

FOOD FOR THE LAMBS OR HELPS FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

by Charles Ebert Orr

Orr's guide for new believers providing spiritual nourishment and practical helps for young Christians just beginning their walk with God, covering the basics of salvation, holy living, and growing in grace.

52 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Food For The Lambs Or Helps For Young Christians
1. INTRODUCTION.
2. MORTALITY.
3. FEEDING THE LAMBS.
4. WHO ARE CHRIST'S LAMBS.
5. FOOD FOR THE LAMBS.
6. ON FRUIT BEARING.
7. A GAZING-STOCK.
8. THE WILL.
9. GOD OUR GUIDE.
10. FRAGRANCE.
11. SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM.
12. PRAYER.
13. MEDITATION.
14. REVERIE.
15. A THEATER.
16. REST OF THE SOUL.
17. HAPPINESS OF LIFE.
18. THE HIDDEN LIFE.
19. CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD'S PRESENCE.
20. REFLECTION.
21. BECOMING.
22. LOVE OF HOME.
23. VICTORY.
24. THE FIRST LOVE.
25. THE LITTLE FOXES.
26. SPIRITUAL DECLENSION.
27. DILIGENCE.
28. LOWLINESS.
29. ON DRESS.
30. THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.
31. RULES FOR EVERY-DAY LIFE.
32. A HOLY LIFE.
33. A SOLITARY WAY.
34. STIRRING THE EAGLE'S NEST.
35. SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT DO.
36. PURITY.
37. MEANS FOR GROWTH.
38. LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE.

39. CRUCIFIXION OF SELF.
40. LOVE NOT THE WORLD.
41. HAVE A CARE.
42. AFFINITIES.
43. THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.
44. FLEDGING THE WINGS.
45. SOME TIME
46. THE PRECIOUS OINTMENT.
47. THE TREE OF LIFE.
48. ETERNITY.
49. NEARER TO THEE.
50. CONCLUSION.
51. CLOSING EXHORTATION.

Food For The Lambs Or Helps For Young Christians

INTRODUCTION.

Out upon the sea of human life sails many a bark. But, alas! how few are sailing tranquil waters. Ascend with me to some solitary height and let us take a view of the innumerable human crafts as they sail out upon life's broad ocean. Many are being tossed to and fro upon the angry billows. Hope is almost gone. As they look forward into the distance all is dark and uncertain. In the early days of their voyage all was peaceful. They looked out over the broad expanse and saw only calm, contented waters, and hope beamed bright. They fancied themselves anchoring, in a ripe old age, in a beautiful haven of rest somewhere behind the setting sun. But they sailed only in the strength of human art. Storms unexpected arose, and winds adverse beat upon them. The high, wild, angry billows threaten their destruction, and they despair of ever entering their fancied golden port. Above the blackness of the raging storm there is extended a delivering hand, but they see it not. Their eyes are not upward; they are upon the turbulent waves. Oh, how sad! How pellucid would have been the waters and how serene in glory their voyage, if they had embarked in the strength of Him who at their request would have said to the angry waves, "Peace, be still," and all would have been at rest. Yonder in the distance we see gay, glittering crafts sailing about in a state of unrest. Some are sailing out upon the sea of worldly pleasure in search of happiness. See them rush wildly about. Yonder they seem to see bright, golden waters and hope that true pleasures are to be found there. But, alas! just beneath the surface all is dark and murky and bitter. Some are sailing out upon the highways of worldly fame and honor, others upon the wild stream of worldly riches, all searching for rest and finding none. See the surging, tossing mass of human barks and hear their wail of disappointment as the sweet, golden waters turn to bitter wormwood and gall. The rainbow-colored bubbles, from their hoped-for fountain of joy, burst upon the air, leaving them empty-handed and restless-hearted. Above the wild din of their clamor speaks a soft, tender voice, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." But their ears are not turned to catch sounds from above; they hear only the siren song of an enchanting goddess -- the world. Down toward the setting sun we see many shattered vessels going down in a wild vortex. The waters are closing over them. They found that human strength was inadequate to life's voyage. They, having weathered many a storm, hoped to gain the peaceful harbor. But, alas! they are overcome at last, and, lamenting the day they ever set sail, they go down without hope. From the ethereal heights of inspiration I hear a chiding voice saying, "O had ye hearkened unto me, then had your peace been as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." You, my dear young Christian reader, have just embarked upon life's untried ocean. You have laid hold upon One who is mighty to save and strong to deliver. Underneath you are the everlasting arms. Push out, then, boldly into the broad expanse, fearing nothing. You can escape the perils of the deep, only by making God your refuge. Anchor your faith in him and see to it that your faith never breaks anchor. The billows may threaten, the storms may rage; but by faith you can beat them back, and sail out on unruffled seas. God pity the one who attempts life's voyage without the aid, cheer, and comfort that Heaven gives. Make the Word of God your compass, and obedience the rudder that steers your little bark in all the ways God's commandments point you; and make faith the mighty cable, and you will be towed safely past the dangerous rocks and reefs and

threatening billows into the peaceful haven of eternal rest. Across the deep and wide unknown

The bark of life sails on:

Who thinks to trust to human art

Shall perish mid the storm. The other shore far distant lies,

Wild billows intervene,

And dangers little known arise

To try the strength of men. Man lays his purpose and his plan,

He fixes sail to-day;

But winds adverse sweep o'er the main

And turn him from his way. Man's wisdom can not know the end,

Nor future courses see:

Whoever sails in human strength

Sails mid uncertainty. Man has a strong inveterate foe,

So subtle in his art;

He tries the strength of human craft

And finds the weakest part. By human strength man can not sail

O'er ocean's troubled breast:

God's hand alone can e'er prevail

And bring him into rest.

MORTALITY.

In plant, animal, and spiritual life mortality is greatest in infancy. The plant in the first few days of its existence is very tender and delicate. It will succumb to the winds if they be slightly too cool, or to the sun's rays if they be too warm. The smallest insect feeding upon one of its tiny roots will cause it to die. After it has formed more roots and they have gone deeper into the earth and the plant becomes stronger and coarser it is far less liable to destruction. The chilly winds may blow or the sun's rays may pour upon it; it now has the power of resistance, and so lives on. The same is true of animal life. Mortality is far greatest among children in the first few hours of life, and lessens as they grow older. Only a slight current of cold air upon the newly born infant is likely to cause its death. The new life is not yet able to resist opposing elements, so it must be carefully guarded. As it grows stronger and becomes capable of adapting itself to the elements of the outside world it can with comparative safety be brought into contact with them. What is true in the plant and the animal world is also true in the spiritual world. You who have but recently been born of the Spirit are not as able to resist the cold winds of persecution or the heat of fiery trials as those who have been deepening and widening in the grace of God. Guard carefully the new-born life of Christ in your soul. Seek an establishing grace in sanctification, and you will be strong in the Lord and fully able to cope with the dark powers of sin, Satan, and the world, and triumph over all in Jesus' name. In the days of your infancy we offer you our help in this little volume, and assure you a frequent remembrance in fervent prayer.

FEEDING THE LAMBS.

Some years ago when attending to the work to which the Lord had called me in one of the sunny Southern States it was my happy privilege to enjoy for a few days the kind hospitality of a generous Christian farmer. One balmy afternoon while walking over the pleasant fields of his large farm, with my heart in sweet communion with God, I came upon the most beautiful flock of sheep it had ever been my privilege to behold. They were quietly grazing in a rich green pasture, near by which silently flowed a deep, broad river. To me it was a fair reminder of the "still waters" the Good Shepherd gave promise to lead his sheep beside, and the "green pastures" he promised to make them to "lie down in." From beholding this beautiful fleecy flock I learned a lesson which I hope never to forget. The principal cause of their well-developed frame and handsome appearance was, they were well cared for when they were lambs. Since then I have often remembered, and felt the import of, the command the Savior so tenderly gave his shepherds -- "Feed my lambs." Over and over has it in all its strength and beauty been breathed anew by the Spirit in my soul, animating me to greater assiduity in caring for the precious lambs of his fold. And, thus, I shall prove my love to him by doing all I can in caring for his lambs. Lambs need something more than feed; they must be sheltered from the cold wind and cruel storm. Feed them ever so well, but if you expose them to the wintry storm, they will die. In John 21:15 the word feed is translated from the same Greek term as is the word feed in the 17th verse; but in the 16th verse the word feed is translated from an entirely different Greek term. In this verse the Greek does not mean simply to feed, but to protect, to shelter, to tend. The shepherd's duty is not only to feed the lambs, but also to guard them from the wolves that are seeking to devour them.

WHO ARE CHRIST'S LAMBS.

It is those who are young in Christian experience whom the Savior calls lambs. The shepherds that are to feed them are his ministers. A lamb is one of the most meek, tender, and tractable of all the young animals, and very fittingly represents one who has received the meek and tender spirit of Christ. Christianity in its nature is meek and mild. It converts the wolf into a lamb and the leopard into a kid. Young Christians are, therefore, beautifully spoken of as lambs, whose nature is mild and gentle. Christ's lambs are those who have received into their hearts his lamb-like spirit. They are those whose hearts and souls have been touched and thrilled with the mildness and tenderness of divine life; those in whom the "hidden man of the heart" is robed in righteousness and adorned with "a meek and quiet spirit," which is precious before God. You might robe a wolf with a lamb's skin, but it would still be a wolf. A person may profess to be a Christian: but unless he has a change of heart and affection; unless he has been made meek and gentle by the Spirit of the Lord coming into his heart, he is only a wolf, after all, and not of the Savior's fold. Jesus speaks of some who put on "sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." By "wolves" he means men and women with wicked hearts. They profess to be Christians; but in their hearts are envy, pride, hatred, jealousy, love of self, and love of the world. They may appear quite lamb-like in public life, but in their hearts no change has been wrought by the transforming power of God's grace. To be "Jesus' little lamb" is not only to have a profession of Christianity, but to have the heart cleansed by the blood of Jesus from envy, pride, malice, love of the world, etc., and filled with meekness, gentleness, and love. A good old prophet in olden time, looking forward to when Jesus should come to save people from their sins and speak peace to troubled hearts, said, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." When you were wandering in the deserts and mountains of sin, Jesus, the true shepherd, came seeking for you, and now that you have given yourself to his loving care, always confide in him and yield to his guidance. Ever keep your hand in his and follow where he leads, and your life will be full of joy and terminate at last where there will be pleasures forevermore.

FOOD FOR THE LAMBS.

Of course, it is very important to know what foods are most conducive to the growth of lambs. The apostle to whom Jesus gave the command "Feed my lambs" has said to those lambs, "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby." 1 Pet.2:2. Milk is the aliment which the nature of the newly born infant demands. The infant instinctively receives it with a readiness. It is the natural and most proper food. It is the food above all others for the sustaining of life and the promotion of growth. So the glorious doctrines of the gospel are the natural and most proper food for the Christian. The newly created life in the regenerated soul instinctively turns to the word of God for nourishment. It is the natural food for the new life. Nothing else can be substituted for it and growth go on unhindered. Without this food the Christian will die. "Man shall not live by bread alone," says the Great Shepherd, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." [Illustration: "He shall gather the lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom."] The Christian has a twofold life: he has both physical life and spiritual life. As bread sustains physical life, so the word of God sustains spiritual life. I beseech you most earnestly, my dear young Christian reader, to ever remember that you can no more live a spiritual life independently of the word of God than you can live a physical life independently of bread. If growth in grace is worth anything to you, and eternal blessedness in the sweet fields of heaven of any value, keep this ever in mind and act accordingly. As with the physical being, so it is with the spiritual. There must be appetite, eating, digestion, and assimilation, that the word of God may impart life. Remember, it is the sincere milk of the Word that you need that you may grow thereby. Sincere is from the Latin sincerus, which is derived from sine, meaning without, and cera, meaning wax; honey separated from the wax. Milk to which has been added chalked water may yet have much the appearance of milk, but it has lost its nourishment. So the word of God with the slightest adulteration will not meet the demands for spiritual growth. The word of God, without modification or exaggeration, without taking from or adding to, is the only wholesome food for your soul, and may you "eat in plenty" and "grow up as calves of the stall."

ON FRUIT BEARING.

