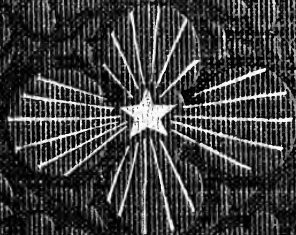


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**STEPS  
CHRISTWARD**

**COUNSELS  
FOR  
YOUNG CHRISTIANS**

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**HOWARD ALLEN BRIDGMAN**

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1933

# Steps Christward

Counsels for Young Christians

By  
HOWARD ALLEN BRIDGMAN

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BOSTON  
**The Pilgrim Press**  
CHICAGO

2000  
Bridgman

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
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*TO MY WIFE*



## P R E F A C E

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FOR over ten years it has been a duty and privilege to furnish each week through the columns of *The Congregationalist* a few suggestions concerning the current topic for the Christian Endeavor prayer-meeting. During this period the broad field of Christian truth and Christian service has been traversed, not in a consecutive and systematic fashion, but most of the subjects which engage the mind of the disciple of Jesus, or appeal to his heart, have been considered. The treatment of the themes, though fragmentary and inadequate, has received such an undeserved measure of favor as to encourage the preparation of a little book which may interest a wider audience than that originally addressed.

The material at command has been totally reshaped and a classification made under comprehensive captions with a few sub-topics from page to page. A considerable portion of the book is altogether new. The author hopes that in its present form it may help fellow travelers in the good way and serve the need of some who would enter upon and continue in the life which is life indeed.





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*THE START*

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Life is big and demands big ventures.

—*F. W. Tomkins.*

Do not draw back from any way because you have never passed there before.—*Phillips Brooks.*

There is a great deal that is hidden away in a Christian life before we are through with it, but as with everything else its beginning stands out in the clear. You can set your face Godwards and Christwards, you can leave off waiting and start, and take a step to-day and then you will be in readiness to take the next step to-morrow.—*C. H. Parkhurst.*

# I

## THE START

THERE will be many steps after the first, some long, some short; some firm, some halting; but none of them more important than step number one. To go anywhere one must start from where he is, and to walk in the way of Christ one must, on some forever memorable day, call into action all the forces of his nature and begin. Impulses from without may cooperate—a mother's prayers, a friend's tender word, a book casually encountered, the state of feeling in the community, but it is the man himself in his solitary and splendid individuality who shakes off his inertia and his indifference, and rises up to follow Jesus.

*The  
First  
Step*

Dr. Pentecost tells about a sleeping-car porter whom he once approached regarding the matter of personal religion.

## S T E P S     C H R I S T W A R D

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*The First Step* "You are going to be a Christian sometime, aren't you?" he asked, when the man seemed inclined to postpone a decision. "Oh, yes, doctor," was the ready reply, "but I dreads de process." How many persons have kept themselves out of the kingdom because they "dread the process." I can distinctly remember thinking when a lad that I never could be a Christian until I had paced the floor for a whole night in an agony of spiritual unrest. It was an idea derived, presumably, from the biography of some saint. That experience never came, and I do not believe that we can lay down in advance a certain course of procedure by means of which we shall enter the kingdom, nor can any one lay it down for us. Christian impulses and convictions steal in upon us when least expected. It may be as we listen to a sermon, or as we walk alone under the quiet stars, or as we address ourselves to the hard work of life. The question with us is not how, or when, or where the Spirit of God shall overtake us, but what shall be our response.

## T H E      S T A R T

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The solemn truth of the matter is that we are going somewhere. Our days bear us swiftly along to a different outward environment. The inner man is changing too. What are they all for—these human years? What ought we to do with time and talents, with health and reason, with influence and opportunities? What ought we to cast out of our lives? To what should we open the doors of our hearts? Here comes religion with its simple, direct answer: There is a way that is known as the Christian way. It proposes certain definite ideals. It calls for a certain attitude of mind and will. It imposes certain great governing principles of conduct. It promises certain rich and satisfying rewards. All you need to do at the present moment in order to know more about it is to start.

*What  
is  
Life  
For*

With or without great emotion, with or without large knowledge, with or without much confidence, the start is effected. Suffice it for the present that the first step is to be made. More feeling will come by and by, and a keener under-

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*What* standing too. But the look is already  
*is* forward and little by little the step which  
*Life* seems so simple, which really is so  
*For* simple, is seen to have large relationships  
and to involve certain definite acts and  
processes. So we go on to analyze even  
our first venture and to take hold one by  
one of the different elements, using the  
terms familiar to Christian ears, but seek-  
ing to pierce through conventional lan-  
guage to the reality within.

*Repenting* Why is it that those few simple words,  
“I am sorry,” come so hard to us? In  
our childhood how many parental per-  
suasions and entreaties, how much ad-  
monition on the part of our teachers, it  
required to bring us to the point where  
we would own to ourselves and to others  
that we had done wrong. Such a con-  
fession, good as it is to the soul in early  
or in later life, knifes our pride. It re-  
duces us to the level of men whom we in  
our pharisaism have denominated sin-  
ners. But it touches the very springs of  
righteous living. A man must go lower  
before he can mount higher. Until a



## T H E   S T A R T

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man senses and hates his sin God can do *Repenting*  
very little for him. The prodigal who at last comes to himself in the far country and loathes his rags and his company is nearer the kingdom of heaven than the cultivated, faultless, unbelieving society man, who thinks that he has

No tear to wipe, no good to crave,  
No fear to quell, no soul to save.

But penitence involves another step. And just as we are all prone to attribute to others the cause of our downfall, so we are disposed to offer to God some other penitential gift than that which he desires. Some, like the "Penitentes" of New Mexico, lacerate themselves and wail like madmen. Some, like the saints of the middle ages, put on hair shirts and keep long vigils. The Jews, abusing a system which was meant to train them in righteousness, brought the blood of bulls and goats to God, until he cried out that he was wearied with such sacrifices and his prophet thundered forth, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Repenting*      We fall into the same blunder. We think to atone for injustice to one person by stricter justice or even by generosity to another. We will make up for being faithless to one duty by being over-zealous in the performance of another. This is to make a farce of penitence. God wants us to clean up our lives at those precise points where we have been remiss. The sin which you realize and which, from the bottom of your heart, you spurn, that is the sin which God wants you forever to renounce, and the offering which he yearns for is a complete and immediate right-about-face.

One may delude himself for a little while with the idea that some big obstacle for which he is not responsible lies right athwart his path into the kingdom of God, but others know and God knows that it is nothing but his own pride and self-sufficiency.

*Deciding*      Two things are involved in the decision to be a Christian. One is the intrusting to Jesus Christ of our intellectual questionings and strivings. We do not aban-

## T H E     S T A R T

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don the exercise of rational thought, nay, *Deciding*  
Jesus himself bade us to love God with all our mind. But we do agree, when we become Christians, to leave with Christ the great intellectual problems that often perplex and battle our faith. We say, Here is a man who knows, and we accept his testimony regarding God and heaven and the meaning of all the discipline of these human years. We adopt a certain intellectual attitude toward truth; we obtain a certain philosophy. We call these the Christian attitude, the Christian philosophy. By it we mean that we look out upon this universe through the eyes of Christ and accept his judgment and his estimate of values.

In the second place, we adopt Christ's program of life. We say that, instead of presuming to order our own way, choose our own tasks, work our own pleasure, we will receive from Christ the practical guidance of all our doing from day to day; we will live for the same ends for which Christ lived and died. Like him, we will make it our aim

## S T E P S     C H R I S T W A R D

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*Deciding* always to be well pleasing to the Father.

What an immense difference this two-fold commitment of the whole self to Christ makes! There is a vast gulf between those who are in the kingdom of God and those outside. It is not for us to draw a line and determine on which side this or that man stands, or to proclaim ostentatiously that all the virtue of the world is within the kingdom and all the vice outside. But this much is true—those within have made one honest step toward the kingdom and are trying, even though they fail repeatedly, to think the thoughts of Jesus and to do his works.

A decision ought to be made in the interests of honesty. Jesus never was content and never will be with a certain indefinite friendly attitude toward him. His word is, "Follow thou me." He is seeking, not men in the mass, but John and James and Andrew. Is it quite fair to evade the simple, searching test which he has always laid down as a condition of entrance into his service? At heart you are not quite honest when you take

## T H E        S T A R T

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refuge in your kindly instincts toward *Deciding* him and never once actually make that definite, personal surrender which he demands.

The decision should also be made in the interest of peace. Perplexed Pilate moaned, "What shall I do with Jesus?" "Try Herod," his cowardly nature suggested, "try the instincts of the mob, appeal to Jewish pride, do anything that will make it unnecessary for you to pass the final judgment." At last he had to settle the question himself. So it will ever be. No lasting peace will come until like a man you have faced the issue. There is a time for deliberation, but after every possible aspect of the case has been thought through there comes the time to act. You may be in doubt up to the morning of election for which candidate you will vote, but if you are going to do your duty as a citizen you must decide, and in making the decision touching Jesus Christ, as in making every other decision in life, it is well to remember that no question is ever settled until it is settled right.

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Deciding* If the rejection of Christ to-day be only a deliberate refusal to have anything to do with him—a sharp decision against his claims and his cause—then the number of those who reject him is relatively small. Not many men have dared to drive from their hearts all thought of Christ, or to declare to themselves or others that they would have naught to do with him. Indifference, absorption in other things, the disposition to wait for a more convenient season—these are things which keep most men from openly allying themselves with Christ. We cannot believe that men taken in the mass are so depraved, so hostile to the Christ of history, as to commit the terrible sin which has lain like a shadow on the Jewish race ever since the cry, “Crucify him. His blood be on us and our children,” rang through the streets of Jerusalem.

But the sad thing about this matter is that indifference, indecision, amount practically to a rejection. Sooner or later Jesus comes to close quarters with every human soul. There is this differ-

## T H E     S T A R T

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ence between him and other spiritual leaders. They put forth their teachings, but did not emphasize a personal relationship to themselves. Socrates never said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Ralph Waldo Emerson never said, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Browning never said, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." Many men drift along for years without the nerve to decide this great question, but every true man has times when the personal Christ presses in upon his life. Through some messenger—a yearning mother, a devoted teacher, a loving friend, a pastor, a pleading evangelist, or through one's own reading of the New Testament—comes the simple, strenuous command, "Follow thou me."

If the answer is, "Not yet," God in his mercy repeats the invitation over and over again. Jesus Christ is the most inevitable being who has ever walked this earth. We cannot escape him. He is continually confronting us in the best

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Deciding* literature, the noblest poems, the finest statuary and the most beautiful paintings of the world. If you reject him in early years or do what is equivalent to rejection, that is, postpone action with reference to him, you are likely, suddenly, in some distant corner of the earth, it may be, to see the marred face of the Son of man as he bends his yearning look on you alone. The pathos of life is that while the appeal of Christ is no less tender, the human heart, as it goes on in sin or in indifference, loses its earlier susceptibility. And the evil effects of one rejection after another accumulate until character is undermined, and he who was made capable of fellowship with God becomes more fit to associate with brutes.

But who can measure the joy and significance of that moment when religion as a matter of personal experience really grips our hearts? Is there anything more marvelous than that a man hitherto absorbed in self and earthly things should suddenly awake to the consciousness, not only that there is a God some-



## T H E     S T A R T

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where far out in space, but a power close at hand exercising a Father's care and pouring out a Father's love? It is not strange that when Christ thus arouses a man to a sense of his divine capacities and possibilities the world becomes new to him and he dates all future events from that moment. "It was about the tenth hour," said John, many years afterwards, as he recalled his first meeting with Jesus. "It was ten years, six months and a half ago last week Thursday," says the man who bears testimony in the Rescue Mission. *Deciding*

Saints, martyrs, confessors—these have always been linked in the thought of the Christian Church and have constituted its roll of honor. It is significant that those who were outspoken in their faith came to be classified by themselves. Hunted down by the persecutor, brought to bay before kings and councils, they recalled the words of their Master about confessing him before men. Secret discipleship had to be abjured forever. The test had come. The line of demar- *Confessing*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Confessing* cation between them and others—some of them possibly at heart followers of the Nazarene—had to be drawn. They must tell it out to the world that they believed in Christ. It was, after all, only what he had foreseen would come to them, and because they stood up like men and showed their colors our faith has been preserved to us with the radiance of their testimony upon it.

Whether a man will confess Christ by joining his church is a secondary although very important question. Decide, first, whether you will confess Christ daily as you go to your business, not by mumbling his name every few minutes nor by making the sign of the cross, but by imitating his example. After your policy in this respect has been determined, the question of joining the church will assume a different phase and you will be very exceptional if it does not seem to you the natural and almost necessary outcome of the other decision.

“But I am not good enough!” Oh, how men misconceive this matter of

## T H E        S T A R T

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confessing Christ! If you were to stand before a congregation and assert that you had made an end of all perfection, that you were henceforth to be an example of all the virtues, you might well shrink from such pretensions. But it is not the good people who confess Christ, but the people who want to be good—the people broken with the shame of their repeated failings and misdeeds, the people yearning for a way out of the prison house of self into the light and liberty of the sons of God. *Confessing*

“But I am not quite sure whether Jesus is divine!” Does he ask you to exhaust the mystery of his being, or to estimate his place in the scale of creation? He simply asks you to take him for what he himself says he is—the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd of the sheep.

What is this universal instinct that impels one life to commit itself to the care and guidance of another? We expect it in the child as the most natural and beautiful trait of childhood, indeed, *Trusting and Obeying*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Trusting* as the indispensable factor in its growth.  
*and* The time will come when the little  
*Obeying* one, if it hopes to be a man by and by, must abandon creeping and must totter towards the loving arms outstretched so near, but far enough away to call for some enterprise on the child's part, in this the first great venture of his life. In the growing youth we see the same trait when the home circle is exchanged for the boarding-school or college and hitherto untried opportunities of education are first made use of. And when manhood is reached, and a scientific or professional career is entered upon, are there not many moments when even the wisdom of the wise must wait upon the faith element?

When the chemist in the laboratory institutes certain processes, he trusts that the elements with which he is dealing will combine and produce certain results. Life in all its grades and periods is more or less of an experiment. The religious word used to describe these ventures of the soul and mind is "trust." When analyzed it is found to consist of two ele-

## T H E     S T A R T

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ments—first, the letting go of something which had proved fairly sufficient; and, second, the taking hold of something stronger and more satisfactory. “Trust” means going forward before you are altogether certain. *Trusting  
and  
Obeying*

From this point of view, becoming a Christian is not anything less rational or more difficult than moving forward in any department of life. When the child lets go the chair and moves unsteadily towards its mother, it is exercising trust for the first time. When a man lets go of self, ceases to rely on his own wisdom, courage and sufficiency, and moves out towards the larger wisdom and power of Jesus Christ, he is exercising the supreme trust of his life. But there is really no more risk in the one step than the other. Who ever knew any one who had actually exercised this trust in Christ and maintained it from day to day confess that he made a great mistake? The experience of nineteen centuries can be taken as guaranty that no man who really gives the keeping of his life to Christ and complies with the conditions

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Trusting* of fellowship with him is destined to  
*and* be either sorry or ashamed. Men talk  
*Obeying* sometimes as if Christ were a vague, un-  
certain figure in ancient history, whereas  
he is the most potent personality of the  
ages, and in dealing with him we deal  
with a fact which cannot be gainsaid or  
overthrown.

