of his company. Their advance was phenomenal. Orders poured in upon them continually, necessitating a larger plant and more men. In the midst of this success another railroad wreck rendered almost useless the one leg that had assisted the crutch in his locomotion. But instead of stopping at this calamity he got another crutch and went on, more vigorous than before. He had now become a wealthy man and wished to see the world. His friends remonstrated and suggested the impossibility of a man in his condition taking a trip to Europe. Meanwhile he had ordered tickets and taken passage on a fast passenger steamer. Arriving in southern Europe he, with his wife and daughter, toured the

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entire continent, reluctantly leaving London after every spot of interest in the great city had been explored. I venture to assert that to the day of his death he could tell you more of what is to be seen on a journey through Europe than any man of your acquaintance who has made the trip but once.

But at last his hour seemed to have arrived. Racked with pain and unable to take food or medicine, this man, who had overcome every other obstacle in life by sheer will power, seemed yielding before the Universal Reaper. Friends and relatives were gathered at his bedside. So weak had he become that every breath was now fanned into his nostrils by some loving hand. Dissolution was momentarily expected when, to the surprise of all, he rallied. Some said, "It is the final struggle before the going," but instead of that he continued to improve. Soon food and medicine were acceptable and the man rose from his bed and lived an active life for many years. In conversation with him almost immediately after the first rally I asked him what had brought about the change. "Well," said he, "after I had been allowed to stay so long, and when I heard how sorrowful mother and the children were at the thought of my going, and when I realized that death was near and I had never done much for God, I concluded that God must still have some work for me to do in the world and so I decided to get well and I'm progressing finely!" What medicine could not do, what all the skill of trained

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physicians could not do, Decision gloriously accomplished in the life of this servant of God.

Tell me not, in view of these facts, that if God meant that you should be great he would have given you more strength. He most often chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. A weak body, backed up by the power of decision and determination, will do more for the betterment of mankind than the strength of a Samson with no determining will behind it.

It may be said, further, that the simple passing of much time has little to do with progress. Three-score years and ten would leave a person a physical infant and a mental blank if there were no decisions of the will toward development. Man often progresses more in a single hour or a single day than in a previous decade. Better one clear-cut decision, made in a moment, looking toward a larger growth, than ten years of drifting through the routine duties of daily life. Progress is in direct proportion to the number and definiteness of the decisions we are faithfully carrying out.

“Very early,” said Margaret Fuller, “I perceived that the object of life is to grow.” Commenting upon this remark and upon herself, James Freeman Clarke says: “She, herself, was a remarkable instance of the power of the human being to go forward and upward. Of her it might be said as Goethe said of Schiller, ‘If I did not see him for a fortnight I

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was astonished to find what progress he had made in the interim.' ”

Psychologists tell us that in every act of the normal will there are three distinct elements—motive, choice and volition. In the simple act of making a gesture all these have a part. First there is something to be done. This furnishes a motive. The mind recognizes the need and immediately determines to meet it, but in what way? Several of differing degrees of appropriateness suggest themselves. There must be a choice between them. Finally the mind decides that it shall be a right-hand gesture. It now remains that the volition be carried out—that work be actually done. Motive, Choice, Volition. The process is simple and unconsciously followed. The difficulty lies not here but in the painful fact that all too few minds ever enter determinedly upon the work of willing. Some fail to see the need and so are not moved to meet it. Many see the need, the motive is sufficient—but through indifference fail to determine to meet it. While still others see the need—choose between the various ways of meeting it and fail in the last element, the carrying out of the volition.

All of these are they who are standing still—mere promontories upon the landscape, while the great stream of men and women who are hurrying to carry out their decisions rush past them as a swiftly flowing river. A huge boulder retaining its position merely by virtue of its ponderous weight

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sees little—the same view every day. But the water in that river has already traveled a thousand miles and will travel a thousand more before it reaches the ocean. With every moment a new scene has opened to its view. It has flowed past cities, past farms, past hamlets. It has seen a thousand opportunities to advance the interests of man and bring joy and gladness into the world. Here it flowed over a mill wheel and gave wealth and health to man; here it laved the roots of a mighty tree that had grown upon its hospitable banks and the tree gave denser shade and more beauty to the landscape. Yonder it laughed and rippled and gave to a poet a theme for his song which shall long cheer the hearts of men—from source to ocean this happy progressive river sees and takes advantage of a thousand opportunities to better a needy world.