The following beautiful language is found in Isa.51:3: "For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall he found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Zion is a metaphor signifying the church of God. It is, therefore, the church which the Lord will comfort and whose wilderness will be made an Eden. But what is the church of God? This is a very important question; one which all people should fully understand, and one which is very easily answered. You will learn at once by reading Eph.1:22,23 and Col.1:18,24 that the church is the body of Christ, and in 1 Cor.12:27 we are plainly told that Christians are the body of Christ; they are, therefore, the church of God. Dear reader, if you are a Christian, you have been born of the Spirit; you have passed from death unto life; you have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light; you have been created anew; you are, therefore, a member of the body of Christ, and all such members make up the church of God. The children of Israel were the church of God in the old dispensation, and he dwelt in a tabernacle or temple they built for him. In this more glorious gospel dispensation those who have been born of the Spirit and made pure in heart are the church of God. In this Holy-Spirit dispensation we do not build temples for the Lord to dwell in; for "know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor.3:16. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" 1 Cor.6:19. In this blessed gospel day Christians are the "habitation of God through the Spirit." If you are a Christian, God dwells in your heart; your body is his glorious temple. This is a most stupendous thought, but it is true. In your soul is the sweet heavenly manna, the budding rod, and the ark of the covenant overshadowed by the cherubim of glory. When God created man He placed him in a garden which He had planted eastward in Eden. In this garden God made to grow every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food; also, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil were in this garden, and a river to water it. It is said that God "walked in the garden in the cool of the day." That was in the day of literal things. We are now in the day of spiritual things, when our bodies have become the temple of God through the Spirit, and our hearts his lovely garden. It is in this garden he dwells; it is there he walks. See 2 Cor.6:16. When the south winds blow and the spices flow out he comes into his garden to eat his pleasant fruits; he gathers the myrrh and the spices, he eats honey and drinks wine and milk. See Cant.4:16 and 5:1. This is sweet language, and is expressive of the purity of the Christian heart, where God dwells, and where he walks in the gentleness of his Spirit, delighting himself in the tender Christian graces that are budding and blooming all along the peaceful avenues of the soul. Like as the gentle south wind blows upon the flowers of the garden and scatters the fragrance; so the Spirit of God fans the heavenly graces implanted in the heart, and a fragrance flows out of the Christian life, awaking admiration in the minds of all who come into its presence. The trees that were pleasant to the sight and good for food in the literal garden of Eden symbolize the graces of the regenerated heart, which are lovely to behold, which feed the souls of those who look upon your noble Christian walk, and which become a "tree of life" to the desert hearts of men. In the garden of the Lord blooms the rose of Sharon and the

lily-of-the-valley. These are beautiful emblems of the Christ-life in the Christian soul. The river which flowed through Eden's literal garden represents the deep, broad river of peace which flows in the heart which has tasted of redeeming love. A young heart filled with the mild, meek spirit of Christ, and a young life laden in rich profusion with kind words, generous deeds, and gentle, modest ways, is the most beautiful object that ever graced this mundane sphere. Angels look down and marvel, and throughout all heaven is awakened songs of joy and praise. It is your privilege to be filled with Jesus now; to be clothed in white and walk in purity. It is also your privilege as you journey down life's way to grow more kindly; to be more and more like Jesus; for the sweet graces of heaven to bloom more beautifully in your heart and life; and the beauty of your young Christian life to give way to more beautiful ripened age. If you attend to all Christian duties and live in prayer and devotion to God, your soul will become more and more weighted down with the riches of heaven, and, looking out through the casement, your soul will hail with joy the convoy that has come to bear it to its home of eternal rest. The Savior in speaking of himself said, "I am the vine," and in speaking of Christians he said, "Ye are the branches," and speaking of God he said, "My Father is the husbandman." This very clearly and strikingly illustrates the duty of a Christian, and the position he occupies. Christians sustain the same relation to Christ that the branches do to the vine. As the branch receives life through the vine and bears fruit, so the Christian receives life through Christ and bears fruit. The object of fruit bearing is the glory of God. You should be desirous of bearing as great an abundance of fruit as possible, and do all you can to increase your fruitfulness, since "herein is God glorified, that you bear much fruit." The apostle Paul in speaking of Christians said, "Ye are God's husbandry," 1 Cor.3:9. If you will examine the Greek text you will find that a more proper rendering would be, "Ye are God's field." Greek scholars tell us that the Greek term from which husbandry is translated in our common version signifies a cultivated field. It answers to the Hebrew word sadeh, which means a field sown and under cultivation. From this you will be enabled to yet more fully understand the true position you occupy under God. You are his fertile field, where he has under cultivation the precious fruits of the kingdom of heaven. The Husbandman has rooted up every plant that he has not planted, and sown there the seeds of righteousness. Not only are your hearts the "garden of the Lord" where blooms the "rose of Sharon" and the "lily-of-the-valley" in all the sweetness of their fragrance and beauty, but they are also the Lord's fertile field, where the amiable Christian graces are to bud, bloom, and bear fruit. Your duty as a Christian is to bear fruit for God, that he may be glorified. Every fruit-bearing branch, therefore, he purges, that it may bring forth more fruit. The successful farmer carefully removes all the foreign growth out of his field, and then cultivates his plants, that he may reap the greatest possible harvest. Delicious fruits are brought from the tropical clime to this land of ours, and they awaken in our hearts an admiration for that delightful country. We long to travel through those sunny lands. You are God's fertile field. In your life has been placed the beautiful fruits of the heavenly land. As this world looks upon your life and beholds these fruits admiration will be awakened in their hearts for the fruitful fields of heaven. They will be influenced by your life to seek the kingdom of God and its riches, that they may taste of its fruits now and forever. If you will walk with God and live devoted to him, those precious fruits of the Spirit will become more plentiful and beautiful in your life as you journey down the way, making you a greater blessing to the hearts of others. To this end you must live.

A GAZING-STOCK.

In Heb.10:33 it is said that Christians are a gazing-stock. The world is looking upon your life. You have taken upon you the profession of Christianity. If you live a pure and holy life, God will be honored; others gazing at you will see that Christ lives in you, and many will give to God the glory. You must be willing to be gazed at by the world. You must let your light shine. Your holy life will be a savor of life or a savor of death unto those before whom you live. So do not think you are living to no purpose. Some one is looking on every day, and if you will walk uprightly, it will tell for God. What a privilege you have of living a life that God will use to the salvation of some and to the condemnation of others! You must be interested in living a pure, clean life, and live your very best each day, so that you will not be ashamed before God to be a gazing-stock for the world.

THE WILL.

Among the different faculties which God gave to man in his creation is one called the will. It is because you have this faculty that you become a responsible being. Before the first man and woman in the garden of Eden God placed two laws -- one was the law of obedience, and the other, the law of disobedience. These were subject to their choice. They could will to obey God and live forever, or will to disobey and die. Before all men are placed two ways -- one is called the way of life, and the other, the way of death. These are subject to their choice. Therefore, the will is called that faculty of the soul by which we choose or refuse things. The will is capable of cultivation. By the exercise of your will you can refuse to do wrong things, and thus strengthen your will-power. Men have attained extraordinary heights of morality by the exercise of the will in right-doing and refusing to do wrong. This is noble and beautiful, but there is something more noble still and more beautiful. The moral man wills to do right because it is right, while the Christian wills to do right because it is the will of God and pleases him. Although man can not by the exercise of his will-power in right-doing evolve into a Christian, the will plays an important part in the formation of Christian character. It is true, the will is most usually led by the affections of the heart; therefore the writer of Proverbs said, "Out of the heart are the issues of life." The heart must, however, get consent of the will before its desires are fulfilled. Here is a truth of vast importance to the Christian. Many people's wills have become so in bondage to the impure affections and desires of their depraved hearts that they have no will to do right and shun the wrong. The desires of the heart sway their scepter of power over the will, and it acts to the granting the heart its wishes. This is a sad picture. A human being created to be free, but now a wretched slave. When he wills to do good evil is present with him; the good he would do, he does not do; and the evil he would not do, that is what he does. O miserable man! A person who has rejected the mercy of God and has yielded to the inclinations of an unholy heart until he has no power to accept the offers of mercy and shun the ways of sin, is an object of the greatest pity. To him there is no hope of escaping the damnation of hell. There is a time in the life of every rational young man and woman when they can accept the blessed offers of salvation which God extends through his Son, if they will. God gives the Holy Spirit to operate upon the depraved heart, making it to feel something of the realities of a Savior's love and goodness, and something of the awfulness of sin. The Holy Spirit does not take hold upon the will and compel it to serve God, or force it into right action. He just takes hold upon the heart, suppressing its love for sin, and awakening desires for a better life, thus removing the unrighteous scepter the heart swayed over the will, giving the will freedom and power to accept or reject the mercies of God. While the impure affections and unholy desires of a depraved heart are being restrained by the power of the Holy Spirit, before the will is set the way of life and the way of death, each subject to choice. Now is the time for whosoever will to come and drink of the water of life freely, and whosoever will now call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Not only does the will act an important part in securing the salvation of the soul through the offered mercies of God, but it is the purpose of God that the will act an important part all along the Christian way. After the Christian enters through the "strait gate" and steps out upon the "narrow way" that leads to eternal golden glories, he is not carried forward in a "chariot of fire" through the

journey of life and crowned at the end with eternal blessedness irrespective of his will. Often it is true that the soul is carried blessedly onward in the way of life on the wings of joy, without any apparent exercise of the will; but how often Good seems to have deserted or forsaken us, Joy has hid her smiling face, and Good Feelings have departed, and we are left to serve God and attend to our Christian duties from choice of will. God wants our life service to be a willing service. It is necessary, therefore, that he apparently forsake us and permit dark powers to engage us. It is that our wills may be exercised. The Psalmist says, "I will go the way of thy commandment; I will keep thy testimonies," and let us all say amen. The blessings and joys the Lord bestows upon us are the rewards of willing service, for which things you should be very thankful; but never let them influence you in your conduct toward God. There have been those, who, in the hour of seeming desertion, refusing to use their will-power, have turned back to the world. This is faint-heartedness and cowardice, ignobleness and unmanliness. Every faculty of the body or soul that is unused or unexercised will weaken and die. The muscles if unused will grow weak, the mind if unused will weaken, and the will if unexercised will lose its power. Should God always keep us soaring aloft on the wings of peace and joy and blessings, without the exercise of the will, this important faculty would degenerate into weakness and slavery. O may my young readers arise in the strength of their manhood and womanhood and use, in choosing and doing the right, the will God has given them. The tempter may come, yea, will come, and endeavor to get some of the affections of the heart set upon the world; but you must reject all such temptations, and by the force of your will set your affections on things above. God does never will for us, but he gives us power to will if we will but use the power he gives us. You are exhorted by the Scriptures to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." The "crown of life" lies at the end of the Christian race. When we step over the boundary between time and eternity our salvation is then eternally secured. Praises be to God! It is for this crown of amaranthine glory, or blessed eternal salvation, that we are to watch and labor with fear and trembling. O may you be very careful! Be watchful, lest something should hinder you in your Christian race, and you miss at last the blessedness of heaven. Guard the affections of your heart with the strictest vigilance. I said above that God would always give us power to will, if we would but make use of that power. For proof of this I shall refer you to Phil.2:13, which in our common version is rendered thus: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The meaning of this text is not so readily comprehended by this version as it is by some others. By Conybeare and Howson it is translated in these words: "It is God who works in you both will and deed." Upon examination of the different translations we find the meaning of this text to be this: "It is God that gives us power to will and to do his good pleasure." In the verse preceding this one the apostle tells us to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," and then he adds for our encouragement, "God will work in you the power to will and to do that which will secure your eternal salvation." Never say, "I can't." Here is something which will prove very valuable to you in your Christian life if you can only get to fully comprehend it: You can do nothing; your will is powerless without God and his grace, and God can do nothing in you without the consent of your will. God does everything, and we do everything: we are to purify our hearts, and yet it is God who purifies our hearts; we are to make us a new heart, and yet it is God who gives us a new heart; we are commanded to work out our salvation, and God gives us power to do it. God furnishes the power; we are to do. Do not think that God will act for you. He will give you power to act, but he will not do the act for you. Do not, therefore, say, "I can't." You can do "all things" through Christ, who strengthens you. You can serve God in a way acceptable to

him; you can keep your mind stayed on him; you can pray; you can resist the devil and temptation and be an overcomer; you can endure unto the end -- you can do "all things" by the grace and power of God, and he will always give you power to do his pleasure. Do not serve and praise God only when he gives you blessings and joy, but serve him and praise him when the way is dark. Have a fixed decision of the will to serve God no matter what the feelings may be. Be thankful to God for the will-power he has given you, and use it manfully, nobly in his service. Do not cower and tremble before temptation. You are to "fear and tremble" before God, but never before trials, temptations, sin, nor the devil. God will cause you to triumph by giving you power to will. Be steadfast, be faithful, fix your will unswervingly to serve God, and in due season you shall reap if you faint not.