And the object of all this trust, let us  
not forget, is to obtain strength to do  
the things which he would have us do.  
It is to no dreamy, mystic, rhapsodic ex-  
perience that we are called when we be-  
come Christians, but to put our lives  
alongside the mightiest source of strength  
available for use. It is the "Strong Son  
of God," as Tennyson calls him, with  
whom we have to do, and he has the  
power of communicating strength to all  
who trust him. John recognized it when  
he said, "I have written unto you, young  
men, because ye are strong." Trust is  
not simply a beautiful disposition of the  
soul; it is the alliance of ourselves with  
a person by whom our weakness is  
turned to strength and our ignorance  
transmuted to knowledge.

## T H E     S T A R T

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Jesus, by common consent, was the wisest and best of men—too wise to be mistaken and too good to deceive.

*Trusting  
and  
Obeying*

This is why we put confidence in Jesus. Others through the nineteen centuries before us have trusted him and we rely on their witness. The noblest souls in all the ages have testified that he deserved and rewarded their confidence.

To trust in him means to believe what he says and to do what he bids. When he declares that the life is more than meat, that we must be born again in order to enter his kingdom, that he has gone to prepare a place for us, that he who sees him has seen the Father, we must believe that he knew about what he was talking. Then when he outlines a course of action for us, orders us to take up our cross daily and follow him, sends us out into the highways or hedges, bids us be pure and peaceable and merciful, we must obey.

The step from a mere interest in Christ or an admiration for him to unhesitating confidence in him is a logical step but

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Trusting* one not always taken. When it is taken  
*and* it admits a man into the real blessedness  
*Obeying* of the Christian life. There will come  
times after that great step when the  
darkness shuts down upon one. Then if  
one trusts Christ unhesitatingly he must  
be willing to go with him up the rough  
slopes and into the fiery furnace. But  
even there he is sure to be cheered by a  
sense of the presence of the Son of man,  
and in due time he will emerge again  
into the sunshine, his hand more firmly  
clasped than before in his Saviour's.

*Abiding* Jesus staked his kingdom upon the  
ability and desire of men to enter into a  
personal relation with him even though  
out of the range of their earthly vision.  
It was a tremendous venture. These  
were strange words to speak to unlet-  
tered fishermen. You would expect the  
master of a group of disciples to say  
when parting with them, "Remember  
me, follow the truth, trust God, do your  
duty." But Jesus says something more,  
and let us remember that he is not talk-  
ing to mystics or dabblers in occult  
30



## T H E   S T A R T

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sciences, but to every-day persons like *Abiding* ourselves. In so saying he differentiates his religion from every other. He gave his followers no creed to recite daily to themselves and to pass on to others. No set and indispensable forms of worship did he devise nor did he specify just how they should carry on his work when he was gone. But one thing on this last night of their earthly fellowship he does insist upon, and illustrates his thought by allusion to the vines which may have been climbing up to the very window of the room where they were assembled. Henceforth he and his men were to be as closely united as branches and vine.

The supreme question then for a man who wants to lead the Christian life is, "Can I establish and maintain a personal relation with Jesus Christ?" This involves remembrance of him, imitation, loyalty, service in his name and something more, difficult to define or describe but intelligible to any one who has let his whole being go forth to another soul. I cannot think that to be

## S T E P S     C H R I S T W A R D

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*Abiding* on terms of friendship with Christ, to be united to him, to have his life coursing through our veins is so very different from the best experience we have of human love. I have a friend more than half-way across this great continent. I see him rarely, but he is as much of an inspiration and blessing to me as he was in the days when we were often comrades from morn till eve. I have a Friend whom I have never seen. He lived long ago in Palestine, but every noble impulse and conviction of my nature somehow relates itself to him. I am sure that it is perfectly possible to keep up a hearty, wholesome friendship with him if I do my part. It is easy to let it cool, but to maintain it is worth all the pains it costs.

“But this is all mysticism,” some one says. Yes, but it is the most sensible and rational kind of mysticism that the world has ever known. The simple fact is that Jesus Christ is the best known man of history. We know far more about him than we possibly can about Julius Cæsar, Charlemagne or Napoleon. One reason is that he has been the sub-

## T H E   S T A R T

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ject of the minutest and the hardest *Abiding* study that any character ever received. Every new life of Christ adds to the world's understanding of Jesus. The other reason is that the Christ life has been relived so many times before our eyes, in our homes, on our streets, not perfectly, to be sure, but genuinely, that we have had and shall have countless human interpretations of the historical Jesus. Therefore we too may have personal union with this clear-cut, real, heroic figure of history.

This is the best and also the simplest way of maintaining the Christian life and developing a Christian experience. Books on morality say, "Keep your courage up, don't whine, be pure, love your neighbor as yourself." It all sounds very fine and it is just what we ought to do. Yet we cannot always abide in fortitude, in purity, in love as abstract virtues. But we can abide in Christ, the source and example of them all; we can join our lives to his so that what was in him shall be little by little transferred to us.



*THE FOES*

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**When the fight begins within himself  
A man's worth something.**

—*Robert Browning.*

**Battle I know so long as life remaineth —  
Battle for all, but these have overcome.**

—*F. W. H. Myers.*

**O thou for whom the strife was strong,  
Thou who hast sung the conqueror's song,  
Uphold me through the holy war,  
Make me a smiling conqueror,**

—*Thomas H. Gill.*

## II

### THE FOES

WHEN Mr. Moody was holding large meetings in New York City on his first return from England a number of years ago he was going back to his lodgings late at night accompanied by a friend or two. As they passed along the little group noticed that they were being followed by a man, and one of Mr. Moody's friends, aware of the opposition to him among the rumsellers of the city, warned him to be on his guard; but the evangelist, raising his voice a little, said, "What would you say if a man should ask you how to get free from sin?" The words were hardly out of his lips when the unknown man in the rear darted forward, crying, "That is just what I want to know."

It is singular how this sense of sin survives from age to age, even though

*The  
Ceaseless  
Struggle*

## S T E P S     C H R I S T W A R D

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*The* people become better housed and better  
*Ceaseless* educated and various theories are ad-  
*Struggle* vanced to explain sin entirely away. But it will last as long as high ideals of character survive, as long as men commit themselves to the moral struggle with any degree of earnestness and persistence; for there can be no morality or spirituality without their opposites, and the fight is an eternal one between the things that make for man's overthrow and ruin and the things that make for his salvation.

If we had lived in the early Christian centuries or at the time of the Crusades, or had served with Cromwell or Miles Standish or other stalwart representatives of muscular Christianity, it might have been easier for us to appreciate the fact that our religion has its fighting side. In these latter times we are, perhaps, in danger of becoming what some one terms "carpet-slipper Christians." But if we read our New Testaments faithfully, and if we follow the careers of Jesus and Paul, we shall discover that the only reason why we do not encounter more opposition and



## T H E F O E S

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do not have our fighting qualities called *The*  
into exercise is that we have too little *Ceaselss*  
genuine religion. The highest type of *Struggle*  
religion in any age is sure to come into  
collision with worldly standards. It must  
suffer. It must show the scars of battle.  
What have we ever done, what did we do  
to-day or last week, that may prove to the  
world that we are loyal soldiers of the  
great Captain of our salvation?

One does have to fight to maintain his  
habits of secret prayer, to do justice to  
his Bible daily, to perform patiently the  
routine Christian duties and to overcome  
the thousand and one little foes that con-  
front us at every turn. We think we have  
won the battle, but the months go by and  
the enemy shows a strong front again.  
And even when you have thoroughly  
overcome one bad habit, or finally tri-  
umphed over some terrible foe to society,  
you need not think you can lay your  
armor by, for some other besetting sin  
will at once disclose itself to you, or some  
kindred giant to that one just slain will  
challenge you to combat. Said Charles  
Kingsley: "Some say the age of chivalry

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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is past. The age of chivalry is never past so long as one wrong remains undressed."

*Temptation*    I should like sometime to read a carefully written book on the psychology of temptation, prepared from actual investigation of the way it works. There is nothing in the world more subtle and deceitful. There was once a small boy who had been forbidden from going in swimming too often. He returned home one day with unmistakable signs that he had been in the water. When his mother remonstrated with him he replied, "Yes, I know, mamma, I did wrong, but I was tempted." "But how did you happen to have your bathing-suit with you?" "Well, I took it along, thinking I might be tempted." How often we capitulate in advance to a temptation! Then, too, we delude ourselves with the idea that we may be the exceptional person for whom God will relax his punishment. While his laws work generally in the universe, we think we may be granted a special permit to do what we please and special exemption

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from the consequences. Still more devilish, because it touches us on the higher side of our natures, is the suggestion that, even if we do wrong, God is so fatherly and we know him so well that if we go to him penitently he will forgive us. So again, before the battle is on, we strike our colors in the most cowardly fashion. *Temptation*

When the word temptation is uttered it suggests to most persons the wine-cup or the gaming-table, or some well recognized and flagrant form of sin; but we who are real Christians ought soon to be beyond the power of these grosser temptations. Not that we should proudly think ourselves invulnerable, or despise those who are beset by them, but rather that we should be the more vigilant to conquer our finer, but no less real, temptations. Not many persons who may read these lines are tempted to profanity, but how about envy, pride, dilatoriness, slovenliness of person, rudeness of action, hypocrisy, gossip, anger, discontent, despair? These are the little foxes that are all the time preying upon our vines. It

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*Temptation* is too bad that we cannot sit down quietly by our own fireside or kneel meekly in church without being pursued by the tempter, but lo, sin lieth at the door.

He who orders our lives has, however, made ample provision for our deliverance. Jesus Christ is never of more value to us than when he comes to reinforce our weak will in its strife with evil. The Bible is explicit on this point, and when it says that he was tempted in all points like as we are, we should take the statement on its face value. "But," says the conductor of an electric car, "Jesus Christ never stood on the back platform and endured what I have to stand from the company and the public." "But," says a woman in the midst of the pressing demands of modern society life, "Jesus Christ, that simple Galilæan peasant, was never situated just as I am." "But," says some person isolated among the hills, hungering for the stir and the opportunities of the city, "Jesus Christ never passed through this experience." Yes he did, or its equivalent. Sometime, perhaps, I can explain it better, but I believe with all my

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heart that this many-sided, universal man *Temptation* met and conquered the equivalent of all of the world's temptations, not those of ancient time alone, or of Eastern lands, but those of modern times and of Occidental countries as well. And when we reflect that he mastered not a few temptations, but all, how his sinlessness glistens and glows before our eyes!

Realizing then how seamed and scarred *When the Battle is On* our natures are, how responsive to evil suggestions and downward tendencies, what next? The fight, to be sure. But we pause a moment before we draw the sword, since penitence, contrition of heart, commitment of ourselves to God's mercy, must precede any effort of ours to get rid of our sins. As President Tucker says, "God can do little for a man until he has forgiven him." The experience of Christians through the ages, voicing itself in such hymns as "I lay my sins on Jesus" and "There is a fountain filled with blood," can be cited as proof that a disordered human heart, conscious of inherited tendencies down-

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*When  
the  
Battle  
is On* ward and its own frequent lapses from virtue, requires first of all God's healing touch. Yet we are not to forget that Jesus bade us ask that our debts be forgiven as we forgive our debtors. No full and gladdening forgiveness can come to a man who approaches the mercy-seat with resentment burning in his heart toward his brother.

Once forgiven by our heavenly Father, once rid of the stain and shame of our sins, we can begin open warfare upon them. The late President Seelye of Amherst used to say that the more specific the battle against our sins the more likelihood of success. Sin in the abstract is so large and so deeply rooted that we almost despair of overcoming it, but the concrete sins that reside in the temper, the feeling, the imagination, the will—these little foxes that spoil the vines—cowardice, avarice, impatience, uncharitableness, irritability, impurity—these foes we can face and vanquish. How exhilarating, after all, it is, when one has sought and found forgiveness and has come into possession of God's

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powerful aid, to sally forth and make war to the knife upon these enemies of our souls! No crusader of old, starting out to rescue the Saviour's grave from the Saracen, could feel any greater enthusiasm than it is possible for us to have as we fight to-day and here the nobler battle against spiritual enemies.

*When  
the  
Battle  
is On*

The possibility of a flank movement is also to be considered. Some sins can best be overcome by the indirect method. That apostle had this line of attack in mind when he wrote, "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?" And his brother apostle cherished the same thought when he told his converts not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil by good. There is great latent fighting capacity in the "expulsive power of a new affection." Satan finds little entrance into the heart that is daily set on achieving righteousness, that is eager to fill life full of unselfish service. The blows of the antagonist fall with no effect upon the man encased in the whole armor of God. Fill life up with noble

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acts, and the battle against sins will be more than half won.

*Drifting*     But life may be figured as a voyage as well as a battle. Certainly those who have once set their faces toward God and goodness are no more in danger of conscious and wilful departure from the right course than of a quiet, imperceptible backward movement. The man in the boat hardly realizes that he is going down stream. He has only been idly rocking or resting on his oars, with the purpose by and by of again bending to them, but suddenly he looks up and notes that he is considerably farther away from certain points on the bank than he was only a short while before. The Christian youth, full of good intentions, but allowing himself to take a little vacation as respects religious testimony and service, encounters this same sensation of surprise when something occurs to turn his thought in upon himself. He has not been doing anything very bad, but he has been drifting, and, if he will be honest with himself, he will confess



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that his spiritual condition is far less *Drifting* satisfactory than it was.

What are some of the things from which we are in danger of drifting? First, from our early ideals. Longfellow's sweet poem, *The Castle Builder*, pictures a little boy putting one block upon another, and the great poet encourages him by saying :

Build on, and make thy towers high and fair,  
Rising and reaching upward to the skies,  
Listen to voices in the upper air,  
Lose not thy simple faith in mysteries.

Many of us have drifted far from our childhood's faith in mysteries, from our ideals of what we would be and do in the world. Once we thought we might be foreign missionaries or do some heroic service for Christ in some hard or dark corner of the earth. Life has moved on with us and we now smile a little at those childish notions. But if we cannot now hear "the voices in the upper air," if we are not moved by those high ideals of duty which once thrilled us, we have drifted far and sadly.

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*Drifting*      We are likely to drift from our faith in men. As we rub against them in the world and see their weaknesses, as we may suffer injustice or betrayal at their hands, or as we simply look at them in the mass and notice how animal many of the faces are, we find it hard to believe Christ's words, "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!" But we must cling to the divine estimate of our poor humanity. We cannot serve men as we ought unless we see in them divine possibilities.

We need, too, to guard against the drift away from a personal comradeship with Jesus Christ. Most of us have had in our experience what Phillips Brooks used to call "Jesus moments," when he seemed near and dear. But it is hard in the stress of the world to maintain that intimacy. Yet the strength and usefulness of our Christian life depend upon it.

*Dead to Sin*      It was a splendid conception of their new life in the world and of their position in the sight of God which Paul

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set forth when he counseled those who had only recently emerged from a heathen state to count themselves as if they were forever rid of the old nature, and instead of being dead *in* trespasses and sins as now dead *to* sin. *Dead to Sin*

That is the way a man should now and then look at himself. It is not a mere temporary burst of enthusiasm growing out of revulsion from the old life and the first great charm of the new; it is the status to which every redeemed man is moving and which God in his compassion looks upon as already achieved, provided the will has once been steadily set toward that goal. As Canon Gore says in his *Incarnation of the Son of God*: "God deals with us by anticipation." So Paul's eye, that pierces the future, sees the Christian man as already complete in Christ. Over and again in his writings he insists upon the necessity of putting down an impassable barrier between the old life of sin and the new life of faith.