The people who stand still are bowlders. To see them you must go where they are. They see no need for activity because they move not among the people who have needs—mere cumberers of the ground that must be cast out before the husbandman can till his field. The people who progress are as the water of the river. In their swift course from infancy to age they are ever passing new scenes and discovering new ways of helping mankind. They bring prosperity, they give health and life, they cheer, they inspire and the world is better for their having lived.

If, now, some one should put the question, "How

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may I, who have been standing still, begin to progress? How may I, who have been a cumbering boulder, become a life and joy-giving river?" I answer you gladly, "By deciding to do so." Definitely, positively decide to progress and then bend every energy toward the carrying out of that decision. There are no insurmountable obstacles in America to prevent men from progressing. If you are not doing so be assured the blame rests entirely upon your own shoulders. Replying to the complaint of a young man that he had no money and therefore could not go to college, David Starr Jordan, president of Leland Stanford University, said tersely:

This is nonsense! If you have health and strength and no one dependent upon you, you cannot be poor. There is in this country no greater good luck that a young man can have than to be thrown on his own resources. The cards are stacked against the rich man's son. Of the many college men who have risen to prominence in my day very few did not lack for money in college. The young men who have fought their way, have earned their own money and know what a dollar costs, have the advantage of the rich. They enter the world outside with no luxurious habits, with no taste for idleness. It is not worth while to be born with a silver spoon in your mouth when a little effort will secure you a gold one. The time, the money the unambitious young man wastes in trifling pursuits or in absolute idleness will suffice to give the ambitious man his education. The rich man's son may enter college with better preparation than you; he may wear better clothes; he may be graduated younger; but the poor man's son can make up for lost time by greater energy and by the greater clearness of his grit. He steps from the

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commencement stage into no uncertain world. He has already measured swords with the great antagonist and the first victory is his. It is the first struggle that counts. But, he adds, it is not poverty that helps a man. There is no virtue in poor food or shabby clothing. It is the effort by which he throws off the yoke of poverty that enlarges the powers. It is not hard work, but work to a purpose that frees the soul.

Then, fearing the charge of stating untried theories, Dr. Jordan continues:

Do not say that I am expecting too much of the effects of a firm resolution, that I give you advice which will lead you to failure; for the man who will fail will never make a resolution.

From this clear illustration from so high an authority we may see that whatever worthy ambition, within the possibilities of human attainment there may be before you, may be largely realized if you firmly, positively, with consent of all your present faculties, determine that you will accomplish it.

After the first firm positive decision to progress has been made there is indeed much to be done. When the water in a mountain spring decides to flow to the ocean it would never leave its stony cradle if it did not begin at once to adjust itself to new conditions. Now it must flow swiftly over jagged, heartless rocks, now it must flow slowly along a nearly level plain, now shoot a dangerous rapid, now plunge over a lofty precipice, all the time adjusting itself to new conditions and requirements

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but, having once decided to flow to the ocean, these changes are but trifles, but working out the details of a rare accomplishment. So the life that decides to start toward success must be ready to make a thousand other decisions that will help on the progress. Here an important point must be yielded, there a stand must be taken, now you must go swiftly but anon your pace must be slackened, all the time you must be able and gladly willing to adjust yourself to new conditions that your great, shining goal may be attained.

It is a small thing for a hare to turn a corner if by so doing he escape the jaws of the fast pursuing hound. It is a small thing for a young man to give up a habit if by so doing he escape the devouring jaws of oblivion. You may say it is not wrong for you to smoke a cigarette but, if it makes your hand too shaky to wield properly the pen to-morrow it is standing like a stone wall in front of your progress. You may say it is not wrong for you to enjoy social life, to stay out late at night and indulge in fatiguing pastimes and eat late suppers, but if doing so robs you of proper rest, beclouds your brain, weakens your power, the current of your progress will flow slowly indeed, and if you watch not will soon become a stagnant pool. Once having decided to attain a ground, to win a victory, be willing to decide all minor matters in such a way as that they will do most to help you achieve your coveted victory.

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Toward what shall our first great decision look? Upon this will depend the whole trend of our lives. Falling on one side of a promontory on the border between the United States and Canada a drop of water will enter the St. Lawrence and flow eastward toward the Atlantic Ocean; falling on the other side of the same promontory another drop will enter the Mississippi and flow southward to the Gulf of Mexico.