GOD OUR GUIDE.

This is a dark world of sin, error, and uncertainties. It is weak and transitory. Man, God's chief and highest work in the things of creation, is weak, ignorant, and can of himself do absolutely nothing. Though he may have a most scholarly mind, he can not peer with any degree of certainty one hour into the future. Who knows what the morrow may have in store? Life may run about the same as to-day, or fortune may come, or misfortune. Man may plan for the future, but the plan may never be carried into effect. It is not in man to direct his way. There is one, however, that knows all future things and shapes the destiny of man. We are invited to commit our way unto him. He has promised to guide us with his eye. Life lies before us like an unknown sea, none know how many days' journey it is across, nor how much sunshine and shadow there may be on the way. With the unknown expanse before me, and I, in my ignorant finiteness, not knowing which way to take, rejoice exceedingly in my heart to be permitted to commit my way unto Him who makes the clouds his chariots, and rides upon the wings of the wind, and stills the wave. He knows the best way and will direct in tender care my every step. He guides me with his eye, and leads me by his own right hand beside the still waters and into green pastures. Why are there so many anxious hearts, so much unrest, so many discontentments and fears? It is because man is attempting to direct his own way. He feels his weakness, and fears; he knows his ignorance, and becomes anxious. How blessed to walk out upon life's way trusting in God and casting every care upon him! The waves may sometimes dash around our feet, but we are looking up unto Him who shall guide us continually. The secret of a happy and successful life is to let God lead us. When we get in a hurry and pass on ahead of the Lord, devising, contriving, planning over our work and way, then come fears and failures. Many Christians find it difficult to know the will of God and understand his leadings. Many hearts are longing to know God's will and way. You may always know. Do not hurry, only wait, pray and trust, and God will plainly and unmistakably teach you his way and give you a sweet consciousness in your soul of his guidance. Sometimes it may require long waiting. I have for months been almost daily praying and sometimes rising a great while before day to seek God beneath the stars to know his will in a certain matter. Sometimes it seems I must act, but God whispers in sweet stillness, "Only wait." The Word Our Guide. In many affairs of life we need no guidance other than the Word of God. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psa.119:105. Much reading of the Scripture will impart wisdom and knowledge, and be a help to us in directing the affairs of life. You may have a difficult matter to settle with your neighbor. Open your Bible and read: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Quite likely this will enable you to settle the matter in perfect satisfaction to all. Some one may have done you much harm, now what must you do? Open your book of guidance and read: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves ... vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Thus, much of life's duties and affairs can be determined and decided by the Word of God. The Spirit's Impressions. The Holy Spirit is given us for a guide. With respect to our conduct and our duty, we often feel the impressions of the Spirit. The Word of God tells us to give of our goods as the Lord has prospered us, but the Spirit may often impress us as to where to give. We feel impressed by the Spirit to give, we feel impressed to go to a certain place, we feel impressed to pray for such a

one, we feel impressed to fast and pray, etc. Many a precious soul that once was full of joy and fatness is to-day in unrest and leanness because these impressions have been resisted. But are there not impressions given by an evil spirit? Most certainly, and these impressions have led many an honest soul into the wildest of fanaticism. Thank God, by living very humble, with all our motives very pure, and by acquaintance with the Word of God, we may know the voice of the Spirit of God and that of the evil spirit I have known people to receive and obey impressions to fast and pray that were given by Satan. God's Word and God's Spirit favor fasting and praying, but both are bounded by sound judgment; and in such matters we should not follow a spirit beyond what common sense would approve. It is blessed and beautiful to be led by the Spirit of God. If its impressions are not resisted, but encouraged by cheerful obedience, they will lead us into a blessed felicity with God and a deep acquaintance with him. An evil spirit's whisperings can be very easily detected by one who has much communion with the Lord. Recently while standing on a steamer's deck it was whispered to me that the steamer was an ill-fated vessel, and that I never should see home again. At first I did not know but that it was the voice of God, but soon I felt attempts being made to cast over me a tormenting fear; this aroused my suspicion that it was not God speaking, and to be convinced I allowed the spirit to talk on. For a while it tried to torment me with fears that I should never see the dear ones at home again, and then said, "You may as well cast yourself overboard into the deep." Ah! now I knew the Satanic spirit and I rebuked it in Jesus' name. I reached my home in safety. Praise the Lord! Try the spirits by the Word; Satan will soon expose himself. God's Providences. In the sure guidance of God we have his Word and his Spirit and also his providences. Again, we would say, oh, how blessed to await the providences of God! His providences are always in favor of the righteous. "All things work together for good to them that love God." How many can look back through their lives and see how the providences of God have directed their ways. They may have planned, but God's providence overthrew and brought better things to pass. Trust in the providences of God, commit your way unto him, patiently wait, and he will guide you into the way that is best. Never get in a hurry, but wait on the Lord, and he will always make the way plain before you. I have learned never to take a step until I know it is ordered of God. In the providence of God, Joseph was sold to a company of Ishmaelites and cast into prison and thus brought to be ruler over all Egypt. In the providences of God, Kish's asses went astray and Saul being sent in search of them was led to the prophet Samuel, who anointed him king over Israel. You may meet with losses, all things may seem decidedly against you; but be patient, trust in the providence of God, and in time you will see his kind favor. If you value your happiness and success in life, wait on God. If you do not know which way to go or what thing to do, wait until you do know. God will surely guide you; he will open the way clear and plain before you. When he has given you full assurance, then go forward in all security. Mountains may rise before you, but he will pluck them up and cast them into the sea. Rivers and seas may lie across your path, but he will divide the waters and let you pass through. Live humbly and only for the glory of God. Trust in him with all the strength of your soul. See that all motives are as pure as heaven. Prayerfully seek a knowledge of God's will, patiently wait on him, cheerfully and promptly obey when his will is known, and he will lead you in the path of security, strewing the way with blessings and glory, and make your life one golden gleam of light across this dark world to lead others to the Lamb.

FRAGRANCE.

Every saintly life on earth, is a sweet fragrance unto God, and every sinful life is a stench in his nostrils. As the rose scents the evening air, so a pure life scatters a sweet Christian influence and a knowledge of God throughout the world. The literal translation of 2 Cor.2:14 reads thus: "But thanks be to God, who leads me on from place to place in the train of his triumph, to celebrate his victory over the enemies of Christ, and by me sends forth the knowledge of him, a stream of fragrant incense, throughout the world." A saintly life diffuses a sweet, heavenly fragrance throughout the world, and brings a knowledge of God and the nature of his salvation to the minds of men. Let me exhort you, therefore, to a pure life, a life full of devotion and reverence to God. You can make your life, by God's grace, a constant, flowing stream of fragrant incense, whose sweetness will linger long on the air after you have passed to higher realms. So may it be.

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mat.6:33. An injunction of much importance is here given. Verses 24 to 34 of this chapter show how beautifully it is in the plan of God to care for his own. We are taught to have our trust in God for what we eat, for what we drink, for what we wear -- for all the necessities of this life. We are referred to the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field, which take no thought for their life, but live in their happy, independent way, without care or trouble. These God cares for and says we are of more value than they. What a valuable lesson we are to learn from this! But is it really true that we are to have the same degree of freedom from care or anxiety that the fowls or the lilies have? We shall also ask, Is it really possible? This lesson surely teaches that we are to have such a trust in our Maker, and therefore it must be possible. The apostle Paul instructs us in Phil.4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." And in another place, "I would have you without carefulness." Our lives are to be free from worry or anxiety about anything and everything. This feature alone of the divine life, or this principle alone in the economy of God's gracious plan, ought to represent salvation as a thing greatly to be desired. But in the face of this people fail to see anything desirable in it, because by their unbelief they hold such a life to be impracticable. By this kind of unbelief the enemy of souls deprives many of their privileges in Christ and hinders the world from seeing the real nature of the salvation experience. How the world is estranged from the principles of righteousness! How it holds light to be darkness and darkness to be light! Instead of accounting that there is any reasonableness in such trust in God as is shown in this lesson they would fain be selfishly taking upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining their own existence, and thus every one seek for his own gain. Thinking that they thus have an excuse for not devoting their time to God's service and their spiritual welfare, the things of the Lord are forgotten and neglected, and their souls consequently are lost. When will individuals learn that they have a spiritual as well as a physical existence, and that the spiritual is the more important of the two? Seek first the kingdom. But the fact that we wish to bring out most prominently is that many Christian professors, who are supposed to be examples of the Christian life, do not comprehend the import of the text "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." The mistake is made on the word first. They think to obey this scripture by first gaining the profession of salvation, presuming then that the blessings of the kingdom will follow, while they live as selfishly as before and dig deep into the things concerning the unrighteous mammon. In so doing they fail to experience the blessings of the kingdom, and also misrepresent the kingdom to the world. The word first means not only first in time, but first in importance; and this idea of importance must ever be held before us, not only when we enter the kingdom, but throughout our whole Christian life. We are to hold the kingdom of righteousness first in all our lives. If we hold God first in everything and consider what will be to his glory before we consider our own, we give God a chance to fulfil his word, and his own good pleasure in us will be accomplished. We then place ourselves in the order of his plan where it will be possible for him to do as he has promised. The salvation life means an unselfish life. We are not to seek selfish glory in anything, but seek the glory of God first -- above everything

else. It has been remarked concerning certain ones who were struggling for an earthly existence, that if they would only get saved "all these things" (all earthly necessities) would be added unto them. But it is not those who merely get saved that can claim this promise; it is those who keep saved and carry out the principles of the plan of righteousness. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" in everything. Lose your own individuality in God, consign your all to him, live for his glory in all your life, then "all these things shall be added unto you."

PRAYER.

Upon this subject and the one following I have written in other works very similarly to this; but since these subjects are so well adapted to a work of this nature I can hardly feel willing to leave them out. If you have read very similar words to these in other productions of mine, I hope the rereading of the subjects will not be time spent to no profit. The value of prayer can hardly be estimated. Unless you are willing to take up a life of prayer and keep it until the close, you had just as well not take up the Christian profession. Without prayer you will die. Some one has expressed it thus: "Prayer is our life, our soul's triumphant wings,