Of course this idea is not to be tolerated for an instant apart from the other

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*Dead to Sin* great idea of Paul, that we are continually working out our own salvation, but it is a simple fact that as men go on in their Christian life they do become dead to particular sins. You cannot possibly associate drunkenness or gambling with certain men. Perhaps they have always been dead to them, but certainly they have reached a point now when it is impossible to conceive of their falling away in these particulars. Their whole moral nature is set in the opposite direction.

Oh, if this could only be said regarding the entire circle of sins that do so easily beset us! How many a man would give half of what he possesses if the faults and failings which he has been fighting more or less earnestly all his life could forever be sloughed off! Among the subjects which Phillips Brooks once jotted down in his notebook for future uses in the pulpit was this: "A sermon on a man's discovering a meanness in himself from which he thought he was free, coming from new circumstances, *e. g.*, traveling." Is not this a frequent experience with us

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all? Yet Paul says that even these old *Dead*  
and persistent foes can be mastered, but *to Sin*  
the new principle alone will do it.  
One's nature must flower out on the  
side toward Christ before the weeds  
in the garden can be completely up-  
rooted. Christ alone furnishes a new in-  
terest and a new motive and a new  
ideal ; most of all his own life steals into  
ours and subtly transforms it. The oak-  
tree keeps its leaves throughout all the  
wintry storms and no blast of the north  
wind can detach them ; but let the new  
sap of the springtime begin to creep up  
through trunk and branches and the  
faded leaves fall off of themselves.



*HELPS BY THE WAY*

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Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing.

—*Luther.*

I believe there is no means of preserving rectitude of conduct and nobleness of aim but the grace of God obtained daily, almost hourly waiting upon him and continual faith in his immediate presence.—

*John Ruskin.*

Prayer is the greatest power in the world. My own prayer has been weak, wavering, inconstant, yet it has been the best thing I have ever done.—*S. C.*

*Armstrong.*

Lord, this morning I read a chapter in the Bible and therein observed a memorable passage whereof I never took notice before.—*Fuller.*



### III

## HELPS BY THE WAY

A MAN may live near an excellent gymnasium and still be round-shouldered and spindle-shanked, because of his failure to realize how undeveloped he is physically. A youth may spend a winter at Berlin or in Dresden and get no musical or artistic uplift. Little can be done for one who does not realize that he is put into this world to grow. Christian life for many of us is arrested or recedes simply because we think that joining the church or the Young People's Society is the end of the whole matter. We have lost sight of our ideals. Look again at Jesus Christ. How are we poor, stunted, one-sided, selfish specimens of humanity ever to resemble that beautiful, glorious One? Do we think that our souls can emerge from the dark and sordid places where they grovel

*How  
Ideals  
are  
Realized*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*How* and deteriorate, into the light and liberty  
*Ideals* of children of God, if we do nothing  
*are* ourselves? Are we so foolish as to  
*Realized* believe that by living in a so-called  
Christian community we shall somehow  
or other be propelled along into the  
kingdom of heaven? Said Bushnell, in  
his incisive way, "The injunction to  
abide in Christ does n't mean to bask in  
Christ." The will must assert itself,  
must command all our faculties, mental  
and spiritual, to fall into line with the  
Christian ideals.

Spiritual growth is dependent upon  
the use of the forces which make for  
that end. As well might the sailor  
undertake to cross the ocean without  
adjusting his canvas to the winds as for  
the spiritually-minded man to expect to  
make steady advance in the holy life  
without having every chamber of his  
soul open to the breezes that bring  
to him the ozone and the impulse of the  
spiritual world. It is hard work trying  
to pull one's self up by one's boot-straps.  
If the Bible makes anything clear it  
is the truth that the man who really

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wants to be better can command the aid of mighty supernatural forces, and by them be lifted to higher levels. Let us not think that any multiplication of machinery, any new methods, any patent devices, can take the place of daily reliance upon those spiritual forces with which the busy world in which we move is crowded, even though they are not visible to mortal eyes.

*How  
Ideals  
are  
Realized*

When a practice becomes a part of our daily routine it influences us powerfully thenceforth. What we do every day comes soon to stamp itself upon our characters and upon our faces, too. What we do once in a while, when we feel like doing it and when there is nothing more interesting to do, makes only a little ripple on the swiftly flowing stream. If I observe that at a certain time every day an acquaintance of mine walks into a saloon, I draw some natural, and probably just, inferences respecting him. The youth who sets apart an hour a day for practice on the piano or violin, and perseveres in the habit, is bound, provided

*The  
Daily  
Discipline*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*The Daily Discipline* he possesses any talent whatever, to attain to some degree of proficiency. What wonders can be accomplished by one who reads systematically, devoting perhaps only fifteen minutes a day to some good book! Whole libraries are thereby mastered in the course of years.

Our religious habits need to be established in precisely this same fashion. It would be an immense gain if we could overcome our fitfulness in religious things. We dabble with this matter of personal piety. Our Christian progress is subject to many periods of retrogression simply because we rely on transient enthusiasms and passing moods. Let us get our religion into the thick of our day's work. Let us consider it as much a part of our regimen as our daily bath. We do not wait for that until we feel particularly enthusiastic about it. We take it as a matter of course, as an essential to healthful living.

*The Bible* Every soldier has his book of tactics, to which he constantly refers. The

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Christian's chief reliance as he undertakes to master the fine art of noble living is the Bible. No amount of higher criticism can make the Bible any less essential to spiritual growth than our fathers found it to be. It tells us, as no other book ever does or can, what it is to be good and, best of all, how we can attain goodness. Is not such a book as that to be taken in our hands and pondered every day we live? I should not insist upon mere rigidity of rules. There may be circumstances that justify an occasional omission, but at the end of a month or the end of a week a man should bring himself before the bar of his conscience and ask if, during that time, he has bestowed upon his Bible the time and attention he would have given it had he set apart, say, ten minutes a day to its perusal.

*The  
Bible*

System is secondary, provided the desire to learn and to grow through perusal of Scripture exists. The trouble with most of us is not a lack of effective systems, but a lack of determination to persevere in carrying out one system.

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*The Bible* There is an abundance of good plans for Bible reading and study. The Christian Endeavor organization furnishes one, the Y. M. C. A. suggests another, the Sunday-school Quarterlies outline still another. Almost every week witnesses the printing of some book or pamphlet which, if rightly used, will aid in opening up the Scriptures. Professor Walter F. Adeney's *How to Read the Bible*, is an admirable guide. The series of handbooks entitled *The Modern Reader's Bible*, edited by Professor Moulton of Chicago University, has made many of the books of the Bible new to those already familiar with them. Surely we ought to be thankful that we live in an age not of heavy, bulky and abstruse commentaries, but of cheap, attractive and scholarly manuals on Bible study and Bible reading.

It does not, to be sure, require a large supply of even such excellent helps as these in order to find out what the Bible teaches. One could get along fairly well, as respects the New Testament.

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with Marcus Dods' Introduction. We surely do not want to substitute books about the Bible for the Bible itself, but we may make profitable use of the results reached by men who have grown gray in bending over the pages of Holy Writ. While the Bible is simple enough to be understood by an ordinary mind, it is also true that we do not get at its richest lessons and inspirations unless we are willing to use our mental faculties upon it in the same way in which we apply them to the study of general history or literature. *The Bible*

What the average young person needs most is an actual knowledge of the contents of a given passage. How few can narrate accurately such familiar stories as that of the prodigal son or of the good Samaritan! We glide over the surface of Scripture. Frequent reading of it in the house of God secures from us only a mechanical attention. Study your Bible until you actually know how, in its broad outlines, the gospel of Luke differs from the gospel of John; what Paul is trying to teach in Galatians as over against his

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*The Bible* instructions to Timothy; what the book of Joshua actually tells about the conquest of the Holy Land. It is little short of a disgrace that intelligent Christians know so little of what the Bible sets forth in the way of historical fact. Any kind of criticism is better than such dense ignorance as to what the pages of the Bible contain. There are seventeen books in the New Testament, any one of which can be read through in from seventeen to twenty minutes.

We are to study the Bible to obtain food for our spiritual lives. No Christian can be strong for service who does not keep in constant contact with God's revelation of himself through the Scriptures. Intellectual mastery of the argument in Romans for justification by faith is worth much, but a simple, childlike surrender to Christ is worth more. A discernment of the overruling Providence which guided the steps of the children of Israel is important, but of still more consequence is it to obtain a sure sense that as God was with the fathers so is he with us.



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Suppose each person in a parlor company undertakes to write on paper what he or she considers to be the absolute necessities of life. There would be some amusing differences and some surprising resemblances in the lists. And when one thinks the matter through he is likely to come to the unexpected conclusion that, after all, for the average person, only two or three things are absolutely necessary. We all must have some one to love and something to do. Silk hats, beautiful gowns, handsome equipages, delicate viands—we can get along without any or all of these. But we must have friends and we must have work. These were the two great necessities of Jesus' life. He could not possibly dispense with his friends or with his work. They were two of the forces that brought his nature to its completion.

One more force explains Jesus Christ and that is equally important for our development, too. Prayer was the background and atmosphere of Christ's human years. He never could have done his work well or loved his friends wisely

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*Prayer* unless there had been those vigils on the mountainside, that wrestling in Gethsemane. There is no other alternative for us, either. The order of the universe is such that only he who comes into personal fellowship with God through prayer renders the fullest service of which he is capable and loves his own and the world wisely and beneficently.

This is not theory but fact. Look over the shining list of the men and women whom the world honors as its greatest moral and spiritual leaders. You will find that almost without exception they were men and women of prayer. If we want to get results in our work and in our love, we must come into accord with the method by which this universe is ordered. Stop speculating about prayer, or, if you will, the existence of a God, but put yourself every day in a humble, reverent, receptive attitude. Talk out into space as if there were a God there, and as day follows night you will find hope and power stealing into your life. Availing yourself of the machinery at hand, it operates in your be-

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half as it has invariably in behalf of penitent, aspiring souls since the world began. *Prayer*

And there is something more to prayer than a reflex influence on mood and temper. It is our business to pray even when our only hope is by that means to change the current of our thought and feeling. But he who persists finds sooner or later a living, personal God. One who habituates himself to prayer, who makes it as much a part of his daily routine as his meals or sleep or exercise, soon obtains precious tokens of God's interest and care. He does not say so much about them perhaps to others, but he learns to watch for the answers to his petitions and they come in the most surprising and delightful ways.

Yes, prayer is absolutely necessary if one is seeking to be a religious person at all. Is there a problem touching our spiritual growth and service which prayer cannot solve? In the beautiful words of Archbishop Trench :

We kneel, how weak, we rise, how full of power!  
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,  
Or others—that we are not always strong ;

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*Prayer* That we should ever weak or heartless be,  
That we are ever overborne with care,  
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,  
And joy and strength and courage, are with thee ?

And from Robertson of Brighton let us take this solemn injunction: "Go not, my friend, into the dangerous world without it. . . . We may get experience, but we cannot get back the rich freshness and strength which were wrapped up in those moments."

Prayer ought to become as fixed a habit as that of going to the table for our food and drink. It is not something unnatural and mysterious—it is the most simple and sensible procedure in the world. As Professor George P. Fisher says in substance: "A man is never more of a man than when he enters into his closet and shuts the door in order to commune with his Father in secret." Let us divest the function of prayer of its abnormal and remote character. That a man should talk with his God and Redeemer day by day—is this anything to wonder at or be ashamed of? The mystery is that men with divine in-

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fluences within them should hermetically seal their lives against God by neglecting prayer. To be sure, there may come times, as in the case of any other habit, when we do not feel in the need of prayer, but do we never go to the table when our appetites are not keen? The working man realizes that he must eat if he is to perform his daily toil. Are there never times when those who love each other deeply do not feel demonstrative, but on that account do they cease from uttering a civil good-morning or good-night, or do they refrain from all communication with each other? Prayer is the medium through which our love and zeal are kindled, and we ought to pray more earnestly when we are least disposed to seek God.

Yet it is a comfort to think in the midst of our busy days that God does not ask for lengthy petitions or insist upon any prescribed method. The great German scholar Bengel had the reputation of being gifted in prayer, and one night some people assembled under his window to overhear, if they might, his

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*Prayer* petitions. But he toiled late over his books, and when bedtime came he dropped on his knees a moment merely to say, "Lord Jesus, I thank thee that we are on the same old terms." Happy the man who knows the way to the throne of grace sufficiently well to employ such language!

Certainly a variation both in language and in method is beneficial. In the summer-time pray in the open air. Use occasionally for your own petitions some of the great collects of the church or other printed prayers. Pray with some one else. How seldom does one Christian seek another saying, "Brother, I should like to have a word of prayer with you with regard to some one dear to me, or with regard to the church which we both attend, or with regard to this place where we live."

To want to know how to pray indicates that one is growing spiritually. How the Saviour's heart must have thrilled when his disciples approached him, not with a speculative question, like that put by Nicodemus or the woman of Samaria,

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not with a request for some outward good, *Prayer* as when later he was asked to grant to James and John special places of honor, but possessed with a sincere longing to know how to approach God in prayer! Their words represent the yearning of humanity at its best all through the ages. "How shall I come and appear before God?" One who honestly takes this petition on his lips, whether he be living in the midst of pagan darkness or in a Christian environment, is headed toward the kingdom of God; nay, is already in it, because at last he has awakened to that restlessness of heart which can never be stilled until one rests in the bosom of God.

It is a great step in advance when we realize that in a certain sense prayer is an art, that it must be learned as other arts are, that one has not really learned to pray simply because, in the stress of a great fear, as on the deck of a sinking vessel, he cries out for deliverance from drowning to a God whom he never really sought before. That single utterance is tinctured with superstition. It repre-

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*Prayer* sends a stage of life only one remove from heathenism. To pray as a child of God, as a disciple of Jesus ought to pray requires months and years of practice. Not that the little child does not truly pray when it offers its evening prayer at its mother's knee, but that as life goes on a man must give time and thought and his best energy to the act of prayer. It is no easy business. There must be at times the wrestle with God. Only sheer determination and perseverance can overcome apathy and indifference and the ebb-tide of faith. Prayer is the sublimest exercise in which a man can indulge and at the same time the most strenuous.

Christ helps his inquiring disciples by prescribing a form. We shall never out-grow it and never find its equal. But as we employ it so constantly we do well to enrich our petitions and stimulate the prayerful spirit by availing ourselves of language accredited by long usage, through which devout hearts have expressed their sense of need and their longing for pardon, peace and joy in believing. There are standard works of devotion



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to which fresh compilations are constantly *Prayer* being added and they may be made of immense value in quickening the flow of feeling and in furnishing us with words, which, better than any we might be able ourselves to choose, voice the desires of our hearts. Such meditation on the great things of God, on the reality of his fatherly relation, helps us to find him near when we kneel before him and helps us also to frame our desires in language.

Connection with an organization becomes a joy only when one is in thorough *The Church* sympathy with its principles and aims. No amount of argument can convince me that it is my duty to join, or that I should find any pleasure in belonging to, a fire-engine company or to the state militia or to a farmer's grange. For such organizations, when properly conducted, I have a great respect, but just at present I have other and more absorbing interests. It is just as vain to labor with a man with reference to church membership, unless he cares in a hearty

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*The Church* way for Christianity. And if he has become a Christian he ought not to need much urging.