Deciding to accomplish selfish ends, one man may go on until he becomes as rich as Dives—and as cursed. Deciding to accomplish higher ends for the betterment of man, one may go on until he be as wealthy in service as Paul—and as blessed.

The decision of the prodigal is the “priceless decision”: “I will arise and go to my father.” Would that this might be the “supreme decision” of every man and woman in the world. The poor, hapless, worthless, young vagabond did not decide to “arise and go toward wealth” nor to “arise and go toward fame,” nor to “arise and go toward personal happiness,” but “I will arise and go to my father,” and all these things were added unto him. Taking their portion of the Father’s goods,—of wealth, of faculty, of opportunity,—many men have wandered far from the Father’s house and wasted their substance in riotous and worse than useless living. The fair image with which they started, the rich inheritance of noble birth, is marred beyond recognition by the thriftless, debasing life they have

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been living. For them, for us, for all men everywhere, the first great sweeping decision to make is "I will arise and go to my father." Knowing of this, the great Father's heart will leap for joy, and "while we are yet afar off" he will come out to meet us with the best robe and ring and falling upon our necks will give us the kiss of joy and welcome. Call now the neighbors in, kill now the fatted calf, provide education, provide wealth, provide happiness, "for this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE TIME LIMIT ON CHRISTIAN PROGRESS

The perfection of God himself is set before man as an attainment entirely possible for him. The thought fairly staggers the human mind. From the summit of the delectable mountains of revelation shines his ineffable glory. He is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. Not only so, but his heart is a heart of love and he yearns over his earthly children as a mother over her first-born. What can the Saviour mean when he commands us to be like him? to be perfect as he is perfect?

This cannot mean that we are called to equal God in understanding or in achievement, and so it must mean that in the development within us of qualities that are godlike, purity, sympathy, love, forgiveness, we shall reach perfection to the measure of human possibility; perfect in our place as our heavenly Father is perfect in his.

No man should pale before this call because it is difficult; he should be stimulated by it to the utmost endeavor because of its magnificence. To

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be godlike in personal purity, in the exercise of love, sympathy, forgiveness, were an accomplishment beside which all others sink into insignificance. God measures man by character, not by earthly accomplishment. Therefore equal, surpass if you can, other men in achievement, but strive to equal God in character.

How great a thing it is that God has willed this boon for us! How amazing that he should make it easier for us to attain perfection in character than to achieve any other thing! How marvelous that all his instructions should have been supplemented by an example in human flesh, putting the fact of human perfection beyond all question and making it easy for us to understand and apply his revelation! How stimulating that, as it were, from the walls of Zion he should call out to all men: "My children, I am watching you. I would have you grow strong and rich in learning and character for your own good until you attain unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of my Son."

Before the great Torso in the Vatican galleries at Rome, the marble that taught Michelangelo to be a sculptor, masters still take their pupils. The perfection of the whole is pointed out. It is turned about on its movable pedestal that every line and curve may be seen to best advantage, and when the eye has gathered all there is for it the delicate fingers of those quick students finally touch the marble itself. Through sensitive nerves there flows

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to the brains of eager souls new perfections until, when with reluctance they move away, it is only to go back to their studios and more nearly approach in their creations the perfection of the greatest marble in Rome.

Similarly God would have us study the perfection of Jesus very closely. He is the great example. If we will live as he did we will satisfy God wholly. First, we are to see him as a fact of history, mighty, pivotal, central; the God-man whose character and whose work forever changed the course of human events and made possible the redemption of a rebellious and selfish people. Then we are to listen to his words and give consideration to his teaching. When such a character speaks, it is with authority, and all men should hear and heed. His words are golden and hold for men the riches of life. Then we are to begin to exercise his virtues; to feel with him the needs of men, the distress of the sorrowing, the joy of the victorious.

Having seen and dwelt upon the perfection of Jesus, we are called to bring our own life structure up to the Saviour's standards and walk with him in the holiness of God. Surely God has paid man no higher compliment than this, that he counted us worthy to walk with him in perfection of character! Perhaps now we can better understand the Psalmist when he cried:

For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.

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In view of all this stimulation, this gracious and abundant assistance, it is disappointing that man's progress toward perfection in character is so painfully slow, that in some generations he seems actually to slip backward more than he moves forward; that in spite of the glory of righteous living there are still many men who love "the darkness rather than the light," who make no attempt to attain unto the perfection of character revealed as a possibility in Jesus Christ.