The arm that holds the shield and hand that takes the crown; Along the line on which a thousand faithful prayers ascend, Surely God doth send ten thousand blessings down." What an honor it is to have audience with the King of glory! He extends the golden scepter to us, and we come hopefully, confidingly, into his presence and tell him all that is in our hearts. It is only because we comprehend something of his great love to us that we venture to come into his presence. Who would not consider it a great honor and blessed privilege to be admitted into the courts of the lords and the kings of earth? The greatest honor bestowed upon man is the privilege of coming into the presence of God and conversing with him. Alas! how few appreciate the privilege of prayer! How few can properly estimate its true worth! Jesus by his example has taught us something of the worth of prayer. His rising a great while before it was day to hold communion with the Father, and his spending all night in prayer to him, teach us something of its importance. If it was necessary for Jesus to spend so much time in prayer, how much more necessary for us. Prayer is the energy and life of the soul. It is the invincible armor which shields the devoted Christian from the poisoned missiles shot forth from the batteries of hell. It is the mighty weapon in his hand with which he fights life's battles unto victory. He who lives in prayer reigns triumphant. His soul is filled with the peace of heaven. Power is given him over sin and the world. By prayer all storm-clouds are driven away, mountains of discouragement are cast into the sea, chasms of difficulties are bridged, hope is given wings, faith increases, and joys abound. Hell may rage and threaten, but he who is frequent and fervent in prayer experiences no alarm. By prayer the windows of heaven are opened, and showers of refreshing dews are rained upon the soul. It is as a watered garden, a fertile spot where blooms the unfading rose of Sharon and the lily-of-the-valley; where spread the undecaying, unwithering branches of the tree of life. By prayer the soul is nourished and strengthened by the divine life. Do you long for deeper joys? for a greater sense of the divine fulness? for a sweeter balm of hope to be shed upon your soul? for a closer walk with God? then live much in prayer. Do you desire to feel the holy flame of love burning in all its intensity in your soul? then enkindle it often at the golden altar of prayer. Without prayer, the inner being will weaken, famish, and die; the fountain of love dry up; the spring of joy cease to flow; the dews will fail to descend; and your heart will become a parched and dreary desert waste. Look upon the character of Jesus. Behold his lowliness, his meekness, gentleness, and tender compassion. Have they any beauty? and would you love to have them grace your own soul? then draw them down from the skies in all their glorious fulness by the fervent prayer of faith. As through the

process of assimilation food is transformed into an active, living being; so through the medium of prayer the character of Jesus in all its transcendent beauty and glory becomes the character of man. If you desire victory during the day, begin it with prayer. Not a few hurried words, but minutes of deep, intimate communion with God. Linger at the sacred altar of prayer until you feel particles of glory drop in richness into your soul, scattering sweetness throughout the whole and relating you to the world above. In the early morning hour, when the still, balmy breath of nature plays around, let your soul fly away on the wings of prayer with its message of love and praise to its Maker. Jesus went out a great while before day to hold communion with God. There is no time better suited for prayer. The world is hushed in slumber. There is less sin being committed, and if the world ever is innocent, it is in the early morning time. We thus get an advantage of the devil and have sweet converse with God before the devil is aware. If you desire to be more deeply and sincerely pious, seek it in prayer. If you desire heights in God's love, depths in his grace, fulness in his joy, richness in his glory, seek it in prayer. Did you say you had not time for prayer? What a pity! Your happiness and usefulness in life depend upon it; your eternal welfare depends upon it -- then, oh, what a pity you have no time for it! But you must find time. You can not afford to listen to Satan; there is too much at stake. This is an excuse that many allow Satan to make for them. Time for rest, time for eating, time for sleeping, time for friends, time for books; but no time for prayer. This is a device of Satan to rob souls of the love of God. You must not give him such an advantage of you. In love for your spiritual welfare I beseech you in Jesus' name, live much in prayer. Go often into your closet, and then, with the loins of your mind girded up, in all earnestness of soul pray until the love of God and the light of heaven fills your being. Satan will try to make you listless and indifferent; he will try to make your thoughts to wander; he will tell you of many other things that need to be done that very moment; and many other things will he tell you to deprive you of the blessings of prayer. But you must resist him and go the more earnestly in prayer; and continue to pray until a rapture from the skies sweeps over your soul, making the place of prayer the dearest spot on earth to you. When the shades of night come softly stealing,

Softly stealing o'er the window sill;

When the busy day is slowly ending,

Slowly ending peacefully and still, --

Christian, with thy heart adoring Heaven,

Sweetest glories falling from above,

Go to God in secret, silent pleading,

Tell to him the wondrous tale of love. When the morning light is gently dawning,

Gently dawning in the eastern sky;

When the darkness fast away is fleeing,

Duties of the day are drawing nigh, -- Down before the sacred, hallowed altar,

Christian, bow before thy God in fervent prayer,

Giving thanks to him for life's sweet blessings,

For the day imploring his kind care. To be overcome to-day makes to-morrow's battles harder. If you would be a better Christian to-morrow, live your very best to-day. Like as the warming rays of the autumn's sun melt the early frost, so the warmth of Christian love in our hearts will melt the coldness in the hearts of sinful men. Begin the day with prayer: it will fortify you against the tempter's power. The result of neglecting prayer is to be tossed furiously about upon the billows of temptation. Time is of too great worth to waste one precious moment. An hour lost is that much of life lost. For all the time spent in idleness, you had just as well not have lived at all. By rightly using each moment you will build up a character that will stand a monument upon the tomb of the dead past. Moments misspent are life and character gone, and no imprint is left on the hearts of men to tell that we have lived. How many golden moments are flying away into eternity unladen with any fruit from your life? Learn to value time. Redeem it because these days are evil. Seize upon each passing moment, and send it up to the glorious Author of time laden with golden deeds.

MEDITATION.

The Scriptures invite Christians on to greater depths in the love of God and greater heights in his joy as they journey on through life. It is the will of God that you grow in grace and become more spiritual each day of your life. That meditation does affect one's spirituality is an undeniable fact. Meditating upon God and his law is an excellent means of increasing spiritual life in the soul. Vagrant thoughts dull the finer sensibilities of the spiritual being, thereby rendering it less capable of impression by the Holy Ghost. "Keeping in touch with God" is an expression much used in these days by people professing holiness, but what does it imply? We are all at sea when not in touch with him. To be so kept is to have everything in us fully alive to God. Every Christian grace must be in a perfect state of health and vigorous growth. If there be any dwarfed condition of the spiritual being in any part, it will be less sensible to God's touch. The blind have been known to cultivate the sense of touch in the physical being to the amazing acuteness of being able to distinguish between colors. The sense of touch in the soul can by careful, earnest cultivation be refined to such a degree as to make it susceptible to the slightest impressions of the Spirit of God. By an electric cable America is brought in touch with Europe. Were this to become divided, communication would cease. Sin divided the life-giving cable from the presence of God to the souls of men. In Jesus the divided cable is taken up and united, and man brought into communion with God. So cultured may become the sensibilities of the inner being, and so thoroughly impregnated by God's enlivening power, that one empty thought causing the slightest ebbing of life's current flow is keenly felt. To keep in perfect touch with God is to live where there is a soul-consciousness that he is pleased with every act of your life, and where there is a clear, definite witnessing of the Spirit to your inmost soul that the words of your mouth and the meditations of your heart are acceptable unto him. Useless thought makes the soul coarse, and difficult of impression by good influences. Pure and holy meditations are an excellent means for the refinement of your moral being. Praying to God is talking to him, telling him the desires of the heart; whereas meditating upon God is contemplating his goodness, love, mercy, greatness, and wonderful works. Meditation prepares the heart for that deeper communion with God called prayer. Whoever gives attention to his meditations, and has learned to fix his mind upon God; to whom "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge;" to whom "the heavens declare the glory of God," and who hears God's voice in nature and sees the goodness of his hand in all creation, -- finds no difficulty in drawing to God in prayer. If you allow your mind to wander vaguely about upon the vanities of the world, you will find prayer a difficult and rather an unpleasant task. Learn, therefore, I beseech you, to stay your mind upon the Lord, and great will be the peace and quietness of your soul. Precious moments spent in idle chit-chat with your companions or indulging vagrant thoughts are time worse than wasted. As your mind acts once, so it is disposed to act again. The mind forms habits of thinking. Then, how careful you should be to direct it in proper and useful channels. [Illustration: THINKING OF THE LIFE BEYOND.] Some people have found it difficult to prevent their thoughts from wandering while they were reading the Bible or in secret prayer. The wonderful works of God hardly awaken any admiration within them; they can not elevate the soul into a profound awe before his awful presence, and there is but little

conscious depths of inner reverence and devotion to his name. There is a blessed and sure remedy for this serious trouble. Carefully watch your meditations. Call the oftener upon God in some silent, secret place. Select some secluded, hallowed place, where nature is most inspiring for meditation. Isaac, the son of Abraham, went into the field at eventide to meditate. The evening is a time well suited to draw the soul out into deep, intimate communion with God. The setting of the sun is a reminder of life's setting sun. You will be brought face to face with the fact that you must some day stand before Him who created all things. Your meditations will become serious. Oh, may you adore the Creator, and learn to admire his wondrous works! Go forth in the starry evening, when Nature is most inviting, and through her let your soul adore the Almighty, and let all within you be awed to solemn stillness at his footfall. Idle, careless thoughts generate a stupidity that will rob you of joy. The sensibilities of your inner nature will become deadened, and you can no more hear the solemn footsteps of the Lord, nor the whispers of his voice. Meditating upon pure and holy things and seeing God in all, will elevate the soul to a plane all radiant with light and love, and put a meekness and modesty in your life and a sweet gentleness in every expression that will seem to make you akin to angels. Are you concerned about the peace of your soul? Is a happy life worth anything to you? Do you have any desire to become more like Jesus? Do you want to do all you can for him? Do you want to dwell in heaven with him forever? Then let your meditation be upon him, and your soul sipping at the fountain of Heaven's love as the flower drinks up the dew. I can not be too earnest in my exhortation to you in this matter. I know how important it is. I want to see you prosper and your soul increase in God; therefore I exhort you to meditate upon his law day and night.

REVERIE.

Down beside the rippling river
'Neath-the weeping willow-tree,
Viewing nature sweet and lovely,
Wond'ring what must heaven be. List'ning to the merry songsters
In the near-by leafy world;
Such sweet music seems to bear me
Nearer to the gates of gold. Breezes murm'ring through the branches,
Waters rippling o'er the stone,
What, oh, what must be the anthem
Ringing round the great white throne? Songs of birds and streamlet rippling,
Meadow, flowers, and leafy tree,
Make of earth a land of beauty --
What indeed must heaven be? If you love scenes of great grandeur,
And to hear sweet music ring,
Come, oh! come with me to heaven,
To the land where Christ is king.

A THEATER.

A theater is a place where plays are performed before spectators. People go to such a place to witness the acts of men. The apostle Paul says, "We are made a spectacle unto the world." 1 Cor.4:9. In the margin it reads "theater" instead of "spectacle." In Conybeare and Howson's translation this text reads thus: "To be gazed at in a theater by the world." You as a Christian are here in this world on exhibition for God. He is the character you are to represent in life's great play. You must live in such a way as to do justice to his name. This world is looking on. God has written the entire play in his book. You have a life-time to play it in. If you will live in humble obedience to all the Word of God, you will act your part well and faithfully represent his true character.

REST OF THE SOUL.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Mat.11:28,29. Wonderful words of love and hope! Never did a sweeter nor richer invitation than this reach mortal ears. A whole world of humankind groaning under a burden, tossing in unrest, laboring under pain, sighing with sorrow, roaming in discontent, filled with fear, sinking in despair. But One appears upon the scene and says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Oh, may the humble followers of the lowly Nazarene echo and reecho this invitation of love among the haunts of men as long as time shall last! Amid a world of sin and trouble, a soul at rest; how blessed! You remember the day you came to him. Your sins with all the burden of guilt were taken away and you found rest. Later you dedicated yourself fully and forever to the Lord and entered into the fulness of his rest. Canaan's fair land is the soul's sweet home of rest. What heaven will be we can not know now. Doubtless scenes and experiences will arise of such a nature as to greatly enhance the felicity of our hearts; but the revelation of heaven upon a sanctified soul and "The enjoyment of heavenly bliss

E'en in a world like this" can never be told. Storms will arise and threaten you; but if the cable of faith remains unbroken and the anchor of hope unshaken, your little bark can sail on sweetly at rest. Doubts are very destructive to soul-rest; therefore they must be dispelled at their first approach. By faith your soul can be kept in the precious realization of heavenly enjoyments; you can have sweet walks with God and tastes of his love all along your journey of life. By living in the vale of humble submission to God, fully and freely yielded to his control, upon your soul the sweets of heaven's graces will be distilled like the gentle siftings of the evening dew upon the flower, transporting you to wondrous felicity in God all along your pilgrim way. Behold the fowls of the air:

They sow not, neither do they reap;
Yet kings have not more healthful fare,
Nor rest in calmer, sweeter sleep.
They have no barns nor hoarded grain,
Yet all day long a soft, sweet strain
They warble forth from forest tree;
Ever happy and ever free,
Teaching a lesson dear to me.
So free from care, O sylvan band;
Fed by a heavenly Father's hand.