If his Christian life be at all deep and purposeful, he will go where he belongs. What Christ, his Master, wants him to do will weigh considerably with him. What most of his fellow believers have done will also have its influence. He will reason about it in the same sensible fashion which he has used in settling other relations. He has allied himself with a certain political party, not because its opinions as expressed in its platforms are in every minute particular his own, not because the party is absolutely free from men whom he dislikes and distrusts, but because, on the whole, he wishes to be counted among those who are known as believers in certain political doctrines, and because he thinks that through such an alliance he will be better able to fulfil the duties of a patriotic citizen. In short, the true disciple of Christ does not usually hide behind excuses which are simply pretexts. He is too manly and straightforward to indulge in a specious

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kind of reasoning, which if applied to other human relations would cut him off entirely from all formal association with his fellow men. *The Church*

Now and then, let us frankly admit, we find exceptions—men who are humble and sincere Christians and yet not connected with any church. But what is the most frequent and the best excuse which these friends of ours have to offer? Is it not this, that they think they can be just as good Christians without joining the church? Possibly they may be so different from the rest of their kind that this claim of theirs is true. Perhaps they are superior to the help and inspiration of the church—its noble worship, its stately hymns, its blessed sacraments, its history and traditions. The thought of all its saints and martyrs may carry no appeal to such a one; but if he cannot be persuaded by considerations of his own need of the church, will he not remember that others weaker than he are by his example deprived of the strength which might come through church membership?

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*The Church*      And the better the man is who stays outside the more harmful is his influence, for others point to him as one who is "just as good as your church members and a good sight better than many of them." If we look upon church membership as one of the most sacred and precious relationships of our lives, we shall find it yielding greater and more solid satisfactions day by day.

*The Lord's Day*      In considering what benefit he may derive from an established and accredited institution the Christian is bound to have regard to its historical standing and use. He finds that the nations and individuals whose lives have been purest and most influential in the world have kept Sunday. A little deeper study tells him that the need of such a day is rooted deep in the constitution of man. God knew when he appointed it that the physical nature of man could not endure uninterrupted toil, and experimentation by at least one nation—the French—has proved that it is difficult to improve on the divine plan of one day in seven. God knew also that

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man's spiritual nature as well demanded the relief and the uplift of a periodic breaking away from the daily routine in order to give the soul a better chance to develop its powers. This, then, is the twofold object of the day, rest and worship, and its providential design is defeated just as much when the day is entirely given to exhausting work, even Christian work, as when no regard is paid to the claims of the sanctuary.

*The  
Lord's  
Day*

When it comes to practical matters the Christian must be guided in his decisions by the effort to make the day in his case serve these two ends. With due deference to the opinion of others older and wiser than himself and to Christian public sentiment in the community where he is, and without forgetting that a method to secure even these desirable ends is itself questionable when it interferes with another man's right and opportunity to keep the Sabbath, we are to decide, each for himself and each in the light of Christ's teachings and example, what we may do and what we may not do on Sunday.

Should our Sabbaths be different from

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*The  
Lord's  
Day*

other days? Yes. "The world is too much with us." We do not want the news of the universe dumped on breakfast-tables Sunday morning. Politics and business and fashions and amusements have a sufficiently long term of supremacy when they hold sway six days out of the seven. What we need to purify and invigorate our Christian lives is a Sunday marked by a different kind of reading, conversation and by a different atmosphere.

Most people have to spend the waking hours from Monday morning to Saturday night in facing and solving the problem of daily bread. When God ordained one day out of seven for a special purpose he knew how weighed down the great majority of mankind would be with earthly interests. And to a certain extent, by changing our clothing, by altering our diet, we all recognize that Sunday is a different day. But the real difference ought to come in the direction which our thoughts take, in the general tone and atmosphere of the home. Jesus and Paul took issue with the Pharisees on the Sunday question because the

## HELPS BY THE WAY

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difference which they made between Sunday and week-days was one of externals only. They were no more open to God, they were no more just and merciful on the Sabbath than on Monday and Tuesday. They were just as crafty, domineering and hypocritical. Let us change the current of our thinking and of our desires if we would keep Sunday rightly.

*The  
Lord's  
Day*

It ought also to be a divine day. Three elements—rest, worship and service—combine to secure this. How to proportion them is the problem for the individual, but make sure that you are getting the real things and not any substitutes for them. As respects worship, for instance, do not delude yourself by thinking that you are drawing near to God merely because you are lying prone in a field of daisies or idly holding a rod over a running stream. The approved method through all the centuries for finding and worshiping God has been to seek him in his sanctuary. There is where most men are filled with a sense of God's greatness and nearness. There

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*The Lord's Day* is where they bow upon their knees and ask him to have mercy upon them, contrite sinners. Perhaps you are different from most of your kind, and then again perhaps you are not. Another common mistake is to substitute sociability for the kind of service of needy men and women which the Bible enjoins upon the Sabbath Day. It might be better for us to decline an invitation to dine with congenial friends on the Lord's Day, and spend the time that would be consumed thereby in visiting the poor and the sick. As another has said: "The only liberty which Christ permits on Sunday is the liberty to do good and to grow better yourself." Make the day different, make it divine by longer prayers, more attentive reading of the Bible and of the books that feed the spiritual life and by ministering to those who need your help, and your Sunday is sure to be full of profit.

*The Lord's Supper*      Apparently Jesus did not care much for forms. He saw too much formalism about him, too many whited sepulchers,



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too many institutions of religion out of which had gone the faith and hope and love which constitute the eternal elements of religion. He never gave his disciples any formula through which they should invariably express their faith in him. He seemed to prefer to trust to that phrasing of it which would be the natural outcome of the divine life which he implanted. He only prescribed one form of prayer, and that was in response to their request for it. So when he does institute a certain definite outward action and bids his followers observe it for his sake it possesses all the greater significance.

*The  
Lord's  
Supper*

The Christian man, then, must needs ask himself if the Lord's Supper means as much to him as his Lord intended it should. If a dying friend says: "Now no matter about going to my grave in the cemetery, no matter about a notice in the newspapers, no matter about putting on crape, but the next time you are in those quiet woods where we used to walk together I want you particularly to remember me, or every Sunday evening

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*The Lord's Supper* in your room just at sunset call my face to mind," we should be very sure to heed his wishes. Jesus knew that we needed some special season, some definite place, some concrete act in connection with which we should specially remember him. Not that we forget him elsewhere, but none of us are so spiritual yet that we can dispense with times and ways of particular and more tender commemoration.

Certainly the associations that gather about the table of our Lord ought themselves to bring spiritual quickening. Those emblems there are the definite material proof that Christ was once in the world. We need no better evidence of the reality of Christianity than the persistence of this rite through nineteen hundred years. And it has gathered into itself the penitence and the consecration, the toils and the sacrifices of countless multitudes who, in stately cathedrals or in plain Puritan meeting-houses, in the catacombs and the mountain fastnesses whither the rage of their persecutors had driven them, or in great gatherings which

## HELPS BY THE WAY

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commanded the world's attention and respect, have partaken of the bread and the wine that spoke of forgiveness and peace. Surely some sense of what this supper has meant to the Christian world should steal into our hearts as we sit at the same table of the Lord.

*The  
Lord's  
Supper*

But we gather there chiefly to remember him. Some there are who are made fearful by the words of the apostle with reference to eating and drinking unworthily, and to them the communion hour is one of mourning over their sins. Contrition there should be, but it is our Saviour rather than our own stained and marred selves of whom we should think. Others dwell upon the shortcomings and inconsistencies of their fellow Christians, but it is not in remembrance of other people's sins that we are to partake of the supper. He who bore them and ours, too, in his own body on the tree, whose compassion is wide enough and whose power great enough to redeem a universe, should be the chief object of thought and devotion as we linger about the table which bears his name.

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Giving* It is singular how loath we Christians are to trust the working of a spiritual law. We order our lives in sure reliance upon physical law. We are confident that if we plant the seed and keep the weeds away the sunshine and the rain will bring it to maturity. But we shrink from testing the law found on so many pages of the Bible, to the effect that one's growth and usefulness depend upon the policy of liberality. "The liberal soul shall be made fat," declares the Old Testament. Jesus echoes the assertion more than once in such sentences as these: "Give, and it shall be given unto you." "Whosoever shall lose his life shall find it." I like that old illustration of the way in which it is possible to retain a portion of grain. Just as soon as one clenches his fist the shining meal escapes through every crevice, but pour it on the open palm and it remains there. You cannot in the long run hold anything simply by hanging on to it. You must be willing to put it out in the open where it can be available to others as well as to yourself.

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As respects dollars and cents this law *Giving* holds. In the long run men are prospered according to their willingness to share their returns from business. If we could get at the exact statistics, I think we should find that Christian people who have some definite convictions about devoting a portion of their income to the needs of the kingdom of heaven register as large a measure of outward success as do their neighbors whose contributions to charity consist in dimes and pennies tossed to the beggar by the wayside. Within a short while several striking instances have come to me of men remarkably prospered in business who have made it their rule for many years to give a tithe of their income to the church and to philanthropy. They began this practice when it was hard for them to spare that amount from small salaries, but they persevered then and God has brought them to the point where they can easily give more than a tithe.

But no one, at any rate, can gainsay the spiritual returns from a liberal policy.

## S T E P S     C H R I S T W A R D

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*Giving* Nothing after all develops the finer qualities so much as to give to another of that which represents toil and sacrifice. It seems as if the noblest instincts of our hearts demand some such outlet quite as much for our own sake as for the sake of those to whom our offering goes. When a little child labors hour after hour just before Christmas to make something for father and then succeeds only in presenting him with a pin-cushion in which the clumsy stitches are evident, he values it more than the most expensive gift, and the child itself has taken a distinct step forward. Into its own heart have come impulses of love and tenderness never before cherished. We may dare even to apply this principle to God himself. The demands of his own nature require that he should give his Son. He could not be a redeeming Father of mankind until he had furnished a crowning proof of his love.

Is not this the key to many of our problems? If we could only take this simple law and trust it, our doubts and questioning would disappear, our cold-

## HELPS BY THE WAY

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ness and apathy would give way to a *Giving* genuine interest in men, to a real sense of fellowship with God. You confess sadly that you have no interest in missions. How much money have you invested in them within the last year? Put twenty dollars into the training of an Indian orphan, or send ten dollars for a college in distant China; connect yourself personally with some worker in Turkey or Africa; deny yourself some luxury in order to help equip that worker—and see if you do not have a deeper interest in missions. The early Christians to whom Paul wrote believed in this law and practiced it, and that is why there was such a sturdy type of Christianity in the first century. Our converts on missionary soil to-day, who more nearly resemble in their giving the widow whom Jesus commended than do most Christians in America, show in their own strong and daring lives the reactive influence of that same law. It is forever true, as another has well said, that the secret of success is to be lavish of one's personality.

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*The  
Helpful  
Ordering  
of  
Life* Prayer, the Bible, the church, the Lord's Day, the Lord's Supper, the liberal hand,—these are the substantial and enduring helps as we step toward Christ. But the wayfarer will not wall himself off from other sources of invigoration. His Creator has so fitted out this universe, so ordered the play of life upon life that as we tread the way of righteousness many a benign influence may steal into our hearts. The beauty of a summer day, the glory of a winter landscape, the serene and stately onmoving of the universe—breed in us peace and strength. Our daily tasks, whose grip upon us is so relentless and sometimes so wearying, may after all prove one of the chief agencies for putting granite into our characters. Wholesome books, beautiful pictures, statuary and music minister to every fluttering aspiration after truth and goodness. The warm and delicate hand of human friendship leads us forth upon high places whence we see our lives as they are meant to be. The family relationship, while it imposes restraints and obligations, strikes at the beast and the demon in us and

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# HELPS BY THE WAY

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challenges us to every-day heroism and saintship.

Thus for the obedient, high-minded and purposeful man the path Christward is safeguarded and illumined during every stage of the journey.

*The  
Helpful  
Ordering  
of  
Life*



*THE WAYMARKS*

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First the blade, then the ear,  
Then the full corn in the ear.

—*Jesus.*

Heaven is not reached at a single bound ;  
But we build the ladder by which we rise  
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,  
And we mount to its summit round by round.

—*John Gilbert Holland.*

Do not seek to change the order of God's spiritual year. Do not seek to put the fruits of one season into "the lap" of another.—*George Matheson.*

There is no better means of progress in the spiritual life than to be continually beginning afresh and never to think that we have done enough.—*Francis De Sales.*

## IV

### THE WAYMARKS

DID you ever on a Saturday night or a Sunday morning look back over the vanished week with a view to determining the worth of each day to you? Why not make the effort some time to mark them on the scale of 100? If you mark one seventy-five and the other ninety, on what ground would you make the difference? Perhaps some great and unusual pleasure is associated with Monday or Wednesday; perhaps on Friday you passed an excellent examination in one of your studies; perhaps Sunday brought you a new sense of the goodness of God and the love of Christ; perhaps on Thursday you recall going out of your way to help some one else. At all events, our fleeting days will lend themselves to such marking, and if we are true disciples of Jesus we shall find ourselves more and

*The  
Worth  
of  
Our  
Days*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*The* more prone to rank high on the scale  
*Worth* those days when we have been conscious  
*of* of some growth of character, some real  
*Our* usefulness in the world. It would be a  
*Days* shame to mark a day 100 simply because  
from sunrise to sunset our own cup of  
happiness had been full and we had no  
regard as to whether those about us  
might or might not be weary or sad.

In some such way we number our years. Mr. Joseph Cook, not long before his death, characterized human decades in this striking fashion: "Man's life means tender teens, teachable twenties, tireless thirties, fiery forties, forcible fifties, serious sixties, sacred seventies, aching eighties." Of course no one adjective can sum up all the characteristics of ten years, but we are reminded that our lives do move on from period to period, and that each decade may witness some addition to our working equipment, some tighter grasp of the problems set us to solve, a larger influence in behalf of things true and beautiful and of good report.

The only glory that can rest upon

## T H E   W A Y M A R K S

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these human years arises from the fact that we frail and transient creatures of the dust may rest in the mighty embrace of the Eternal, may link our weakness with his strength, our short-sightedness with his foreknowledge, our fleeting threescore years and ten with that life which knows no beginning and no end. Only as we realize that God is the background of our existence does it seem worth while even to breathe, and over against that background how puerile seem our petty rivalries, our selfish ambitions, our absorption in material things!

*The  
Worth  
of  
Our  
Days*

God's judgments are not man's judgments, and as at the end of a year we cast our eyes back it may be that God takes note of things in our pathway which to us seem apparently trivial. His interest in the record is not unlike that of a Christian mother who keeps informed about the progress of her boy away at school. He writes that he is on the football team, that he is president of his class, that he has taken a prize for declamation, that he is among the first

*The  
Backward  
Look*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*The  
Backward  
Look* six scholars of his class. Such tidings rejoice her heart, but if she is keeping a private book wherein she has recorded the notable things in his life since the unspeakable moment when he was first placed in her arms, what will give her the most satisfaction to write down? Surely what he told her about his deciding to be a Christian, about his effort to promote a higher standard of honor in the classroom and on the playground.