By no means can all of this failure be laid at the door of ignorance. The heathen world is not alone in sin. The first page of a single issue of a cosmopolitan daily newspaper a few months ago told of a college professor on trial for the murder of his wife; of the president of a great state educational association being sent to the penitentiary for misappropriation of funds; of three leading New York bank officials who had been given long prison terms for wrecking their institution by self-benefiting high-finance. It cannot be laid at the door of ignorance of the call to higher life or how to meet it that otherwise good people will nurse misunderstandings to the point of family or neighborhood feuds often simply for the satisfying of a little wounded pride; that some cherish hatred against their neighbor until that hatred reacts upon themselves, ruining their disposition and preventing character development. Their action is like that of a species of serpent that, finding itself in an unbear-

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able situation, will suddenly turn and sting itself to death; men are not ignorant when they vote to sustain institutions whose harmful influence is universally confessed and which stand like yawning gulfs before our easily influenced boys and girls.

No! Indifference has drawn a veil over our eyes and selfish lusts have dulled our consciences; the clink of money has filled our ears and slavish fear has sealed our lips and we creep along mere pygmies in character when God intended us to be giants! We wade in mire up to our knees when God intended us to walk upon streets paved with gold! Why are we willing to do it?

We are all very sure that before it is too late we are going to reform. We know this evil living is ignoble; that it is unworthy. Without saying it in words, our feeling is that as soon as we have indulged ourselves a little more or gained a little more money by unholy practices we are going to stop; we are going to reform; we are going to turn from our sin and evil way and live righteously. It is going to be a glorious transformation. We have seen dull, rusty iron cast into the furnace, its dross all consumed, and when the vent is opened we have seen it flow forth a glistening, glowing stream. The change in our life is to be like that. It will be instantly noticeable to the whole world.

It is the business of the messengers of Jehovah to stand upon the walls of Zion and as they call men to repentance and righteous living remind them

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that there is a time limit on Christian progress. Even the earthly life of Jesus could not go on forever. When, after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, certain Greeks asked to see him, Jesus realized that the beginning of the end had come. It precipitated a discussion concerning his earthly life, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" Then said Jesus in substance: Is it possible that even yet you do not understand? I came as God's truth incarnate. Have you not seen this from the life I have lived and the words I have spoken? Have these not drawn you to a higher life? I cannot stay with you always. Learn fast. "Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not."

From this appeal of Jesus let us learn.

First: That we do not know how long the opportunity to correct our way of life and to make our peace with God will be granted us. Nothing is more sure than that our tenure of life is uncertain. How many men who go to their couch at night in perfect health are found by their families in the morning wrapped in the arms of eternal sleep! A short time ago a happy company of seven were reveling in the beauties of southern California in a touring car. Starting to descend a foothill the brakes on the machine refused to hold. Faster and faster sped the huge monster with its precious and

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now terrified load. The young girl at the wheel tried every expedient but all to no avail. Like a demon determined upon vengeance, the huge machine flew forward until, reaching a sharp bend in the steep decline, it plunged over the embankment, down a hundred feet into the ravine, pinning to instant death the company that five minutes before were so happy. We are sure of no moment but the present and should not leave vital things to be attended in a future on which we have no sure hold.

Second: But if life itself is uncertain we must not shut our minds to the inevitable darkness of failing powers. Under the stress of heavy labor or sorrow, or following close upon some crisis, our faculties sway and sometimes yield. We are never the same again. A rich man in central Illinois spent a long life in the accumulation of a vast fortune. He always had spiritual aspirations, but inasmuch as his business methods were not Christian he kept crushing his higher life down, saying that when he had made a fortune he would give himself to religion. The time finally came when he was forced to release his hold on financial affairs. He began to attend religious services regularly but found no satisfaction. Spiritual things were an enigma to him. He had no faculty with which to grasp and understand them. The body, which he had fed and pampered for threescore years and ten, demanded a continuance of the same attention. The mind, adjusted to material things, could not grasp and

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assimilate the things of the soul. No more pathetic picture could be imagined than this rich old man grasping in the dark for spiritual blessings and comfort which his lifelong selfish practices had rendered his faculties incapable of grasping or enjoying. I wonder if many others are not making the same mistake.