Your freedom, O ye fowls of heaven,
New courage to my soul hath given;
I no more can doubt or sorrow:
God will care for me to-morrow. Behold the lilies how they grow:
They toil not neither do they spin;
Yet kings in all their pomp and show
Are not arrayed like one of them;
Smiling and free in breezes sway,
Yet clothed by heavenly hand are they.
Meek lilies of the quiet fields,
Your growth instruction to me yields.
The One who clothes the lily fair
And gives it tender, earnest care --
Will he not hear my fervent prayer?
The One who notes the sparrow's fall --
Does he not love his creatures all?
If he so clothes each tuft and tree
And gives the birds such liberty,
Will he not clothe and care for me?
I no more can doubt or sorrow:

God will care for me to-morrow. A merry heart is a continual feast. It is the will of God that you be always happy. If you are not contented with such things as you have, you would not be contented had you ever so much. Those who are always contented and happy are a most gracious contribution from God to a discontented world. This sin-darkened world is dotted here and there by beautiful Christian lives, which are to the world's weary wastes what the oasis is to the parched desert. The Christian has the blessed privilege of proving to a covetous, discontented world that man can by the grace of God be contented under the most adverse circumstances. Oftentimes people conclude that they would be happy if their surrounding circumstances were different. True happiness consists not so much in the environments, as in the dispositions of the heart. After a day of labor, what a pleasure it is to meet at home the warmth of hearts we love! After a life of toil, what will be the pleasure of meeting all the loved in heaven? I am told that the language of the Algonquin Indians of North America contained no word from which to translate the word love. When the English missionaries translated the Bible into that language they were obliged to coin a word for love. What must be a language without love? and what must be the heart! The Christian out upon

life's sea can, by faith, hope, and love, weather the wildest storm that ever the winds of adversity blew. Hope is the anchor fastened to the eternal word of God; faith is the cable attached to the anchor hope.[Illustration:

My pathway of life is now paved with peace,

The flowers e'er bloom bright and gay;

A halo of light is shed around me

As I walk the beautiful way.]

HAPPINESS OF LIFE.

Down, down in the depths of infinite love,
Filled with all the fulness of God,
Joy's cup ev'ry moment filled from above,
As adown life's pathway I trod. No sin sways its scepter over my soul,
God's righteousness fills ev'ry part,
His fulness of glory keeping the whole,
And I love him with all my heart. Sing not to me of the pleasures of earth,
I have found a much happier way;
The joys of the Lord, of far greater worth,
Are filling my life ev'ry day. Sorrow and sighing have flown away,
From trouble and care I am free,
The peace of God over my heart holds sway;
I am as happy as I can be. You are tempted, you say, and sorely tried;
Of that I have nothing to say,
The victory is mine whate'er may betide;
I'm happy each hour of the day. My pathway of life is now paved with peace,
The flow'rs ever bloom bright and gay;
A halo of light is shed around me
As I walk the beautiful way.

THE HIDDEN LIFE.

You have experienced a resurrection. You once were dead in sin; now you are alive unto God. You have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. You are a new creation; you have a new life. Though you have existence in this world, yet the world does not discover your true life. With Christ it is hid in God. The world knows nothing of you except as they see you in the life you live in the flesh. You have a higher life to which they are as insensible as the inanimate stone is to the life of the bird. You are one of God's "hidden ones," and a stranger on the earth, because you are unknown. You are not found in the halls of worldly pleasure, but instead are to be found by the bedside of the sick, reading the Bible, praying, or speaking words of cheer and comfort, and the world wonders how you can enjoy yourself in such a way. You have a joy that is unknown to them, because you have a life that is hidden from them. That life of yours which is hid with Christ in God finds no enjoyment in the pleasures of the world. When adversity comes the world does not understand how it is that you can rejoice; and when circumstances are very unfavorable, how you can be happy is a mystery to them. It is because you do not live in the things of the world, but in a much higher realm. If your life is hid with Christ in God, your heart's longings will be for the things above; all your affections will be on things above. Those who live upon earth are seeking the things of earth; but those who live above in God seek the things which are above. Nothing of earth has any charms for them. Christ has won their hearts. They love him intensely. They live in him. They are sojourning here upon earth for a time, but their hearts are with Christ in heaven. Their home, their love, their treasures, their hopes, their thoughts, their life, -- all are there, and they are seeking with eagerness for more of that sweet, precious life which is from above. They walk here almost like one in a dream, as concerning this world; they know but little of earth, but much of heaven. This earth is not my home,

I live above,

Where peace and joys abound --

Sweet land of love. My life is hid in God

With Christ the Son,

Though here on earth I am

By earth unknown. I dwell in worlds above,

By thought and prayer --

Oh, blest eternal home!

My heart is there.

CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD'S PRESENCE.

Happy and blessed is the soul that is conscious of God's sweet indwelling presence. Being conscious of God's presence is what the Psalmist meant when he said, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." "Tasting God" is an expression incomprehensible to the unregenerate. Those who have tasted him comprehend the meaning of this expression better than they can tell it. When a bit of sugar is placed upon the tongue there is experienced a sweetness in the sense of taste. When the soul tastes of God there is experienced a sweetness in the spiritual being. The sweetness of God's presence in the soul is as much more glorious than the sweetness of sugar to the taste as spiritual and heavenly things are above literal and earthly things. God and his word are inseparable, or the word is God; therefore when the Psalmist says, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth," it is in reality tasting the sweetness of God. The awakened soul thirsts for this sweetness of the divine presence. Nothing else can satisfy it. The wealth and pleasure of the world do not contain a sweetness sufficient to satisfy the heart of man. It is only God that can fill the hungry soul with goodness. The divine life sheds peace and light and rest in the soul. Man receives the divine presence into his spiritual being when he is quickened by the Spirit. In the Word of God it is termed "passing from death unto life," and "being born again." In sanctification when a revolution is effected in the nature of man and he becomes a partaker of the divine nature, it is then he is conscious of the fulness of the divine presence and is at rest. Glory be to God! To possess the divine presence in its fulness is not the end of the Christian race. There are certain conditions for man to meet in order to possess this glorious inheritance, and there are certain conditions for him to meet in order to retain it. Not only is man able, in the economy of grace, to retain the sweet consciousness of the divine presence in the soul, but in his hands are placed instruments that enable him to cultivate and deepen this consciousness and thus add glory to glory and cause his way to shine more and more unto the perfect day. Oh, how many Christians would enjoy more of heaven's glory in their souls, if by careful cultivation they would increase the sense of the divine presence! Dear pilgrim, have you reached the land of "eternal weights of glory" or the regions where "joy is unspeakable"? To cultivate or deepen the sense of the divine presence requires an almost constant effort. Right at this point is where perhaps more Christians have failed to do what was required of them than at any other; and consequently experience less joy and power than formerly. There are many things employed by Satan to weaken this consciousness of God. Looseness of thought, moments of idleness, or yieldings to self, serve to weaken the reverential feeling in our hearts toward him. A little attention to the world, a little thought for the morrow, a little anxiety, a little too much talking, -- these things destroy the consciousness of the divine presence in the soul, and rob us of spiritual power and rest. Living before God in prayer, holy and pure thoughts, the entertaining of right feelings toward God and man, acts of benevolence and self-sacrifice for the benefit of others, develop and fashion the soul more and more into the beauty of the divine life. It is the privilege of the saint so to walk in the presence of God and live in holy communion with him as to draw God's glory and life into his own, and give him a feature very distinguishing for ordinary natural man. If we wish to be like Jesus and enjoy the sweet consciousness of his presence, we must live with him in prayer. As we improve

the health and strength of our physical being by proper food and exercise, so we improve the strength and beauty of our spiritual being by proper meditation and prayer.

REFLECTION.

How often when walking down the country lane in the twilight of a summer's evening you have looked upon the round, full moon and exclaimed, "What a tender, beautiful light! how soft and mellow is the glow!" But you must remember the light is not its own. Of itself it is a cold, dark body. The great luminary that so recently sank behind the western hills is the real light. It pours its brilliant rays upon the moon and the moon reflects the sun's light upon your pathway. The moon, therefore, is only a reflector. You stand before a mirror and behold your face and form imaged in the glass. The glass acts as a reflector, reproducing the objects that are placed before it and shine upon it. The unregenerate heart is dark and reflects no light; but God can take it and cleanse, purge, and polish it, and make it capable of reflecting the virtues of heaven's grace. 1 Cor.13:12 is rendered thus by Conybeare and Howson: "So now we see darkly, by a mirror; but then face to face." While here in this life we can not see the real and true glories of the eternal world; but we can see some of its beauties and glories mirrored in the face of nature and the Bible. The starry worlds above us, the verdant hills, the swaying forests, the waving grain, the fleeting cloud, the blooming flower, dimly shadow forth the glory that awaits our expectant souls in that bright world where angels dwell. The Greek text of 2 Cor.3:18 is beautifully rendered in these words by the above mentioned translators: "With face unveiled we behold in a mirror the brightness of our Lord's glory, are ourselves transformed into the same likeness; and the glory which shines upon us is reflected by us, even as it proceeds from the Lord, the Spirit." These words are full of grandeur to my soul. Their wondrous beauty and sublimity can not fail to awaken admiration in every Spirit-quicken and purity-loving heart. You will see, Christian reader, the position you occupy as a follower of the Lamb of God. You are a reflector; you have no light of yourself. God shines his glory upon you and you reflect it to the world, and thus you become the light of the world. In one translation "character" is used instead of "glory." God's character is shined into your soul, and you are to reflect it to the world. There is another clause in the above quotation too full of riches and too well adapted to this work to pass by unnoticed. It is this: "We behold in a mirror the brightness of our Lord's glory, are ourselves transformed into the same likeness." We do not grow into salvation, neither do we grow into sanctification; but after we receive this glorious experience there is still a continual transforming into a more perfect likeness of Christ. While in the Museum of Art in one of our large cities last spring I saw an artist reproducing on canvas a painting which hung upon the wall. I looked upon the painting on the wall and upon the reproduction before the artist. So far as I could see the reproduction was in exact imitation of the original; but the eye of the artist could see farther than mine. He kept on applying the brush, giving a slight touch here and a slight touch there, and soon I discovered that the features stood out in more perfect imitation. So let us stand before the original and let the Holy Spirit work in us that which is pleasing to God, and we shall be continually transformed into a more perfect likeness of God. This must be your daily life. Attend strictly to every Christian duty, be obedient to the Word and Spirit of God, and you will become more and more like him and your soul will be rich in grace.

BECOMING.

One translation has rendered Phil.1:27 in these beautiful words: "Let your manner of life be becoming the gospel of Christ." We speak of anything being becoming when it gives a good appearance. An article of clothing becomes you when it gives you a better or less awkward appearance. So your life is to be becoming to the gospel of Christ. You are to live so that your life will make the gospel of Christ more beautiful to the hearts of men. You can do this only by living just as the Bible reads. All the precious truths of the Bible are to read in your life just as they do in the Bible, and thus your life will give a better appearance to God's Word and make it more real and interesting to the unsaved.

LOVE OF HOME.

[Illustration: A HAPPY HOME.] There are but few sweeter words in the English language than the word home. I have thought the three sweetest words are mother, home, and heaven. Home is the dearest place in all the world to the Christian heart. To have a fond love for home is not at all injurious to Christian character. Those who have but little love for home will never succeed well in the Christian life. It may sometimes occur that some of the home members are so disagreeable that the Christian for peace' sake will quit the home roof; but he still loves home. Sometimes young people think that to enjoy life they must get out from under parental rule and roof. We have an instance of this nature recorded in the Bible. How soon we learn of the prodigal's longing for the comforts of home. How often he thought of his father's house, that place so dear to him now. The love of home is a high mark of integrity. Show me one who has no love for home, and I will show you one who has but little true manhood or womanhood. The Bible command to young Christians is to be "chaste, keepers at home." When our duty and service to God demand our absence from home we submit and go in the strength of his grace, but lose not our love for home, and return in joy at Father's will. You can nowhere find more of heaven upon earth than in a Christian home. Look at the picture: A father with the Holy Bible, the mother and children listening in reverence to the heavenly message. Where, I say, can you find more of heaven? Such a scene is most sweet and sacred. Methinks the angels bend low to catch the chants of praise that arise from those devoted hearts to the gates of heaven. "Such a picture," you may say, "is very beautiful and inspiring to look upon, but where is the reality?" Thank God, such a home can be real in life, and it is your duty as a Christian to help make it so. God is pleased with such a home. It is much to his praise. Since such homes are so rare they are all the more glorifying to God, and we should strive the more earnestly to have them real. In your home is the place to shine for God. It is the place to shed forth the radiant beams of Christian light from your grace-laden soul. If you hope to prosper in the divine life, be your best at home. Do not think you can be careless at home and then shine in the splendor of Christian virtue when before the public. Your life at home leaves its mark upon you. Shine in Christian beauty at home, and you will shine in beauty in public; but attempt away from home to be more than you are at home, and you will miserably fail. A few years ago while in one of our large Eastern cities laboring for Jesus and souls for whom he died I wrote a few lines to the dear ones at home, which perhaps will not be out of place to insert here. When the light of day is dying

And the shades of night steal on,

Voices to my mem'ry whisper

Of the dear loved ones at home. Ere the chandelier is lighted,

Ere the day's last ray is gone,

O'er me comes a fond remembrance

Of the dear loved ones at home. Far above in arch of heaven

Lamps are lighted one by one,
But I only see the bright eyes
Of the dear loved ones at home. Far away beyond the region
Where I see those shining stars,
Somewhere in the land of angels,
Dwells a little boy of ours. Years ago one wintry evening
Heaven's gate was opened wide,
And an angel swift descended,
With a sickle at his side. Paused he at our boy's low trundle
In the evening twilight hour,
Caught away his happy spirit
To its home beyond the stars. How my heart adores the Giver
Of all good o'er land and sea,
But I praise him more than ever
For the dear ones left to me. As I think of her he gave me
In my happy youthful time,
How he bound our hearts together
At love's pure and sacred shrine;As I think of her this moment,
Given me by love divine,
Seems I almost feel the pressure
Of her gentle hand in mine.In the arms of night I'm folded,
Soon in dreamland I shall roam;
Then I'll go and see the dear ones --
See the dear loved ones at home.