So God's eye, as it scans our record, rests with loving approbation on things which mark us as disciples of his Son—that day when we met and conquered a great temptation, those times when we were unselfish and loving when it would have been far more natural and easy to be the opposite, the hand which we stretched out one day to a weaker brother, the good cheer which radiated from us when the clouds were settling upon us and those about us.

*The  
Fresh  
Chance* Does it pay to spend a great deal of strength and time in bemoaning the past? Gordon of Khartum used to say



## T H E   W A Y M A R K S

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that he regarded past events not as his-  
tory but as providence. We need for  
our comfort and relief the power to rise  
above the depression and heartburning  
occasioned by a backward look, and to  
grasp the great Christian truth that all  
things, even slips and shortcomings, may  
somehow in the wonderful movements  
of God's providence work out his own  
blessed designs and be for our ultimate  
good. Let us never forget the inspiring  
words of the general who, when he met  
a detachment of his troops fleeing from  
the enemy, their captain crying out,  
"The battle is lost," rallied them and  
turned their faces again to the foe by  
saying, "This battle may be lost, but  
there is yet time to win another."

*The  
Fresh  
Chance*

The only way to make a new year  
better is to make ourselves better. Just  
in proportion as we become more de-  
voted to duty, more open to the truth,  
braver in asserting it, truer and more  
constant in our affections, purer and  
more unselfish in daily living shall we be  
conferring upon the passing days a value  
and a glory which will make them worth

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*The  
Fresh  
Chance* living in the experience and worth remembering hereafter. And the time to begin is now! A year slips away from us before we are aware of its flight. The difference between most of us and Jesus Christ is that he never postponed until next year or next week the thing he ought to do. We are continually deluding ourselves with the notion that pretty soon we will begin to carry out our high impulses; that day after tomorrow, perhaps, we will attack that bad habit; but any year will be a good year to us only as we strive to make January first and January second, and all the successive three hundred and sixty-three days, just as good as we can, by beautifying our own characters and by brightening the lot of those about us.

*Signs  
of  
Progress* If we examine ourselves to discover tokens of growth, we ought not to look only for conventional signs of progress. Every sincere soul may fairly take comfort to himself from every proper sign of advance, even though he may have been trained to exact of himself certain

## T H E   W A Y M A R K S

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prescribed feelings. A man is growing spiritually if he is growing morally, if he finds an increasing hatred in his heart of sham and cant, if his ethical standard for himself and others is constantly advancing, if he loves justice and does mercy, and tries to walk humbly before his God from day to day. Moreover, one of the truest tokens of growth is discontent with present attainments. If that be absent, it is a question whether one is growing at all.

When a great edifice is being erected the sound of hammer and saw is loudly heard; but when nature weaves her carpet of green for the fields, sends the sap coursing through trunk and bough and impels the flowers to send up their fragile stems through the dark earth the wondrous transformations do not advertise themselves to the ear. So the Christian grows. A man who is living near to his Lord, entering more fully each day into his spirit of service and sacrifice, taking on more of his likeness, does not need to bluster or brag about it; nay, he shrinks from any proclama-

*Signs  
of  
Progress*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Signs of Progress* tion of his bettering state. But little by little his friends become aware of it, in the gentler tones of his voice, in his softer judgments of his fellows, in his deepening humility of spirit, in his mastery of his passions and his meannesses.

The growth is orderly; it is not spasmodic; it is not aimless. There is the logical, progressive unfolding of the new life. We have seen some sad cases of men who followed Jesus on the hop, skip and jump principle. But the life that is really keyed to his is steady and moves evenly and quietly to a distant goal. It does not make so much difference if the progress is slow. Dr. A. B. Bruce says in his helpful volume, *The Moral Order of the World*, "The one valid distinction between men is one of tendency and momentum." Only let us make sure that there is some movement.

*Holding On* Sometimes simply to hold one's ground is to make progress. The man rowing against the current deserves some praise for not letting his boat go down the

## T H E   W A Y M A R K S

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stream. The reformed drunkard does  *Holding*  
well if he simply holds on, even if he  *On*  
does not develop all the Christian graces  
at once. Some one asked Sieyes just  
after the Reign of Terror what he did  
during that stormy period. His simple  
answer was, "I lived." Just to live out  
a single day firmly, uncomplainingly,  
may be all that is sometimes required of  
us.

This is an age of transition, and it is  
difficult to adjust the truths we learned  
in childhood to the new discoveries of  
science and of Biblical studies, but shame  
on the man who, because his knowledge  
increases and widens, surrenders his  
faith! Learn Principal Shairp's beauti-  
ful poem of two stanzas, beginning :

I have a life in Christ to live,  
And ere I live it must I wait  
Till science shall full answer give  
Of this or that book's date ?

The Son of man still finds faith on the  
earth, despite the fact that creeds made a  
century ago or fifteen centuries ago do  
not adequately express our own convic-  
tions. Genuine, vital, animating faith is

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Holding* as possible to-day as it ever was ; nay,  
 *On* even more so to the reverent, serious,  
teachable soul. Hold on to what you  
have, and it will gather to itself more.

We ought to hold on, too, to courage. There are problems enough, personal and social, there are lions in the way, but " why should the children of the King go mourning all their days ? " We ought to present a brave front to the world. Courage, too, grows by being exercised. When we come to the narrow places and our foes seem hemming us in, let us spur us on to battle by the thought of the forces on our side.

No one has any business to let go his grip on duty. It is in this region of life that endurance tells most. I was impressed once with the reply which Dr. Sheldon made to a question regarding his attitude toward his critics. " Oh," said he, as if it were a most trivial matter, " I go right along." A great point has been scored when we can learn to go right along with our work, sticking to the duty that is hard or disagreeable, carrying it through to the end.

## T H E   W A Y M A R K S

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The natural heart craves signs and wonders. So a multitude of artificial tests of personal salvation has grown up. Christians have demanded of themselves much more than Jesus Christ ever demanded of them. Some mystical inward witness has been sought, some mighty attestation of the Spirit to the fact that they were accepted children of God. Some of the sweetest, purest souls this world has ever known have subjected themselves to seasons of introspection and self-discipline that have frequently ended in gloom and despair. We of this generation, to whom such words of despondency and self-upbraiding seldom come, do not begin to realize how other generations of Christians have faced it with quivering personal anxiety. What would they not have given to receive the assurance that they were safe as respects this life and particularly as respects that which is to come? *Inward Assurance*

The inquiry might have been justifiable if it had confined itself to a few simple Biblical tests. John, for instance,

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*Inward Assurance* says, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren," "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." It is not a question of ecstatic feeling, or of enjoyment of prayer, or of utter indifference to earthly things, but it is a question primarily of love. A man knows whether or not he is trying to live in the atmosphere of the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians and to walk along the pathway outlined by the Sermon on the Mount. A saved man is a loving man. The love begins with the circle of those for whom he is most responsible and with whom he is most constantly thrown and then he tries to love to the best of his ability. Then his sympathy widens to those in the neighborhood, the community, the nation, the world. So if genuine, impulsive love is welling up in his heart he will not be likely to trouble himself with this question, or if he does the answer will be ready at hand.

There are practical tests, too. Bishop Hannington, when a young man, said



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that one reason why he thought he was a Christian was that he liked to go to prayer-meeting better than he used to. This is by no means a conclusive evidence of salvation, or the absence of the fondness any sure sign of moral degeneracy. It depends upon the prayer-meeting. But it is one of several practical tests. Does a man like the company of Christian people, does he like to hear about the progress of the kingdom of God, does he yearn for peace in the industrial world, does he have a growing disposition to perform the simple routine acts of every-day helpfulness?

We would not bring back the days of our fathers, when the demands of a harsh theology made men morbid, but we are foolish when we go to the other extreme and forget that we have a soul to save. Horace Bushnell once said to a young woman in the most natural way imaginable, "Have you found your place?" We should ask ourselves, now and then, if we have found our place in God's universe, if we are cooperating with his laws and seeking above everything else to

*Inward  
Assurance*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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glorify him. A man may know whether or not he is in his proper place, and he may have the joy and peace arising from this consciousness.

*To-day*      Where am I going to-day? To my  
*To-morrow* work, of course, first of all, and to do it  
*and* better, if possible, than yesterday. But,  
*Then* before I go to it, is there not one other  
*What* spot to which I should resort, there to gird myself for the struggles and responsibilities of the day? The great preacher Chalmers used to express the fear that he would be "bustled out of his spirituality." Any one whose life is beset with many cares is in danger of this misfortune. Let me forfend it then this day, if possible. And then, as I go to my work, and after I get there, may there not be some other path of quiet service which I can and ought to tread? Is there any home of a poor man, any shop or factory where oaths and bad talk befoul the air into which I may go this day carrying the fresh ozone of the Christ life?

Where am I going to-morrow, and

## T H E   W A Y M A R K S

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during all the to-morrows of my earthly life? What single purpose have I in view? "Rome was not built in a day." The great books and the great paintings are not the outcome of a momentary impulse that led their makers to toil fiercely for a day or two. These wonderful achievements represent the steady, patient labor of many years, or even of a lifetime, and from the start these workers kept their goal in sight. Paul belonged to this company of purposeful souls. He took the long look into the future and then set his teeth firmly and said: "This one thing I do." We cannot, it is true, entirely settle in our youthful days, or even in maturer life, just where we shall go when the immediate task is done, when we are through with this school, when we shall have served our time here and there. But it pays the growing boy to ask himself now and then, "At what am I aiming in life?"

*To-day*  
*To-morrow*  
*and*  
*Then*  
*What*

Where am I going, not to-day or to-morrow, perhaps, but by and by when I die? I know not just how much I

## S T E P S     C H R I S T W A R D

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*To-day* shall be able to travel over this beautiful  
*To-morrow* world, but of one thing I am certain:  
*and* in due time I shall have to take alone  
*Then* that journey from which no mortal has  
*What* ever returned. Shall I when I come  
down to that dark river be able to say,  
as Frances Willard did, "How beautiful  
God is"? And how about my destina-  
tion after I have quitted these earthly  
scenes? I shall go somewhere when  
I die. Religious people talk about a  
place called heaven and another called  
hell, and while I cannot understand all  
that some affirm about these places or  
states I really do not think that I shall  
go to heaven until I am in some measure  
fit to associate with those pure and un-  
selfish souls who have washed their robes  
and made them white. If I live like  
a brute here, or even if I do not live like  
a brute but live quite decently, and yet  
am utterly oblivious of the life and  
sacrifice of Jesus Christ and of the love  
of God to which they bore witness, then  
I will not be so presumptuous as to  
expect God to take me to his heaven in  
spite of myself. I once met a man,

## T H E    W A Y M A R K S

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a very respectable business man, who was honest enough to tell me that he believed that if he should die that night he would go to hell. A man is a coward who professes religion in the hope that he may escape hell. On the other hand a man is a fool who ignores the hereafter, who never asks himself this great question, "Where am I going when I die?"

*To-day*  
*To-morrow*  
*and*  
*Then*  
*What*



*THE REWARDS*

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O wealth of life beyond all bound,  
Eternity each moment given!

—*David Wasson.*

If there be joy in the world, surely a man of pure heart possesseth it.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

Very great is the peace of obedience. When a man has his lot fixed and his mind made up and his destiny before him, and he quietly acquiesces in that, his spirit is at rest.—*F. W. Robertson.*

I have been thinking much lately of the Lord's loving kindness in giving us so many wayside enjoyments and so much present reward in all our work for him. . . . For over and above the great gifts, the blessed hope set before us and the quiet peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, what numbers of bits and drops of pleasure and delight one gets which simply would not exist for us if we were not his children!—*Frances R. Havergal.*

In the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament.—*Brother Lawrence.*



## V

### THE REWARDS

THERE is a famous picture of Holman *Joy* Hunt's illustrating the words, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," and representing the Saviour as a pleading suppliant for admission. That is one great aspect of our religion, but I like to match it with the thought of Christ as a King, distributing royal bounties. This was in Paul's mind when he penned those glowing words, "All are yours," and in John's when he wanted others to share what he had seen and heard and felt, to the end that his own joy and theirs might be fulfilled. Religion does not always go through the world as a beggar. It has its splendors and its exceeding great rewards. In the beautiful, richly furnished mansion which stands on yonder hill the feast is spread. There is an abundance of everything

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*Joy* that may delight the heart of man.  
“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye  
to the waters.”

God meant man to be happy. To that end he arched the heavens above him and spread out the smiling earth before him and charged the air with sunshine and ozone and gave to the robin his song and tinted the eye of the violet. As you go out into the open on a morning when the thrill of the springtime makes every nerve quiver with delight, you pour out your appreciation in Longfellow's language and say :

O gift of God, O perfect day,  
Wherein no man shall work, but play,  
Wherein it is enough for me  
Not to be doing, but to be.

Human relations, too, are so ordered by our heavenly Father as to be the source of measureless joy. Despite all the friction and misunderstanding that arise between man and man, an immense amount of pleasure and profit is derived from association with others. Life would be insipid indeed if we did not have the

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cheer and tonic of our family, school and *Joy* business companionships. The solitary man is likely to be a gloomy man.

If, then, notwithstanding all the misery of the world, happiness is man's natural portion, it ought not to be thought that religion lacks this element of joy. It would be contrary to all the movement of life if after a boy or girl has exulted in the fresh winds of heaven and frolicked with his mates and tasted a hundred innocent delights he or she should at the moment of becoming a Christian put on a long face and carry about ever afterward an atmosphere of gloom. Not unto such a service does God call any hopeful, ambitious youth. The nature of his kingdom is often misunderstood. There is the sacrificial element, to be sure, but it is self first of all and forever that we are to renounce, not the wholesome joys of God's good world. The Christian's pleasures are the pleasures which belong to the world's life so far as these are innocent and wholesome. He will exercise wisdom in the choice of them, and self-control in the use of them,

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*Joy* but no one has a better right to a "good time" than he. He may relish just as keenly a glass of soda water or a trip to Europe as the man who never thinks of Jesus Christ or tries to follow him. This is our Father's world, and he has fitted it up with many things to minister to our physical and esthetic senses. We can have access to any and all of them so long as indulgence does not compromise our Christian principles or dull our spiritual vision.

But the Christian has certain pleasures about which the world knows little or nothing. They divide themselves into two classes. First, those arising from the service of others. To be sure one does not need to be a Christian in order to be kind and helpful, and we bless God that to-day so many Christlike deeds are performed by those who do not own that they are disciples of the Master. But the enduring motive for such service of our fellows lies in the remembrance of Him who though he was rich yet for our sake became poor, and every form of ministration to others which stops short

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of a regard for their spiritual needs fails, *Joy* by just so much, of being the noblest service. Pleasant as is the sense of having furnished coal and bread to the needy, one does not taste the keenest joy until the spiritual part of him has gone out in sympathy and help to a fellow man.

The other class of pleasures belongs to the inner life. There is such a thing as Christian experience. Not the mystics alone, absorbed in devotion, have felt the thrill of a holy rapture, but plain, hard-working men and women in the midst of life's battles have over and again felt the exquisite joy of communion with God. We do not have to wait until we reach the heavenly life to know the reality and blessedness of such experiences :

The hill of Zion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets,  
Before we reach the heavenly fields,  
Or walk the golden streets.