The vital mistake men make is in putting these intended transformations off too long. In the early days of Nebraska, before the state was thickly populated, four youths left home for a winter's holiday with a neighboring family some two hours distant. In gay spirits they tramped the distance in the morning over prairies innocent of fence or well-marked roadway. The day was spent in fun and frolic. By mid-afternoon clouds covered the sky and snow threatened. The wiser heads in the company proposed that they start home at once, but the less thoughtful scoffed at the idea and proposed fresh games. Gently the snow began to fall. In an hour all roads were covered and the shades of evening began to fall. Alarmed, the youths now made ready to start for home. Their friends tried to prevail upon them to wait until morning, but they said it was impossible. So out upon the plains in the fast gathering darkness they sped, sure they would be able to reach home in safety. Soon the wind rose and the youths found themselves facing a raging blizzard. At midnight they knew they were lost and tried to find their way back, but the

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snow had obliterated every trace and they could find no familiar object. The cold benumbed them. One after another they sank down while the stronger tried to arouse the weaker to further effort. At last all failed and, huddling together, in the awful blast they clung to each other until frozen in a rigid embrace. Their delay had cost them their lives, though they were never more than two hours away from home and friends.

Hundreds of good men are but a step from the kingdom. They do not mean to be lost. They are keeping their lives well within the lines of respectability. Many of them are good, moral men. They know that morality and respectability will not save their souls, and they have definitely determined to soon take the final step by a public confession of Christ and so do the thing God asks all men to do to secure spiritual birth. If any such be reading this paragraph I cry out to you, in the name of all that is holy, what are you waiting for? If this thing is necessary at all it is vital. What more convenient season can there ever be than the present, when all your powers are normal and when the invitation to action is frequently and urgently sounded in your ears?

Third: But to these obvious things urging us to action, which a man may see by merely opening his eyes, there is another even more startling and compelling. In the early days when God saw that men were neglectful of their higher privilege and re-

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fused to respond to his calls he said: "My Spirit shall not strive with man." What does this mean? Clearly that God at last accepts man's rejection of his call to nobler life as final and the voice of his spirit no longer reaches the centers of his life. Impulses to righteousness pass by. The inner life ceases after a while to urge men to righteousness and they are allowed to fall to the levels they have chosen. I plead with you to respond to these calls while they are sounding in your ear. They will stop some day and possibly before you have made the corrections needed in your life to save you.

Every observing man has lifted his eyes to see the ceaseless working of one of nature's greatest laws, "Every power that is not used is taken away"—and to see no less, in the life of man, that opportunities not taken suddenly cease to exist. God has made it easy for man to build a noble character. The way is clearly indicated, the opportunities are numberless, the impulses to do the right thing in any given instance are strong. Upon every man's pathway to holiness God has thrown a flood of light.

A tiny dory was one dark night feeling its way out through the rocks of a dangerous harbor to a great sea-going vessel in the roadstead. Two anxious hearts were rowing. Success meant that a lonely man should join friends from whom he had been separated for months and go on with them

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for a happy journey. But jagged rocks were numerous, the night was dark and the sea high. All at once a fortunate thing occurred. Anticipating that some such thing might be attempted, the captain of the vessel ordered the searchlight to play over the harbor. In a moment the struggling dory was sighted and from this time on a flood of light made its journey through the rocks easy.

Similarly, on the roadway leading to the city of the soul, God has shed the light of his own revelation. Men stumbled once because they could not see the way, but they need do so no more. The way is clear and plain. Every man who wills may find it and walk in it. To the men and women already in the Christian church the appeal is made, Will you not rise up to the expectation of your Lord? More eagerly than any earthly parent he wants his offspring to be giants. To make this possible he has given us bodies that rebel against all abuse and call for health, minds that aspire to fullest understanding, souls that, at least at frequent intervals, yearn after spiritual perfection and satisfaction. The man who does not rise has loaded himself down with log-chains of inactivity, with dead weights of self-indulgence. If a man is not going onward toward God it is because he is allowing his pampered body to stand in the way of his aspiring soul.

But I have said enough. Few Christians who read these pages need to be instructed. They know

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what is right already. They need only to be aroused. Let your soul have its chance. It is the soul that endures. Its richness and insight must have an influence on the degree of man's felicity and further progress in the kingdom of heaven. Be the spiritual giant your Creator intended you to be, and above all things make progress while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.







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