VICTORY.

When you are forgotten or neglected, or purposely set at naught, and you smile inwardly, glorying in the insult or the oversight, because thereby counted worthy to suffer with Christ -- that is victory. When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your taste offended, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you take it all in patient, loving silence -- that is victory. When you are content with any food, any raiment, any climate, any society, any solitude, any interruption by the will of God -- that is victory. When you can lovingly and patiently bear with any disorder, any irregularity, any unpunctuality, or any annoyance -- that is victory. When you can stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, and endure it all as Jesus endured it -- that is victory. When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation or to record your own good works, or to itch after commendation, when you can truly love to be unknown -- that is victory. When, like Paul, you can throw all your suffering on Jesus, thus converting it into a means of knowing his overcoming grace, and can say from a surrendered heart, "Most gladly," therefore, do "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake" -- that is victory. 2 Cor.12:7-11. When death and life are both alike to you through Christ, and to do his perfect will, you delight not more in one than the other -- that is victory, for, through him, you may become able to say, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." Phil.1:20. "Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor.15:54. The perfect victory is to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" and thus to triumph over one's self. Rom.13:14. "In all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Rom.8:37.

THE FIRST LOVE.

You may wonder why we write so much about love. It is for the very best reason in the world. Nothing is so great as love, and no way so excellent. It is difficult to bind people together where love is lacking. A religious people may resolve to live in peace and confidence with one another; but this they will find to be very difficult if there is a deficiency of love. Love solves the problem; it removes every difficulty, and is the perfect bond of union. Nothing can separate hearts that are full of love. Love must be suppressed before division can be admitted. The most earnest exhortations and entreaties and the strongest reprovings fail to get men to attend to every Christian duty where love is wanting; but it is not difficult to persuade men to obey God and do all they can to glorify him when they love him with all their hearts. There was much in the life of the angel of the church at Ephesus that was praiseworthy; but something was lacking. He had left his first love. But, what is the first love? There is no difference between first love and last love if it be love. Pure, genuine love is the same always -- first, last, and all the time. The overseers of this church, and doubtless the church in general, had lost the ardor of the love which they had at the first. Oh, the warmth, the sweetness, of first love! Do you not remember it, dear reader? When you were so clearly and wonderfully born of the Spirit of God, how ardent was the love in your heart! It thrilled you with delight. There was a delicious, sweet taste all through your soul. How gladly you would have taken wings and have flown away to the arms of Him whom your heart loved. The word of God was to your soul like honeyed dew upon your lips. How delightful it was to labor for Jesus! How precious sweet to make the greatest sacrifices for his sake! and to go away into some secret place and pray was dearer to you than can ever be told. You found the greatest pleasure in attending to every Christian duty. I should be glad if I could describe to you just what that first love was in your heart. I can not do this, neither can you; but you know how it felt, and how joyful was your soul. Oh, blessed happy day, when your sins were washed away, and love sang its sweetest lay within your soul! Now, if you do not have the same ardor; the same warmth; the same sweet relish for prayer, for the word of God, for a meeting; the same thrilling sense of sweetness in your soul; that same precious drawing toward God and toward the brethren; that same delight in laboring for Jesus; that same joy and happiness in making sacrifices for him and for your fellow man: if you do not feel those symptoms of love as deeply and as delightfully, and if they are not in you as actively as they were at the first, -- you are like the church at Ephesus -- you have left your first love. In Wilson's excellent translation this text reads, "Thou hast relaxed thy first love." They had lost the intensity of their first love. It had relaxed, or lost tension, and had become languid. It does not matter to what you testify, or who you are, if you have not the same ardor and deep intensity of love that you had at the first, you have relaxed love. Do not deceive yourself. Do not make any excuses. There is no necessity of losing this fervency of love. The leaping, thrilling, bounding love can be kept in the full blaze of its intensity in your soul as long as you live. I can never encourage a cessation of love. No matter what the circumstances, we can increase and abound more and more in love. You may have works, you may have labor, you may have patience; so did the church at Ephesus; but they had relaxed their first love. See to it, O beloved, that you do not lose the deep fervency of love. Keep it burning in all its brightness and warmth; and the works and labor and patience are sure to

follow. But do not let your works, and labor, and patience deceive you. See that there is an underlying principle of love in all you do. If your works and labor and patience be devoid of love, there will be a secret desire in your heart to attract attention, and a longing for a bit of praise. But if all is done in purest sincere godly love, the joy you will find in doing is a full and sufficient reward. And, may the Lord give you understanding.

THE LITTLE FOXES.

One little fox is, "Some other time." If you track him up, you come to his hole -- never. Another little fox is, "I can't." Just set on him a plucky little "I can," and he will kill him for you. Another bad little fox is, "Just a little" pride, self-will, worldly conformity, etc. That little mischief will strip the whole vine if left go. Another malignant little fox is "I haven't faith." He slips into the vineyard through a knot-hole called self. You can shut him out by removing the self-plank and filling up with Jesus only. Another bad little fox is, "I haven't power." Be sure and catch him. If you will take the pains to dig him up, you will find his nest some where beyond the end of your present consecration. It will pay you to take him, if you have to "dig deep" and work hard. Another devouring little fox is, "My church." "Salt" and "fire" is the sure and only antidote for such nasty vermin. We will point out one more little fox, and he is able to devour all the fruit of the vineyard and kill the very vines. His species is "Fear." One good dose of "perfect love" will kill him stone-dead. And a constant application of the blood of Christ will prevent this, with all other little or big foxes, yea, and all other animals, ever coming to life again.

SPIRITUAL DECLENSION.

A want of interest in the duties of secret devotion is a mark of religious declension. It is well said that prayer is the Christian's vital breath. A devout spirit is truly the life and soul of godliness. The soul can not but delight in communion with what it loves with warm affection. The disciple, when his graces are in exercise, does not enter into his closet and shut the door, that he may pray to his Father who is in secret, merely because it is a duty which must be done, but because it is a service which he delights to render, a pleasure which he is unwilling to forego. He goes to the mercy-seat as the thirsty hart goes to the refreshing brook. The springs of his strength are there. There he has blessed glimpses of his Savior's face, and unnumbered proofs of his affection. But sometimes the professing Christian comes to regard the place of secret intercourse with God with very different feelings. He loses, perhaps by a process so gradual that he is scarcely conscious of it for a time, the tenderness of heart, and the elevation and fervor of devout affection that he had been used to feel in meeting God. There is less and less of spirit and more and more of form in his religious exercises. He retires at the accustomed time rather from force of habit than because inclination draws him. He is enclined to curtail his seasons of retirement or to neglect it altogether if a plausible pretext can be found. He reproaches himself, perhaps, but hopes that the evil will cure itself at length. And so he goes on from day to day, and week to week. Prayer -- if his heartless service deserves the name -- affords him no pleasure and adds nothing to his strength. Where such a state of things exists it is evident that the pulses of spiritual life are ebbing fast. If the case is yours, dear reader, it ought to fill you with alarm. Satan is gaining an advantage of you and seducing you from God. A second sign of spiritual declension is indifference to the usual means of grace. The spiritual life, not less than the natural life, requires appropriate and continual nourishment. For this want God has made ample provision in his Word. To the faithful-disciple the Scriptures are rich in interest and profit. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." To such a soul the preaching of the gospel is a joyful sound; and the place where kindred spirits mingle in social praise and worship is far more attractive than the scenes of worldly pleasure. But, alas! from time to time it happens that some who bear the Christian name and who have rejoiced in Christian hopes, insensibly lose their relish for the Scriptures. If they continue to read them daily, it is no longer with such appreciation of their power and beauty as makes them the bread of life, refreshing and invigorating the soul. Their minds are occupied no small portion of the time with thoughts of earthly things. They find it easy to excuse themselves from frequenting the place of social prayer, and even content themselves, perhaps, with an occasional half-day attendance on the more public service of the sanctuary. And when they are in the place of worship they feel listless, destitute of spiritual affection, disposed to notice others or to attend to only mere words and forms. They want, in a great measure, that preparation of the heart, without which the means of grace are powerless and lacking in pleasure or profit to the soul. Such indifference is conclusive proof that the soul has departed from God; has grieved the Holy Spirit and lost the vital power of godliness. If you, reader, are conscious of this indifference, see in it an infallible sign of your backsliding. It declares you have departed from the fountain of living waters and are a wanderer from your God. A third indication of declension in the Christian life is a devotion to the world. "Love

not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Covetousness is idolatry. Christians are solemnly enjoined to set their affections on things above, and to lay up treasures in heaven. But look at yonder professed disciple. See how inordinately anxious he is about gain. He is giving all his thoughts and time to business. He enlarges his plans and extends his views. He suffers the hours of worldly business to encroach upon the time which should be spent in secret or in family worship or in the social prayer. He forgets that he has no right to do this, and that he can not, without sin, permit the claims of earth to crowd out the claims of God and his own immortal nature. Look, too, at his compliance with the tastes and maxims of worldly people. He appears to feel it is not best to be strict in his adhesion to his principles. He doubts if there is any harm in this or that or the other worldly indulgence. He does not see the need of being so strenuous about little things. He is anxious to please everybody and can not bear to thwart the wishes of the worldly-minded. If the world dislikes any of the doctrines or the duties of religion he would have little said about them. In a word, he is all things to all men, in a very different sense from what Paul meant. In his sentiments, his associations, his pleasures, his mode of doing business, his conversation, his whole character, there is far too little that evinces strength of holy principle and godliness. O reader, has your case been described? You are then a backslider from the God whom you covenanted to serve. A fourth sign of a state of declension in spirituality is an unwillingness to receive Christian counsel or reproof. The Spirit of Christ is a tender, gentle, docile Spirit. When the heart of the disciple is full of holy affection he feels that he is frail and insufficient. He seeks wisdom and strength from above and is thankful for the kind suggestions of those whose experience and opportunities have been greater than his own. If he errs and is admonished by some faithful Christian brother, he receives it meekly and with a thankful spirit. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness," is the language of his heart. Even though reproof in itself be painful, he would not that it should be omitted when he has been in fault, for he dreads nothing so much as doing wrong -- as sinning against God and his own soul. But the spirit that departs from God and duty is a self-willed spirit. It is impatient of restraint. It is irritable and captious instead of meek and willing to be taught. It can not brook any crossing of its views, but esteems advice impertinent and meets admonition with resentment. When he exhibits such a temper of mind; when he disregards the opinions and feelings of fellow Christians; when he affects independence and prides himself on doing as he pleases; when he keeps out of the reach of Christian counsel, and justifies himself when affectionately reproofed; when he comes to regard the watchfulness of others over him as an unwelcome and irksome thing; [when he charges you with having a spirit of faultfinding, of having no charity, but that you only discourage and press him down when you try to show him his lack of spiritual life], -- it is clear that he exhibits no more the fruits of the Holy Spirit's influence on his soul. His piety has declined; he no longer lives in intimacy with God and in the atmosphere of heaven. His light is dim. His glory has departed. The last indication of religious declension that we shall now speak of is a careless indifference to the danger arising from temptation. A Christian whose piety is warm and vigorous has great tenderness of conscience. He dreads the least approach of evil. Even the suggestions of sin to the mind are painful. He therefore prays earnestly and daily, "Lead me not into temptation," and carefully avoids placing himself in dangerous circumstances. Sometimes, however, you will see professing Christians who seem to want this instinctive sense of danger. They often place themselves in circumstances when they might easily have foreseen their strength of principle would be liable to be put to the severest test. They keep company in which it is nearly impossible that their moral feelings should not be defiled.