But only one key unlocks this door of joy. The service must be unselfish and complete. What joy does the soldier

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*Joy* find who has no enthusiasm for the campaign, who does not trust his commander, who would desert if he got a chance, who shirks his assignments, who goes to sleep on picket duty, whose heart never responds to the call to make a desperate charge, to sustain a forlorn hope? If we serve God bravely and well, he will see to it that our cup of joy is kept constantly full.

*Peace*    “Why are your Christian missionaries forever talking about peace?” said a Hindu teacher to one of my college mates in India not long ago, “and you not only talk about it but seem to be able to realize it too.” Thus did a devotee of another religion pay tribute to one of the distinctive qualities of Christianity, and at the same time tacitly admit that his own faith was unable to produce anything like the Christian’s peace.

Is this all a delusion? Have men and women for nineteen centuries been the victims of a vivid imagination? Have they calmly endured martyrdom, or have

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they carried bravely and uncomplainingly *Peace* the routine tasks and burdens of every day, which in some cases are the equivalent of martyrdom, sustained by a trust which had no basis in reality? I do not believe it. There is such a thing as Christian experience, as real to the man who passes through it as the explorer's joy at discovering a new continent is to him, or as the scientist's satisfaction in penetrating a little farther the secrets of this universe.

It would be all a delusion if peace were a product of our own manufacture. The only guaranty of peace arises from surrender to the divine power and love. By no process of self-realization, by no mere discipline of an untamed nature, by no strenuous and persistent endeavor alone, can a man secure the Christian's peace. It is God who must keep us in this peace. It is Christ who bestows his own peace upon us. On the one hand, he said to his disciples, was the world and its tribulations, on the other was himself and his peace. Their lives would be passed in both spheres. They would not

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*Peace* escape the tribulation, but in Christ they would always have peace.

There is no magic about this. Of course there is first the supreme surrender of one's self to God. Man looks out upon the universe and decides that, all things considered, he will accept for himself the Christian theory of its meaning and conform his life thereto. So we all go on from year to year, holding on to Christ because that trust seems to us the most sensible and rational course of action. But along with this trust is the constant effort to mold our life according to the ideals which he has put before us. It is impossible for him to bestow his peace upon a soul that is not seeking to be saturated with the spirit of Christ and to do the greater works which he said his followers would do.

*Hope* Hope has never fled from the human family even in the most wretched periods of its history. Many a man on the brink of suicide even, has recoiled from the dark deed because of the fluttering of a vague hope in his heart. Such stirrings



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of soul are proof that all the children of *Hope* men are the children of God. But when the Christian hope takes hold of a man it seems so utterly different from what he has known before, so satisfying and so beautiful, that he seems to himself to have experienced a second birth, to have passed into a world in which all things have become new.

This living hope, this Christian hope, this Easter hope is not based on a fond fancy that to-morrow is to be better than to-day, upon a willingness to gamble on the chances of life which we trust will soon put an end to our run of bad luck and clear our sky of clouds. The lively hope into which we are begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead is grounded on what God has already done for the world through our Lord's ministry to it and conquest of it. In him we see one who has upon him no mark of its defilement, whose mightiest forces—those of waste and decay and death—he has utterly vanquished. The vital and the vitalizing Jesus is our reservoir of hope. So long as we see his

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*Hope* majestic figure in the forefront of the fight we will not cease to believe that victory is coming also to us, provided we wield the sword of the Spirit with all our might.

The Christian's hope is of countless worth in the presence of discouragement and depression. We need it when we face the poverty and the intermittent character of our own spiritual life. Our sins trouble us and they ought to trouble us, but they ought not to trouble us so much that we lose sight of the promise : " If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." We may always hope and expect that the power which has already wrought in us a partial salvation will bring its work to perfection. Then again, we falter and grow faint-hearted in the presence of the woe of the world. It is so vast and it presses so continuously upon us. Wordsworth felt it when he wrote of

The heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world.

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The injustices and the oppressions, the *Hope* crimes and the vices and the sufferings of the world would make cynics and pessimists of us did we not believe that Christ is the hope of the world, and that it is a vastly better world to-day because his spirit for so many years has been transforming individuals and reconstructing society. And he will surely accomplish that whereto he was sent.

We often have to get one or two *Guidance* knock-down blows before we realize the desirability of a guiding force stronger and wiser than ourselves. In that little book, *Ships that Pass in the Night*, one of the characters is pictured thus: "She had come through a great fever into a great calm." Only those who have been tempest-tossed and buffeted by contrary winds, and who have outridden the impetuosity and wilfulness of youthful days, possess that serenity of soul which comes from surrender to the leadership of a higher power. It is one of the compensations of advancing years that as we grow riper the sense of God's

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*Guidance* guidance becomes more clear. Professor Austin Phelps near the close of his life said that the one word which seemed to sum up his whole history more than any other was the single word "led."

But even the flight of time and the hard knocks of life do not breed the sense of being led in those who never bow the knee to God or think about spiritual realities. We must turn the eye inward away from petty and sordid things. We must find and foster the spiritual qualities that are a part of our birthright in order to discover any plan for our lives and any divine care and leadership. The reason why life is such a puzzle and tangle to so many persons is that they have never found the great Leader of life, the great interpreter of these human years. Life was a terribly mixed-up affair to the apostle Paul until he found Christ. Life is painfully empty and meaningless to thousands of our fellow creatures as the days succeed one another, but bring no sense of continuity or of any divine plan being worked out in their behalf. If you want to be led

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by God, you must go where God is and *Guidance* stay with him and obey him.

Yes, says one, the leadership is plain enough when we saunter by quiet streams and in flowery meadows, but when the path grows rough and thorny, when it carries us straight down into the valley of the shadow of death, ah, then it is hard to believe that our Shepherd is by our side. In such seasons of doubt remember the time when as a little child you placed your hand in your father's or mother's. Happy as our recollections of childhood are, there were hours when we had to take our parents' word, to obey them when our preference was otherwise, to wait before we could see that all was coming out well with us. Ah, but they were after all blessed periods to us, for in the end we came to know and love our parents better, and as grown men and women we thank them that sometimes they led us in paths where our feet at first refused to go, and in which when we did walk it was with tear-stained faces and loud protestations.

On the day that they crucified the Son

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Guidance* of man outside the city wall it looked to all the world as if God had forsaken his well-beloved Son. "He trusteth on God; let him deliver him." Yet the terrible day went by without any intervention from the skies. But now that for nineteen centuries Jesus Christ has been receiving the homage of mankind, and through his spirit has been lifting the nations, can we think that God for a single instant withdrew his care? At the very moment when we murmur and feel most desolate the love of God is flowing about us like the exhaustless sea.

*The Presence of God*      The Scotch have the expression "Far ben," which they apply to a man who has gone far into the mysteries of Christian thought and Christian life. Lachlan Campbell, the Highland mystic, whom Ian Maclaren portrays so vividly, was such a man. Paul, when he wrote his later letters, had penetrated far into the heart of Christianity. He who in earlier epistles had set forth with such force and such variety of illustration Christ's work

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for men then strove to make his converts see the equal importance and value of Christ's work in men. The new truth was not meant to supersede the other but to supplement it, in order that religion might be full-orbed.

*The  
Presence  
of God*

Paul's language is that of a mystic. It is as if an outside force had come in, to which he had abdicated his personal sovereignty. A verse in Galatians points to a blending of identities. He seems hardly to know who was in control, himself or his Lord. Yet Paul is not so far away from the best modern philosophy. Every reverent philosopher and scientist to-day is reiterating the truth that God is in every part of his world, in the lifeless stick as well as in the shining star. Why, then, should he not be in the finest product of his hand, even in man?

Yes, this indwelling Presence is universal, but God is in man as he is not and cannot be in the block of wood. And he is in the Christian man as he is not and cannot be in the man who ignores the divine Presence. Given the response to God and the life blossoms out with

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*The Presence of God* tokens of his indwelling as the trees in the spring are clothed with beauty and thus declare the glory of the immanent God. But when a man crowds his life full of business and pleasure and self-indulgence he is to all intents and purposes hermetically sealed against God. He can get in, for he is God, but he cannot become the inspiring power of the life.

There are two moods when we need the comfort and incentive of the indwelling Presence. When we are impatient, fretful and discouraged, dissatisfied with our lives and our lot in life, with our achievements and our prospects, then to know that there is a calm, strong presence "closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," is to be made steady and hopeful again. The little child may weary of its blocks, but in the same room sits the mother sewing or reading quietly. The child knows that she is resourceful and willing to help it. The very fact that she is within the same four walls is reassuring. Frederick Maurice was forever trying to teach himself



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and others the lessons that one's changeable moods do not affect, in the slightest, spiritual realities, that religion is not the product of one's fancies and emotions, but the response of the soul to a reality already and forever present there. So when the tide of faith ebbs God is still real and still the one unfailing source of spiritual life.

*The  
Presence  
of God*

The other mood obtains when we sink to lower levels and are tempted to baseness and uncharitableness, revenge and cowardice. But how can we admit to our minds that foul imagination, how can we plan to get the better of our brother, how give away to passion and selfishness when the indwelling Presence is aware of every secret thought and motive? Honored with such a Guest, can we wrong or grieve him? Helen Hunt's sweet poem, addressed to a human host, applies also to this divine being:

'Twere like a breach  
Of reverence in a temple, could I dare  
Here speak untruth, here wrong my inmost thought.  
Here I grow strong and pure; here I may yield  
Without shamefacedness the little brought

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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From out my poor life and stand revealed  
And glad and trusting in the sweet and rare  
And tender presence which hath filled this air.

*The  
Graces  
of the  
Spirit*      And why may not a man stepping  
Christward take a proper satisfaction in  
those elements of strength and worth  
which little by little are added to his  
nature and come to be assets of his  
character just as much as machinery and  
warehouses are assets of his business?  
Peace and joy, hope and divine leader-  
ship—these are the fundamental rewards  
of the Christian life, but, besides them, a  
man acquires also, slowly but surely,  
other definite virtues and graces. They  
are the natural out-flowering of the inner  
life of peace and hope and joy. Hu-  
mility comes and lodges with a man—  
not the false humility which sings, “Oh,  
to be nothing, nothing,” but still seeks  
the chief seats in the synagogues and  
craves honors at the hands of others, but  
genuine humility divested of every trait  
of conceit and self-sufficiency, and grow-  
ing out of complete surrender to the pur-  
poses of God. Gentleness and meekness  
blossom forth. Pagan religions neither

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commend nor produce such qualities. *The*  
The Christian also acquires in time a *Graces*  
purity, a courage, a self-mastery, a pa- *of the*  
tience, a fortitude, a tenderness, an all- *Spirit*  
embracing charity worth more to him  
than silver and gold. We may call them  
if we please the by-products of Chris-  
tianity or, to change the figure, the har-  
vestings of the pilgrimage as one moves  
on from stage to stage in the path  
Christward. Characters with granite in  
them, characters that stand serene and  
strong amid all the shocks of temptation,  
characters that have about them the  
savor of Jesus Christ, characters marked  
by beauty, symmetry and force are the  
sure portion and the exceeding great re-  
ward of the men who sincerely follow  
Jesus.



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We are not angels, but we may  
Down in earth's corners kneel,  
And multiply sweet acts of love,  
And murmur what we feel.

—*Longfellow.*

The world waits to be loved.

—*Robert E. Speer.*

Not for an instant does Jesus stand bewildered between the vision of God and the need of man.—*F. W. Gunsaulus.*

Hunger, thirst of body or spirit, strangerhood, nakedness, sickness, some kind of bondage or danger or distress, these are your opportunities.—*F. D. Huntington.*

The humblest Christian worker who is really pained with the sins of men and rejoices in their salvation is feeling, in his degree, the very passion which bore the Saviour of the world through his sufferings and which has throbbed from eternity in the heart of God.—*James Stalker.*

## VI

### WAYSIDE MINISTRIES

THE final purpose for which Christ calls us into his discipleship is not what we may gain from him but what we may do for him. When he said to his early disciples, "I will make you fishers of men," the promise must have sounded strangely to them. If he had declared that he would make them renowned for all time, or make them sharers of his throne in the coming kingdom, he would have extended an expectation that might well have kindled their ambition. But what use had they for men, even if they should catch them? What kind of a mission anyway was it to discharge which he was asking them to leave their nets and their homes?

But Jesus saw far, not alone into the future, but into the very genius of his kingdom. He wanted men then as he

*Our  
Real  
Business*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Our* wants men now, first that they may be  
*Real* with him long enough to imbibe his  
*Business* spirit, and then that they may go forth teaching, healing, saving the world. Would that the thousands among us who think Christianity means simply membership in an orthodox church, and who have little idea of its real nature and scope, would hear and heed this first great promise, "I will make you fishers of men."

Zeal is kindled by an appreciation of the need of the world. When we move out of our habitual and comfortable spheres and see something of the sorrow and woe of others, the desire stirs within us to do something in the way of relief and rescue. No man can be lukewarm—at least no Christian man can—who walks up and down the highways and lanes of this world with open eyes and a responsive heart. The other great kindler of zeal is the cross of Christ—not the painted crucifix, not any single theory about the atonement, but the actual outpouring of the life of the Son of God in behalf of men. When we fully



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realize what that transaction meant outside the city wall nineteen hundred years ago—not in its external aspect merely, but in what it signifies touching the eternal principle of sacrifice—then we grow tender and loving and become sharers of the passion of our Lord.

*Our  
Real  
Business*

“Go in anywhere—there is good fighting all along the line!” said the commanding officer to a subordinate, who dashed up with his battalion and asked where he should locate his troops. Any idler or loafer in the kingdom of God who is at last roused from his sloth, or who desires to cease criticizing others and to find his own place in the vineyard will not have to look far to discover it. Has he money? A dozen needy and worthy causes are stretching out imploring hands. Has he time? Some neglected boy or girl will cross his path before sundown to whom he may give something better than money. Has he brains? No Sunday-school has a full quota of competent teachers, no charitable or philanthropic enterprise has a plethora of valuable helpers.

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Our  
Real  
Business*      The cobbler, William Carey, as he stitched away at his bench, fed his life with God and his missionary impulses by frequently looking up at a large map of the world, on which was roughly sketched the condition of heathendom. It is an interesting fact that the tales of Captain Cook's voyage round the world were also serviceable in broadening Carey's vision and bringing him to the point of consecration to the foreign field. We might easily be quickened if we would use the simple, natural sources of life and power within our daily reach. Read carefully, for instance, the story of present day activities in any single important mission station in the world, and see if it does not kindle your zeal and make you want to have some sort of a share in it.

*Ability  
Imposes  
Responsi-  
bility*      Somewhere back in an early Latin text-book we remember the sentence: "They are able because they think they are able." I went one day into a class-mate's room and saw in conspicuous letters a little card in his handwriting, on  
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which were Kant's famous words: "I can because I ought." It was his way of reminding himself every day that the simple fact that he was called upon to do certain things qualified him to accomplish them. Every one has more ability than he puts to use; even those who mourn because they have no talent at all probably have at least two or three done up in napkins or buried in the ground. Tremendous power resides in the money kings of the world, in the social leaders, in the great inventors and discoverers, but in every humble, sincere follower of Christ is far more ability for good service in the world than he dare dream of. Was it not Mr. Moody who said: "The world has yet to see what God can accomplish through a man wholly consecrated to him"?

*Ability  
Imposes  
Responsibility*

We may all profitably cultivate the resolute spirit of that group of boys who once banded themselves into an organization with this ambitious program of action:

"Resolved: That the world is upside down.

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Ability*      "Resolved: That the world must be  
*Imposes* turned right side up.  
*Responsi-*  
*bility*      "Resolved: That we are the ones to  
do it."

After all, a vast deal of good work for Christ is going on in the world, and against this background of Christian activity the figure of the loafer shows in the most unattractive light. There is a time and place in which to loaf. A man is none the less manly who, having done his year's work with fidelity, loiters beside a running stream or throws himself in utter abandonment on some velvet greensward. But a loafer in the midst of the market-place, where traffic is going on from morn till night, ought to be drummed out of the company and made to move on. So a Christian who, in the first years of this century of opportunity, shirks his Christian task should be ordered to the rear.

A real Christian cannot keep his religion to himself; it must escape from him somewhere, somehow, and it must be made evident to others. It might do a man good personally to go out into the

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wilderness, beyond earshot of his fellows, and shout, "I believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God." Such private confession is no doubt well pleasing to the Master, but it must be quickly followed up by something more public. In one form and another he is continually saying this in the Gospels: "Get your religion at work. Do not bury it in the ground or fold it up in a napkin or put it under a bushel. Display it where men can see it and be cheered and braced thereby." Christianity was never meant to be a cloistered affair. It was designed to be brought constantly to the attention of mankind, and Jesus expects that the men who believe in it shall do with it what they do with everything else in which they heartily believe. Tell others about it, commend it, be enthusiastic about it, be frank and open in championing it.

*Ability  
Imposes  
Responsibility*

There are times and seasons, to be sure. There are foolish and there are wise ways. We should respect our brother's personality. We should avoid

*Times  
and  
Seasons*

## S T E P S     C H R I S T W A R D

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*Times* the ostentatious buttonholing process.  
*and* We should not make ourselves, as we  
*Seasons* seek to bring others to Christ, bores or  
gain the reputation of being cranks.  
The good fisherman chooses his bait carefully and selects streams where he will be most likely to find his fish. The fishing habit—or in some cases the fishing passion—itself dictates the instrument to be used. Let us get lodged in our souls the yearning to save men and the form of its expression will take care of itself.

These are not days when men wear their hearts on their sleeves. They must be sought patiently, tenderly, persistently. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." The divine search preceded the divine sacrifice. Men ought to understand that we are after their souls. We ought not to be afraid to avow our steady intention to win them for Christ.

Some souls are shy. They evade the gaze of the public. They have gotten into out-of-the-way places; they may have wandered thither, as did the witless sheep, through no fault of theirs. They

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may have slipped into a corner out of the view of every one. We need to be circumspect as well as zealous, delicate as well as persistent, in our search after these shy, shrinking souls. We shall have to go more than halfway in order to find them. We may have to overcome many an obstacle, to light every lamp whose gleam we can bring to bear upon the darkness. But the souls are still precious; they have the stamp of the divine valuation upon them. But it is our task to approach them so lovingly and persuasively that they shall be glad to be borne back on our shoulders to the safe lodging and never again to stray away from their home in God.

*Times  
and  
Seasons*

“Under whose preaching were you converted?” asked some one of a young man who had recently found the Saviour. He replied, “Under no one’s preaching; I was converted by my aunt’s practicing.” A similar statement was made by a young minister at the time of his ordination. At one period in his life he was almost an infidel, but he said, “There was one

*Ways  
and  
Means*

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Ways  
and  
Means* argument in favor of Christianity which I could never refute—the consistent conduct of my father.” In these two testimonies is illustrated one effective method for bringing others to Christ. Let your life be a continual invitation to come to him. Mr. Moody said, “A man may preach with the eloquence of an angel, but if he does n’t *live* what he preaches and act out in his home and in his business what he professes, his teaching goes for naught, and people will say it is all a sham.”

Another method is that adopted by Andrew on a certain memorable afternoon when he sought “his own brother Simon” and “brought him unto Jesus”; by Philip when he brought Nathanael; by the woman of Samaria who hastened back to the city, forgetting her water pot in the joy of finding a well, and told the story of her discovery in such a convincing manner that many believed on the Christ simply through her eager evidence. It would be hard to improve upon this old-fashioned method which our Lord himself instituted by saying to



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individual men, "Follow me." He did not at first issue a general call to everybody but selected his disciples one by one. *Ways  
and  
Means*

If really in earnest in our desire to win souls we will never give up the effort. We will keep such a grip upon them as did the young medical student of whom Professor Drummond tells, who found another fellow that was fast drinking himself to death. The friend took him to his own home and watched over him day and night. One evening the fellow threw down his book and said he wanted to "bust." "All right," was the reply, "bust here." His friend stood by him in the extremity of his temptation and finally had the joy of seeing him emerge into a useful Christian life.

The providence of God puts us in neighborly relations in our offices, our school life, our clubs, our journeys. Without intruding upon others or becoming meddlesome, we can be their good Samaritans spiritually. We can open our eyes and see what they need, our purses and relieve their destitution,

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Ways  
and  
Means* our hearts and comfort them. If we are swayed with Christ's own passion for helpfulness, we need not fear that we shall blunder. Old Father Vassar once approached a very worldly woman on the subject of her soul's salvation. At the dinner table that evening, as she related the interview to her husband, he said, "Why did n't you tell him to go about his business?" "Husband, if you had been there you would have thought that he was about his business." If we make it our Christian business to be helpful, to be neighborly, other souls will rise up and bless us, just as we to-day thank God for the good neighbors who have touched our lives.

*Sticking  
to It* This is an age in which impulses to service take root and flourish for a time in many hearts. We are all touched more or less by the altruistic spirit abroad in the earth. It is encouraging to find as we move abroad in the world so many persons who want to do good—society girls wearied of the round of parties and receptions, young business men who have

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come to see that the amassing of wealth *Sticking*  
is not the noblest end of activity, long- *to It*  
time members of churches who are coming to their pastors asking to be set at work. Such an attitude on the part of so many is one of the signs that Christ is more and more touching the hearts of God's children and making them restless unless they are speeding on his errands.

But, after all, it is also an age of dabbling in well-doing. How many wrecks of good resolutions, how many intermittent and fruitless endeavors in behalf of others we see as we look back over the track of the years. That raw but rather attractive youth whom we first met as a waiter in a city restaurant and whom we tried to induce to attend church—what has become of him now? We tried at least four times to do him good, and he responded for a while, but before long we lost our grip on him. That shiftless woman whom you undertook to teach the first principles of good housekeeping and to instruct in the rudiments of plain sewing—with what enthusiasm you entered upon this effort, but how it all

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*Sticking to It* ebbed away as you found how hard it was to accomplish your purpose. That determination, made the first of last January, to be more faithful to our prayer-meeting and bear our part there regularly—we really meant to carry it out, but a famous lecturer came along the second week in January and on the third week a concert which we could not afford to miss, and the following week we were invited out to supper, and now, somehow, we have gotten out of the way of going at all. Oh, how many such chapters have been written, over and over again, in the modern history of Christian men and women!

I have always admired the good Samaritan, not only for his kindly impulses, but for the thoroughness with which he did his benevolent work. He not only got down from his beast and bound up the wounds of the man by the wayside, but carried him to the inn and actually left money enough to pay his board until he himself should return to find out whether there was anything more to be done in behalf of his needy brother. To

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do just one such thorough piece of *Sticking*  
worthy, Christlike ministration in the *to It*  
course of a year, to carry out one's good  
impulses to the very end, no matter how  
unlovely and unappreciative the person  
served is, no matter how much toil and  
sacrifice the work involves—this is the  
kind of patience in well-doing which  
Jesus and the apostles commended and  
illustrated.

Fellowship does for a man just the *Working*  
thing which he needs. If his portion of *with*  
the wall seems to get on slowly, if it is *Others*  
all he can do to lift one stone upon an-  
other, let him stand off for a moment and  
look down the long line of workers and  
see how their united activities are slowly,  
but surely, accomplishing the common  
task. Or if he thinks he is getting ahead  
of his colaborers, that his church is more  
prosperous, his Endeavor Society more  
active, his Christian service more widely  
beneficial, let him take a broad view of  
the various splendid agencies for good at  
work throughout the land and he will be  
humbled in spirit, and gratitude for what

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*Working  
with  
Others* he may have already accomplished will be mingled with a quiet determination to do more and better work. Again, if he is failing to get his stones in line or to build solidly, if he will but examine the labor of others, and learn from them how they are doing it, he will go back to rectify his mistake and build in such a way that his work will endure the judgment of the Master Builder.

God uses workmen of different types. Dr. Vance, in his book, *The College of the Apostles*, has worked out suggestively the thought that when Jesus sent out his disciples two by two he divided them into pairs, not only that they might be company each for the other, but that one might supplement the other's lack. Simon, the radical, was yoked with Andrew, the conservative, Philip, the dullard, with Bartholomew, the sage, the doubting Thomas with the dogmatic Matthew. There is force in this analysis of the qualities of that apostolic circle, even if we do not find sufficient evidence in the New Testament for all that is affirmed by Dr. Vance concerning each individual.

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It helps us to come in contact with Christian workers whose personal characteristics differ widely from ours and who are engaged in different work. If the pastor of a fashionable metropolitan church would take supper once a month with a man running a rescue mission in the slums, good would accrue to both.

*Working  
with  
Others*

Thus fellowship becomes a test of our Christian love. It is easy enough to have delightful relations with congenial spirits, but we are often placed in situations where to carry on the work of our church or our Endeavor Society we must cooperate with those to whom we are not particularly drawn. A missionary to China when asked what his worst trial in missionary work was, responded, "My fellow missionaries." But it is a part of our Christian discipline that we have to learn to labor with those who may try us and whom, doubtless, we try.

Much is gained by cherishing a hopeful outlook upon the world. We cannot do much for humanity unless we have faith in it, unless we hold firmly to the con-

*The  
Hopeful  
Attitude*

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*The Hopeful Attitude* viction that it is worth redeeming. It is hard, in the face of ingratitude and coldness and the falling away of those whom we try to help, to maintain this optimistic attitude, but Jesus did it, and it was one great secret of his success. Those are sad lines in which a man confesses how the estimate of others dragged him down :

They thought me what I said I was ;  
I became what they thought I was.

To better the world begin right where you are. Most of us must serve our God in that "station of life whereunto we are called." Take hold of the handles and levers and sources of influence and uplift that are just within your reach. They seem so small as hardly to be visible, but look at them with the eyes of Christ and they will greaten before you, and the little ways of serving him will become large and radiant.

*The Reach of Influence* The joy in finding the lost arises in part from feeling that we have brought the thing that was astray back to where it belongs. The proper place for the piece of silver was the woman's purse

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and not an obscure corner of the room. Ian Maclaren, in the touching story, Like as a Father, tells how when Flora Campbell returned from her wanderings in London, a penitent and heart-sick girl, her father, Lachlan, whose pride had led him when she ran away to erase her name from the family Bible, made this fresh entry:

*The  
Reach  
of  
Influence*

Flora Campbell,  
Missed, April, 1873.  
Found, September, 1873.

When we bring another soul back to his Father and ours we are restoring that which has been missed and yearned over, but not forgotten, and in the joy of the reconciliation we may have a share.

To set a train of influences at work which shall operate when we are forgotten—is there any keener joy than this? But when we bring a man to Christ we may be furnishing him with one who shall shine like a jewel as he turns many to righteousness, who shall do a much better work for God and men than we with our limited abilities would ever be able to accomplish. What a joy

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*The Reach of Influence* in after years it must have been to Andrew to see the important place which his brother Peter, whom he introduced to Christ, took in his discipleship and service!

Individual work yields the greatest satisfaction. Henry Clay Trumbull declares, as he nears the later years of his long, eventful and productive life as chaplain, editor and author, that he has derived more real joy from personal conversation with strangers touching Christ and Christian things than from any other form of Christian service which he has so nobly rendered. It was Mr. Moody's Sunday-school teacher who brought him to Christ. There was one year in which only a single addition by confession was recorded in the church in the little Scottish village of Blantyre, but that convert was David Livingstone, and the minister or Sunday-school teacher or friend who brought him to Christ must have felt to his dying day the thrill of satisfaction at such an achievement. Years ago a minister had a preaching appointment on a rainy Sunday evening in a college town. He came and went, having discharged

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his duty, wearied and disappointed. The congregation was small, and no notable token was given him that his words had gone home to any heart. A score of years later a book was published which because of its insight into spiritual things commended itself widely to the Christian world. The minister, who had then become a bishop, wrote to the author thanking him for the profit derived from the book. A reply came swiftly back to this effect. "Do you remember preaching one Sunday evening at Williams College twenty years ago? I was in the audience, and what you said quickened within me impulses which have fruited into this book."

*The  
Reach  
of  
Influence*

We might multiply instances of this sort. Christian annals abound in them. You never can begin to calculate the ultimate results flowing from the effort to win men from selfishness and to establish them in the righteous life. It is our unspeakable privilege, as we move forward along the Christian way, to stretch out helping hands to many a weak and needy brother.



*THE GUIDE  
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The chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do the best we can.—*Emerson.*

The heart of our age clings to the Christ.—*G. S. Coe.*

They who long after God will be ever turning their eyes thitherward.—*Horace Bushnell.*

I know men and tell you that Jesus is not a man. He is truly a being by himself.—*Napoleon.*

Sweetest thoughts shall fail and learning falter,  
Churches change, forms perish, systems go,  
But our human needs, they will not alter,  
Christ no after age shall e'er outgrow.  
Yea, Amen! O changeless One, thou only  
Art life's guide and spiritual goal,  
Thou the light across the dark vale lonely,  
Thou the eternal haven of the soul!

—*John Campbell Shairp.*

## VII

### THE GUIDE AND THE GOAL

WE must get our own thought of *Our*  
Christ. The world is full of books in *Own*  
which the thoughts of others about him *Christ*  
are expressed in beautiful language. Raphael and Fra Angelico have put their thought of him into pictures that are the admiration of the world. Poets have sung their sweetest strains when their inspiration has been the thought of Christ. It is not so important that your thought of Christ should harmonize exactly with some one else's or with the accepted standard around you as it is that it shall be your own personal possession—something which you prize because you have wrought it out, something that occupies a high and solitary place like the thought of your mother, or the thought of your happy and inno-

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cent childhood, or the thought of the richest and most joyous experience of later years.

*Lord  
and  
Leader*    The appeal of Christ to modern life gets its strength in great part because our age is looking for a spiritual master, a social leader and deliverer. Christ comes to youth, conscious of power, burning with ambition, capable of doing great and chivalrous things, and says: "Here are ideals ample and alluring; here is the true center and point of departure for your activities; here is guidance which will never fail you; here is control which need never grow irksome; here is that mastery of life under which your powers may unfold normally, beautifully, effectively; here is an influence yielding to which you shall become noble." Many of us begin thus with Christ as Master, as the one who respects our ambition to be up and doing, nay, who plants in us that impulse. He has shed so much inspiration over life that we cannot help yielding to his charm and his sway. And having

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begun by enrolling ourselves among his followers we go on perhaps quickly, perhaps gradually, to realize other relationships which he sustains to us besides that of Lord and Master.