They allow themselves to assort with the idle, the frivolous, with those who are given to foolish talking and jesting; they indulge idle thoughts, repeat amusing stories, read books and papers that do not gender to piety, etc. But he who is willing to go as far toward evil as he can with safety, has lost one of the greatest safe-guards of virtue. He who is ready to tamper with temptation is on dangerous ground and in a sad state of declension. O reader, turn ye about, shake loose from the world, draw nigh to God, let the deep breathings waft your soul upward and upward to greater heights in God's joy and love, and this world will only be a dim specter in the distance.

DILIGENCE.

"O for a closer walk with God!" This is the inward pleading of many a precious blood-washed soul. I beg leave to tell you that that fulness of God, that deep and perfect satisfaction of soul, that sweet feeling of deep reverence, that hushed and sacred feeling of awe, that close walk with God, is obtained and retained only by the utmost diligence. Slothfulness in the Christian life is a sure source of degeneration. Too frequently when saints reach "fair Canaan's happy land" they think they have nothing now to do but to sing and shout and praise God and go to heaven "on flowery beds of ease." To every newly arrived Christian in Canaan is given the command, "Go forward and possess the land." To do this battles must be fought, giant foes must be defeated, and the greatest diligence must be practised. God promised ancient Israel to drive out all the nations of Canaan from before them, and that every place whereon the soles of their feet should tread should be theirs, if they would diligently keep all the commandments that the Lord commanded them, to love the Lord, to walk in his ways, and to cleave unto him. See Deut. 11:22-24. If we will diligently obey God and go forward at his command he will lead us where the milk and honey flow, and where the pastures are green. Our walk with him will be sweet and our souls perfectly satisfied. Since the term diligence is so frequently used in Scripture and such emphasis placed upon it, it is well worth our time to learn its meaning. We often, among the saints, hear testimonies like these: "I am living up to all the Word of God"; or, "All the Bible requires of me, I am doing"; "I love God and find delight in doing all his will," etc. Such expressions are very full of meaning and may sometimes mean more than the witness comprehends. Let me ask you, Are you as diligent in every respect as the Bible commands you to be? Diligence implies an earnest and constant effort to accomplish a desired end -- a carefulness, a heedfulness, an industry, a close and fixed attention. Many a heart has been robbed of the love of God because it was not kept by diligence. Many a beloved saint can look back to a few years ago when his soul was more fully satisfied and his heart abounded more in the love of God, and all because diligence was not given to "keep the heart." In Josh. 22:5 the commandment is to take diligent heed to love God, to walk in his ways, to keep his commandments, to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all the heart and with all the soul. May the Lord help the reader to comprehend the strength of this commandment. O how precious! To take diligent heed to love God, implies a careful avoidance of everything that would have a tendency to suppress his love in our hearts and to eagerly seek all possible means of increasing that love. All company whose spirit and conversation have a tendency to destroy love is avoided as far as possible without violating the command, "Be courteous." Reading amusing stories; telling amusing, worldly incidents, the happenings of bygone days; fondness for the general news of the day; gossiping; admiration for the pomp and show of the world; careless, idle thoughts; fondness for society, -- all serve to extinguish the love of God in our hearts. Talking with others about God and his works, reading his Word, meditating upon him, praying, attending meetings, doing good to all men, giving of our means to advance his cause, -- all these increase the love in our hearts toward him. To be diligent, to serve the Lord with all the heart and with all the soul, is to be industrious in doing all we can for him; seeking opportunities of doing good, carefulness in obeying all his commands, testifying to the works of God, and showing forth his praises continually. Your

soul may long for a closer walk with God, and well that it does; but if you do not keep your heart with all diligence from the world, you will never enjoy the blessed experience. But by giving diligence you can have such a walk with God as to fully satisfy your soul.

LOWLINESS.

But few traits of Christian character are more lovely than lowliness. Humility, meekness, and lowliness are terms nearly synonymous, but not wholly so. It is somewhat difficult for the mind to grasp the shades of difference in their meaning. It appears, however, that lowliness is the deepest depth of humility and meekness. Meekness is the opposite of impatience, harshness, or irritability, and has for its fruit gentleness and kindness. Humility is the opposite of pride, and has for its fruits modesty, unforwardness, etc. Lowliness is simply the opposite of highness in self in any respect, and has for its fruits meekness and humility with their fruits. To us this command is given: 'Walk worthy of your vocation with all lowliness.' If you have the experience of "all lowliness," you will go on in your vocation without discouragement and disappointment, though you are unnoticed and wholly ignored. And though God promotes others and honors them and they are loved and praised by men, you are glad for them and rejoice. If you have the experience of "all lowliness" in your soul, you will not have the least disposition to lift up self. All you do and say will be in godly sincerity. Now look closely. If God heals some one through your prayers, be careful when you tell of the healing that it is to lift up the Lord only. If you have composed a song, and sing it to a company who do not know that it is your song, then you tell them the Lord gave you the song, what is your motive? Do you want them to know how good and great the Lord is, and nothing more? or do you want them to know that you are the author? I say, look closely into your motive. If, from the lowliness of your heart, you desire in all you do and say, only to exalt the Lord, it will be felt in the depth of your speech, and God will be honored; but if there is the least inclination or feeling to exalt self, it will be felt in the gracelessness of your speech, and God will be dishonored. Go humbly on in life attending to the work God has assigned to you, doing it well and in all lowliness of heart before him, and be content.

ON DRESS.

If you could be as humble when you choose rich apparel (which I flatly deny), yet you could not be as beneficent, as plenteous in good works. Therefore every shilling that you needlessly spend on your apparel is in effect stolen from the poor! For what end do you want these ornaments? To please God? No! -- but to please your own fancy or to gain the admiration and applause of those who are no wiser than yourself. If so, what you wear you are in effect tearing from the back of the naked; and the costly and delicate food you eat, you are snatching from the mouth of the hungry. For mercy, for pity, for Christ's sake, for the honor of his gospel, stay your hand! Do not throw this money away. Do not lay out on nothing, yea worse than nothing, what may clothe your poor, naked, shivering fellow creatures. Many years ago, when I was at Oxford, on a cold winter's day, a young maid (one of those we keep at school) called on me. I said, "You seem half starved. Have you nothing to cover you but that thin gown?" She said, "Sir, this is all I have." I put my hand in my pocket, but found no money left, having just paid away all that I had. It struck me, "Will thy Master say, 'Well done, good and faithful steward. Thou hast adorned thy wall with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold'? O justice! O mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of the poor maid? See thy expensive apparel in the same light; thy gown, hat, head-dress!" Everything about thee which costs more than Christian duty required thee to lay on, is the blood of the poor! Oh, be wise for the time to come! Be more merciful; more faithful to God and man; more abundantly clad (like men and women professing godliness) with good works. It is stark, staring nonsense to say, "Oh, I can afford this or that!" If you have regard to common sense, let that silly word never come into your mouth. No man living can afford to throw away any part of that food or raiment into the sea which was lodged with him on purpose to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. And it is far worse than waste to spend any part of it in gay and costly apparel. For this is no less than to turn wholesome food into deadly poison. It is giving so much money to poison both yourself and others as far as your example spreads, with pride, vanity, anger, lust, love of the world, and a thousand "foolish and hurtful desires" which tend to "pierce them through with many sorrows." O God, arise and maintain thy own cause! Let not men and devils any longer put out our eyes and lead as blindfolded into the pit of destruction. God demands of his people that they dress modestly as becomes people who profess holiness. The putting on of apparel for adornment and the wearing of jewelry are not consistent with Christian modesty. The nude and lewd art of dressing which is becoming so prevalent among professors of Christ is an abomination in the sight of God, and a practise which no virtuous man or woman can countenance. If professors would stop and consider the character of women who invent popular fashions of the age they might well blush with shame at their eager attempts to follow the modern styles of dress invented by the wicked leaders of fashion in London and Paris, whence the latest styles of this country generally emanate. It is indeed sad to behold the young of to-day making themselves unfit to fulfil the sacred functions of wife and mother by the use of the modern corset, as well as laying a foundation for years of misery, dragged out in this life by diseases brought upon them by catering to the creed of millions who worship at the shrine of Fashion. The pride of their hearts, pampered and fed by the foolish practises of the age, blinds them to their obligations to God as a Creator and Savior; and

amid the whirl of earthly vanity they hasten to the awful doom that awaits all who fail to obey the gospel of Christ. The Word of God gives plain directions to Christians as to how they should dress. In olden times God permitted his people to wear some jewelry; that is, there was no law against it; but there came a time when he promised that he would cleanse the hearts of his people from all pride and vanity, and they should find no pleasure in putting on ornamental dress and jewelry, and costly array. In Isa.3:16-23 we have a clear prophecy of the gospel age, and how God was going to have his people dress modestly in accordance with their profession. We shall quote from the LXX: "Thus saith the Lord, because the daughters of Sion are haughty, and have walked with an outstretched neck, and with winking of the eyes, and motion of the feet: ... therefore the Lord will humble the chief daughters of Sion, and the Lord will expose their form in that day; and the Lord will take away the glory of their raiment, the curls and the fringes, and the crescents, and the chains, and the ornaments of their faces, and the array of glorious ornaments, and the armlets, and the bracelets, and the wreathed work, and the finger-rings, and the ornaments for the right hand, and the earrings, and the garments with scarlet borders, and the garments with purple grounds, and the shawls to be worn in the house, and the Spartan transparent dresses, and those made of fine linen, and the purple ones, and the scarlet ones, and the fine linen, interwoven with gold and purple, and the light coverings for couches." We shall now quote from the New Testament: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." 1 Tim.2:9,10. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear, whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Pet.3:1-4. The wearing of feathers, artificial flowers, frills, flounces, unnecessary tucks and trimmings, is not in harmony with the gospel standard of modest apparel. Queer-shaped hats, such as we see worn by the people who follow the fashions of the world, should be avoided by the saints as they would every other thing unbecoming to a Christian; not fashioning themselves according to their former lusts in their ignorance. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so he ye holy in all manner of conversation." 1 Pet.1:15. The all-wise God who gave these commands knows what is for the good of his people, and if we love him, we will obey. When the heart is cleansed from all pride there will be no difficulty in measuring up to the gospel on the matter of modest apparel. We trust all who read this may realize it is truth.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

I have seen patent medicines bearing the above title. By the word elixir is meant length of days and happiness. The medical man by labeling his cordial with this title offers to give to all who will take it a long life of happiness. Such things have their sad failures; but I will offer to you a prescription, which, if you will carefully follow, will prove an unfailing elixir of life. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it." 1 Pet.3:10,11. If the reader will follow these directions strictly, making them practical in every-day life, we can upon the authority God has given insure him a long and happy life.

RULES FOR EVERY-DAY LIFE.

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." Col.4:6. "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." Prov.3:27. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without." Col.4:5. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Phil.2:14. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth." Prov.27:2. "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks." Prov.27:23. "Eat so much as is sufficient for thee." Prov.25:16. "Be not wise in your own conceits." Rom.12:16 "Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thes.5:22. "See that none render evil for evil unto any man." 1 Thes.5:15. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." Rom.12:10. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom.12:21."Be content with such things as ye have." Heb.13:5."Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Eccl.9:10."Let all things be done with charity." 1 Cor.16:14."Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Jas.1:2."Keep thyself pure." 1 Tim.5:22."In everything give thanks." 1 Thes.5:18."Keep yourselves in the love of God." Jude 21."Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Eph.6:18.

A HOLY LIFE.