We learn in time that he is our comrade also. True it is that he never conditioned loyalty to him on one's ability constantly to realize intimacy of fellowship with him. The sufficient test of discipleship is the steadfast purpose to follow in his steps. We must not reproach ourselves too much when we find it difficult to grasp the great truth that the unseen Jesus is as truly with us as the man who works at the same bench or who sits by our side in the street car. We are subject to physical weariness and mental depression, and in certain moods and under certain conditions it is almost impossible to realize the verities of the spiritual world.

If we keep on obeying our Master there will surely come to us what Phillips Brooks so aptly calls "Jesus moments," when we shall be thrilled by a sense of

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*Comrade* his nearness. Sometimes as we wander on the seacoast at night, we see in the distance the intermittent flashing of a light, succeeded by regular periods of darkness. But we know that if we look long enough the bright rays will stream out again over the ocean. So if in the dark places of our lives we keep looking at Christ he will surely manifest himself to us. Meanwhile we can rejoice that he is shining upon some other needy voyager.

The best companionship does not depend on neighborhood in space. Perhaps some one halfway across the continent is more truly your comrade than a person who eats three meals a day at the same table with you. Love bridges great distances. Fondness for the same things annihilates space. There is no more antecedent improbability that you cannot have fellowship with the great being whom we call Christ, than there is that you cannot truly keep in touch with the friend who is leaving you to-day for a journey around the world.

But we must use the natural means of promoting companionship. We must

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know the earthly Jesus well in order to *Comrade* walk with the heavenly Jesus. Do you ponder the gospel story, do you sometimes at the beginning of the day take a single incident in Jesus' career, or a parable or a miracle, and bear it always in your mind to be thought of when there comes a lull in your busy hours, when you are looking aimlessly out of a car window, when you are waiting for a friend? This is one of the best methods for securing a sense of his constant companionship. Better than mountain rhapsodies is the consciousness of Christ's friendship along each day's dusty highway.

"Can two work together except they be agreed?" Only as we think the thoughts of Jesus, cherish his ambitions, cultivate his charitable and loving temper towards all men, practice his deeds of kindness and mercy, can we have this intimate fellowship. It is almost an affront to him to conceive of daily intimacy with him simply that it may produce for us a certain pleasurable emotional glow. He wants companions of

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*Comrade* his cross, of his solitary way, men and women who share his intense yearning in behalf of the suffering and the lost.

The world is more and more sensing the practicability of such a relationship to Jesus Christ. We are seeing that Christianity, if it means anything, must touch and color all our thinking, all our living. So this great, central truth of the New Testament, on which mystics throughout the ages have lived, which has sometimes seemed altogether out of reach for the ordinary man, becomes practical, becomes the truth on which we every-day people may live. I once asked Dr. Grenfell how, in his busy life as a sailor, a physician and a missionary up and down the Labrador coast, he could find time for prayer. In his simple, straightforward way he replied, "It doesn't make so much difference how much time you spend in prayer, provided you are constantly thinking of Christ as right at hand." He did not mean to disparage prayer, but only to bring out a living truth, a fact of daily experience to which not only he, but

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hundreds of Christians who are obeying Christ in all parts of the world to-day can bear witness.

An interesting passage in the life of *Brother* Dr. R. W. Dale tells of the comfort he derived when his little child died, from the thought of Christ as his brother. That single phase of the Saviour's relation to him seemed to fit his immediate need best. Sooner or later every one finds himself wanting just this special ministrations from the Son of man. His Saviourship, his Mastership, his Kingship, his friendship—each has its own value and importance for the Christian life, but times arise when we like to think of Jesus, not as some compassionate person from another and different realm of life, but as the closest of blood relations, as bound up with our personal identity as no outsider, however dear as a friend, can be. It is the same feeling which a man has when his brother has earned a fortune while he himself has remained poor, or become the idol of a nation while he continues in his old-time ob-

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*Brother* scurity. But he knows, and he rejoices to know, that his successful and famous brother cannot, will not, would not disown the one who played by his side in childhood and partook of the same parental care.

If Jesus be our brother indeed, it means that he understands the forces of our nature. Who better than a brother or a sister can realize the power of inherited passions, or of a moody disposition, or of a weak and vacillating will? The same blood which flows in his veins flows in yours. You may have gotten a little better mastery of your pride or your avarice, but the seeds of it are still in your nature as in his. Therefore you know how to be pitiful, to be merciful, as the man of alien blood, however naturally sympathetic, cannot be. "Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren." That means also that no sorrow, no bereavement can come to us which is not actually Jesus' sorrow too. It hurts him in the same way that it hurts us. "In all their affliction he was afflicted."

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But if he shares our nature we share *Brother*  
his :

And every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are his and his alone.

We share with him those impulses which sweep one along toward holiness and God. The humble painter who gazed upon the works of Raphael and Murillo said, reverently but resolutely, "And I, too, am a painter." Conscious though we are of blemish and stain, we are justified in saying, as we look upon the spotless character of our elder Brother, "We, too, are children of the same Father." The secret of his exaltation was his love and pursuit of goodness, simple goodness, and in proportion as we share our royal Brother's passion for righteousness will he not be ashamed to call us brethren.

We think oftener of Christ as Brother, *High*  
Leader, Friend than as High Priest. *Priest*  
When Christianity was new in the world,  
and a teacher of the first century was try-

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*High Priest* ing to explain to the Hebrew people its superiority over their own faith, he naturally emphasized the priestly functions of Jesus and proved that the new system was better because its representative was better. The idea of a priest was wrought into the heart of the Jewish faith. If Christianity were to take the place of the old religion it must supply that which was central to it. So, if one to-day were trying to bring a Roman Catholic into personal relations with Jesus, it might be the very best way of approach to declare that he takes the place of the elaborate priestly and sacramental system to which this Romanist has probably been accustomed from youth.

With us modern Protestants this phase of the service of Christ to humanity does not assume primary importance, and we are not to condemn ourselves because the book of Hebrews does not at the first reading interest us so much as most of the other books of the New Testament. We ought to get at Christ naturally, simply, through ways of approach that lead easily from us to him.



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On the other hand, we should not rashly affirm that the priestly side of Christ's character means nothing to us. There must be something in the old Hebrew economy and in the stately ritual of the Roman Catholic Church that answers the eternal need of the human heart, and as our religious life deepens we shall have a growing appreciation of that in Christ which corresponds to the priestly functions in other religions.

*High  
Priest*

Who has not at some time longed for some middle man between himself and the pure and infinite God? Instinctively we shield ourselves behind the superior virtue of another, some saintly mother, some high-minded friend. We think that they can represent our case to God better than we can. Every now and then some human figure towers up above its contemporaries and to it men look for support and inspiration, just as through all the years of his ministerial life frail, tempted humanity clung to Phillips Brooks. But Jesus for all time and for all men has pierced the veil between mankind and the infinite and un-

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*High Priest* seen One. In him, blended perfectly and altogether uniquely, are the two qualities that make the priest: first, he was like unto his brethren; they have always known him as akin to them from the point of view of temptation, struggle and suffering. In the second place he was "separate from sinners." He had points of affinity to God, nay, he was God manifested in the flesh. So we see him at one moment as our human Brother, sharing our nature, and at the next moment illuminated and glorified by the coursing through him of the very life of God. Therefore we are willing, nay, we yearn, to put our hand in his and let him present us to the Father.

And when we have thus been saved and shrived by our great High Priest, does not the impulse come to seek to be to others in this particular what Jesus has been to us? Our priestly service will always be partial—only Christ can complete it—but we may help him to present all men perfect before the Father.

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“Thou shalt call his name Jesus ; for it *Saviour* is he that shall save his people from their sins.” Christ may seem to be more to us in other relations, but we need his Saviourship too. I should like to see the man who can fight his battle through to victory without in some way availing himself of Jesus Christ’s power to forgive and to save. He who takes him as Master will soon find that he needs him as a Saviour too in order that what is lacking, and always will be lacking, may be completed by one so thoroughly identified with us that he can stand for us as the type of what we ought to be. Have your own theory of the atonement, or have no theory at all, but think long and live long before you declare that you have no need of the Saviourship of Christ.

Whether we want it to be so or not, *Judge* the fact remains that Christ is judging us daily and will be the judge of our finished lives. It is within our power to reject his friendship and his saving power, but his judgment we cannot escape, for his own words affirm, “The Father . . . hath

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*Judge* given all judgment unto the Son." There is nothing strange or arbitrary about this, for the ultimate verdict which history puts upon laws and institutions and customs and men conforms to the standards of Jesus Christ. The white light of his character shines through all disguises and reveals the reality. Practically, we often act as if there were some other and lower standards. We are anxious to know what others think of this or that policy; we are satisfied if our behavior tallies fairly well with the ideas as to propriety prevalent within "our set." How many of us hold up before Christ's pure eyes our actions, our words, our thoughts, our desires? How can we call him Friend and Master unless we are also willing to own him as Judge?

It is the thought of his searching and testing us constantly which lifts our lives to a high plane and detaches them from petty, mean and selfish standards of judgment. It creates a desire to be something more than "as good as other people." With the apostle we become

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ambitious, whether present or absent, to *Judge* be well-pleasing unto him. "But," interposes somebody, "this makes life altogether too solemn and momentous. Must every little thing be referred to the standards of living which Christ exalted and exemplified? That is making too severe a demand." But did he not say to fishermen, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"?

Sobering, almost alarming, to some of us is the thought of Christ as Judge. On the other hand, what judgment could be kinder or fairer? We are to face the judgment seat, but let us never forget that it is the judgment seat of Christ—the Christ who knows man, who sees and sympathizes with every individual, who, having himself suffered, being tempted, is prepared to make allowance for human infirmities, who judges us not so much by what we are as by what we want and strive to be.

There is no place where earth's sorrows  
Are more felt than up in heaven.  
There is no place where earth's failings  
Have such kindly judgment given.

## S T E P S    C H R I S T W A R D

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*What*      What sort of a world should we have  
*We*      had if Christ had never been present in  
*Owe to*    its life? This speculation has been  
*Him*      worked out pleasingly in fiction once  
or twice, notably in the delightful Christmas brochure entitled *If Christ Had not Come*, by Rev. J. D. Jones of Bournemouth, Eng. Any man who will stop and think can easily discover that, were Christ extracted from the world, it would be to hosts of human beings a barren and desolate place. We may even doubt whether the natural human impulses towards goodness, on which the ethical writers descant so volubly, would have sufficed to prevent this whole world from lapsing into disorder and perpetual strife.

We owe to Jesus our idea of God. The assumptions behind all that Jesus said—most of all Jesus himself—answer our hearts' deepest yearnings to be assured of the fact of God's existence. More than that, the witness of Christ reveals to us the kind of God in whom we can believe as our Creator and our Judge.

We owe to Jesus our assurance of immortal life. Arguments can be cited

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growing out of the analogy of nature, of the seed, out of the evolutionary process itself, out of the fact that men have always, to a greater or less degree, believed in a future life. But all these carry no such assurance as the words of the Master, "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

*What  
We  
Owe to  
Him*

We owe to Christ a new conception of our duty and the power wherewith to perform it. He, as no other, has revealed the glory of the common task and daily round. He has broadened our thought of duty. Best of all, he furnishes power wherewith to go on doing our duty, perhaps a little better to-day than yesterday.

God, immortality, duty—these three great postulates of Kant to which George Eliot clung even when faith grew feeble—are they not certified to us and illumined by Jesus Christ? Is there any one so fully conscious of God, so sure of his hope of another life, so wise as to his duty and so strong in the performance of it that he can dispense with what Christ has to give us concerning them?

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*What*      The Christian heart owes its debt to  
*We*      Christ for a new sense of forgiveness and  
*Owe to*      peace with God. How our debts in-  
*Him*      crease to him as we reflect! And here is  
a simple test of the depth and genuineness of our Christian life. How much, after all, do we owe to Christ; could we get along without him? How much in our thinking, in our feeling, in our actions proceeds from him?

*Why*      It matters little if changes take place  
*We*      in the region of our thought and emo-  
*Love*      tion, provided the one great force for  
*Him*      righteousness in our lives endures, and  
Jesus Christ remains the same, yesterday, to-day and forever. We may of course know him better and realize more fully his many-sidedness, but the change in our thought of him always tends to greatness as he becomes the one essential element of our spiritual nutriment, the minister of the life of God to us, the interpreter of dark problems, the Friend and Brother, the Lord and Saviour.

This is what he meant by his plain, bold statement, "I am the bread of life."



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It means nothing to him who will not recognize any other life than the self-centered one, who drowns his heavenward aspirations as he plunges into the current of this world's interests. But any one who realizes that God meant him to live, not as the brutes that perish, but as his own child, soon sees that what he needs in his effort to lift himself above the things of earth is not an abstract system of ethics, not cold, distant ideals, but a living, loving, radiant presence, yet not so exalted as to be above "human nature's daily food."

*Why  
We  
Love  
Him*

Religion is an affair between persons. It is not going through a certain routine. It is not assent to a series of intellectual propositions. It is the response of heart to heart. It is personal love and loyalty to a personal Lord. We are made to love Christ; Christ is worthy of our love. That is all. We cannot analyze the relation. We may not want to talk much about it, but we know that our hearts turn toward that majestic figure who stands with outstretched arms. Said Frederick Robertson, "There is one

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*Why* thing in regard to which I refuse to per-  
*We* mit discussion, and that is the love the  
*Love* Christian soul bears to its Redeemer."  
*Him*

Jesus' own loveliness is the primary ground of our affection for him. We see in him a being worthy of our utmost powers of loving. He realizes to us the ideal of manhood. We have known persons, and we have met them in books, who have fascinated us and have aroused and still hold our deepest affection, but Jesus in the full roundness of his character so far surpasses them that the language of the mystical hymn-writers of the middle ages seems none too strong to take upon our lips :

Jesus, name all names above,  
Jesus, best and dearest !  
Jesus, fount of perfect love,  
Holiest, tenderest, nearest.

Add to this inherent loveliness of Jesus' character the fact that he loves us and it becomes impossible to do anything else but love him. Fairest as he is among men, unless we knew that he loved us the affection roused by the

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beauty of his character might, in time, languish. Now, however, we know, as every man who has trusted and tried to follow Jesus knows, that he has done what no other influence could accomplish for us. He has interpreted life's mysteries and problems. He has furnished help over the hard places. He has kindled again and again hope and courage when they were disappearing under the strain of the daily burden. He has opened a new world of thought and feeling. He has stood near when earthly comforts and satisfactions were powerless to console. Best of all, he has, we dare to hope, taken some of the selfishness, meanness and badness out of us, saved us from our worst selves, and made us more worthy to be called the sons of God.

*Why  
We  
Love  
Him*

And so the Christian life looms large before us, as we think of it in successive stages. From start to goal there is orderly progressive movement. The foes are never, in these mortal years at least, completely vanquished, but we learn day by day to lean more heavily on the

## S T E P S      C H R I S T W A R D

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*Why* helps by the way. As the journey  
*We* lengthens we can look back upon many  
*Love* a waymark that tells of conquest and of  
*Him* progress. The rewards, as we persevere,  
grow more ample and satisfying. The  
opportunities for wayside ministry are  
more quickly discerned and more eagerly  
embraced. And ever before us, not so  
far away as to be out of the range of  
vision but distant enough to call forth  
our supreme endeavors to follow after,  
rises the glorious figure of our Guide  
and Leader. Always to be stepping  
Christward—is there any life so rich, so  
deep, any life whose appeal to youth is  
so commanding, so irresistible?