What, in its true sense, is a holy life? It is the life of Jesus. His whole manner of life was truly holy. His life is the ideal life. If we would live holy, we must live as he lived. We must walk as he walked. The artist has his ideal before him, and with touches of the brush here and there upon his drawing he forms a picture in an exact image of the ideal. The life of Jesus is what we are to imitate. He sets the example of holy living and calls us to the same holy life. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." 1 Pet.1:15. This text has a better rendering in the Revised Version: "Like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living." We, as Christians, are God's offspring and as such are like him. Holiness in the life of Jesus is found not only in the greater miracles which he performed, but also in the lesser happenings of his life. The restoring of life to the dead is no more beautifully holy than the laying of his hands upon the heads of children and blessing them. His memorable Sermon on the Mount no more portrays the loveliness of his character than the conversation with the woman by the wayside well. It is the little things in every-day life, if attended to and kept in the meekness and solemnity of the Spirit of Christ, that make life truly beautiful and holy. It is not the eloquent sermon that makes a life so sublime; but it is the tender smile, the kind word, the gentle look, that is given to all. It is the patient manner in which all the little trying and provoking things of life are met. You may preach or write ever so forcibly and eloquently, and bring out the sublime truths of the Bible in great beauty; but if, in the privacy of your own home, there are little frettings, a little peevishness, a little crossness, a little levity, a little selfishness, a little distrust, your life is not as truly holy as it should be. If you desire God's holy image to be stamped upon your soul, your countenance, and your life, carefully avoid the little sprigs of lightness, the little bits of sloth and indolence, touches of forwardness, rudeness, coarseness, and crossness, and acts of selfishness, etc. Pure words belong to a holy life. You should use the very choicest words. Words that are wholly free from vulgarity, slang, and the spirit of the world. Untidiness, uncleanness, carelessness, and shabbiness are not at all beautiful ornaments in a holy life. But quietness, modesty, and reticence are gems which sparkle in a holy life like diamond sets in a band of gold. Give attention to your words, your thoughts, your tone of voice, your feelings, the practise of self-denial, of little acts of benevolence, of promptness, of method and order. These are auxiliaries to holy living. Are there not many little things in your home life that you can improve upon? Seek God for help and be truly holy.

A SOLITARY WAY.

There is a mystery in human hearts,
And though we be encircled by a host
Of those who love us well, and are beloved,
To ev'ry one of us, from time to time,
There comes a sense of utter loneliness.
Our dearest friend is "stranger" to our joy,
And can not realize our bitterness.
"There is not one who really understands,
Not one to enter into all I feel,"
Such is the cry of each of us in turn.
We wander in "a solitary way,"
No matter what or where our lot may be;
Each heart, mysterious even to itself,
Must live its inner life in solitude.
And would you know the reason why this is?
It is because the Lord desires our love.
In ev'ry heart he wishes to be first,
He therefore keeps the secret key himself,
To open all its chambers, and to bless
With perfect sympathy and holy peace
Each solitary soul which comes to him.
So when we feel this loneliness it is
The voice of Jesus saying, "Come to me";
And ev'ry time we are "not understood,"
It is a call to us to come again:
For Christ alone can satisfy the soul.

And those who walk with him from day to day
Can never have "a solitary way."
And when beneath some heavy cross you faint
And say, "I can not bear this load alone,"
You say the truth. Christ made it purposely
So heavy that you must return to him.
The bitter grief, which "no one understands,"
Conveys a secret message from the King,
Entreating you to come to him again.
The "Man of sorrows" understands it well,
"In all points tempted," he can feel with you;
You can not come too often, or too near.
The Son of God is infinite in grace,
His presence satisfies the longing soul;
And those who walk with him from day to day
Can never have "a solitary way."

STIRRING THE EAGLE'S NEST.

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, that fluttereth over her young, he spread abroad his wings, he took them, he bare them on his pinions." That picture is full of poetry, full of life and truth and beauty. Mark it. Have you ever seen an eagle stir up her nest? You know what happens. There in the nest, right upon the rocky heights, are the eaglets. The mother eagle comes and, taking hold of them, flings them out of the nest. They were so comfortable there, but she flings them right out of the nest, high above the earth. They begin to fall straightway. They never have been in air before; they have always been in the nest. Is not that mother bird cruel? Why does she disturb the eaglets? Watch her and you will understand. As long as you look upon the struggling eaglets in the air you miss the point. Watch the eagle. Having stirred up her nest, "she spreadeth abroad her pinions," the pinions that beat the air behind her as she rises superior to it. Where are the eaglets? Struggling, falling; she is superior; they are falling. Then what does she do? "She beareth them on her pinions." She swoops beneath them, catches them on her wings, and bears them up. What is she doing? Teaching them to fly. She drops them again, and again they struggle in the air, but this time not so helplessly. They are finding out what she means. She spreads her pinions to show them how to fly, and as they fall again, she catches them again. That is how God deals with you and me. Has he been stirring up your nest? Has he flung you out until you feel lost in an element that is new and strange? Look at him. He is not lost in that element. He spreads out the wings of omnipotence to teach us how to soar. What then? He comes beneath us and catches us on his wings. We thought when he flung us out of the nest it was unkind. No; he was teaching us to fly that we might enter into the spirit of the promise, "They shall mount up with wings as eagles." He would teach us how to use the gifts which he has bestowed on us, and which we can not use as long as we are in the nest. Fancy keeping eaglets in the nest! It is contrary to their nature, contrary to the purposes for which they are framed and fitted. There is a purpose in the eagle. What is it! Flight upward. There is a purpose in your life, new-born child of God! What is it? Flight Godward, sunward, heavenward. If you stop in the nest you will never get there. God comes into your life and disturbs you, breaks up your plans, and extinguishes your hopes, the lights that have lured you on. He spoils everything; what for? That he may get you on his wings and teach you the secret forces of your own life, and lead you to the higher development and higher purposes. The government of God is a disturbing element, but, praise his name! it is a progressive element.

SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT DO.

Do not forget to pray. Do not waste any moments in idleness. Do not use slang words in your conversation. Do not build air-castles. Do not think evil nor speak evil of any one. Do not lack showing courtesy to all men. Do not be rude in manners. Do not think yourself to be something more than you are. Do not try to make others think you are better than you really are. Do not tell the faults of a friend to others. Do not wear what the Bible condemns. Do not dress slovenly. Do not work too much. Do not work too little. Do not talk too much. Do not eat too much. Do not sleep too much. Do not neglect going to meetings. Do not neglect giving all you can to the cause of Christ. Do not neglect reading the Bible. Do not do to others what you would not like for them to do to you. Do not forget to practise much self-denial. Do not neglect to be zealously affected in a good cause. Do not neglect to admonish your brother. Do not seek the praise of men. Do not do anything through strife or vain glory. Do not be afraid of the devil. Do not think your trials are greater than those of others. Do not neglect to bear the burdens of others. Do not neglect to bear your own burdens. Do not fret, worry, nor murmur. Do not testify to something you do not live. Do not let your thoughts wander idly about. Do not neglect to show meekness and kindness to all men. Do not compromise with sin to the least degree. Do not neglect your salvation. Do not weary in well-doing, knowing in due season you shall reap if you do not faint.

PURITY.

There are but few words in the English language sweeter and more beautiful than the word purity. What tender, mellow light beams out from its depths through its crystal clearness! what a halo of glory encircles it! what a sweet melody is contained in the sound, which, as it falls upon the soul, awakens all that is manly, noble, and godly there! Purity! who can repeat this word and not feel and hear a sweet rhythm reverberating through all the avenues of his spiritual being? "Keep thyself pure." Is there a soul so deep in slumber, so stupefied by the opiates of sin, as to know no awakening by the sweet melodious chimes that ring out from this heavenly command! Dismal, indeed, must be the heart in which no aspirations for a pure, devoted life are awakened by these glorious words. Listen, O my soul, to the sweet music, "Keep thyself pure." Tuned by the Spirit and sung by the voice of inspiration, in the bright morning of this glorious gospel day, it comes ringing down through the ages and is awakening desires and aspirations for the truest nobility of manhood, the deepest piety, and the highest plane of moral purity to which man can attain through the redeeming grace of God. The command to you, young man, is, "Keep thyself pure"; and to you, young lady, "Keep thyself pure"; and to all who are farther down the stream of life and hastening on to the boundless ocean of eternity, "Keep thyself pure." If you desire to comprehend something of the true meaning of purity, think of heaven: what purity is in heaven, so it is on earth; what it is in the life of Christ, so it is in the life of man. Here upon the shores of time we look away, by an eye of faith, and behold the purity of heaven and its inhabitants. We behold the angels and the great white throne, upon which sits the King of glory; but who, of all mankind, will really be eye-witnesses of that fair scene? The Lamb, who is the light over there, makes answer, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." From that golden throne of God and the Lamb, the "beloved disciple," from the land of visions, saw flowing a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal; and he heard the Lord of heaven and earth saying, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely"; and the Spirit and the bride repeat the invitation, saying, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." But what is this pure river of water of life? It is the wonderful river of God's saving grace, issuing forth from out his throne and flowing throughout all his kingdom. The Son of God extended his Father's kingdom to this earth and set the glorious stream of salvation flowing here. This wonderful stream is just as pure and its waters just as sweet in their onward flowing here, as they are when they come sparkling forth from out the throne. If you will come and wash in this crystal stream; if you will drink of its delicious waters, -- they will make you as pure as the throne from which they flow. If you will allow them to ripple over your soul, they will cleanse you and make you pure, so that purity in your heart will not be inferior to that purity which encircles the throne of God. Glory to his name! The Psalmist says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." White is an emblem of purity. When John beheld the multitude of all nations standing before the throne and the Lamb, clothed in white robes, he asked whence they came. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev.7:14. Purity of soul and heart and mind and conscience and thought and life is an experience to be attained to and enjoyed in this life. Peter says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." 1

Pet.1:22. Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart." Mat.5:8. Paul says, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience." 2 Tim.1:3. Peter says, "I stir up your pure minds." 2 Pet.3:1. Paul says, "Whatsoever things are pure, ... think on these things." See Phil.4:8,9. Christ is the standard of purity. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3. Purity in all the affections, in all the desires, in all the motives, and in all the thoughts. The heart that is made pure in the light of God reveals nothing contrary to heaven. Nothing can be more noble and beautiful upon earth than a pure life. Oh, how many unclean and impure thoughts and desires are filling the minds and hearts of men and women in these awful iniquitous days! Dear reader, "Keep thyself pure."

MEANS FOR GROWTH.

You have started out fairly upon the Christian way. You have been "born again"; you have been immersed in water, or buried with Christ in baptism; you have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. With such an experience you are admitted to the contest for the "crown of life." Now since you are thus started out upon the Christian way, it is a fact that you must "grow in grace." There are certain means for you to use that will promote growth. If you neglect these, you will not, you can not, grow. You must live much in prayer; you must read the Bible; you must attend meetings that are ordered of God; you must partake of the Lord's Supper as you have opportunity; you must wash the saints' feet. You will be blest with grace to your soul if you do these things as unto the Lord. You must give of your means to God's cause freely and cheerfully; you must diligently follow every good work; and you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge and grace of God.

LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE.

The "crown of life" lies at the end of the race. Some run well for a time, and then because of slight hindrances turn from the way. You must endure unto the end. You must follow the example of the zealous apostle who said, "I reach forth to the things that are before," and, "I press toward the mark for the prize." The prize was the crown of life. He bends forward in the race with all the energy of his soul. Down at the end of the race he beholds the crown. Sin, Satan, nor the world shall not hinder him in securing it. You must be just as much in earnest. You must strive, and that lawfully, lest some one take your crown. Some years ago a number of boatmen off the coast of New England raced for a prize in single boats. As they were nearing the end of the race it was discovered by the spectators that a special favorite was a half-boat's length ahead of all its competitors. His friends began to cheer him, and he, animated by their cheers, gave a responsive cheer, and, in doing so, lost a stroke of the oar; a competitor seeing his opportunity bent to his oar with all energy, shot past him and won the prize. The apostle Paul warns you against youthful lusts, and tells you to flee from them; to follow peace, righteousness, godliness; to fight the good fight of faith; and to lay hold upon eternal life. We are in days when the love of many is waxing cold because iniquity abounds. You must keep the ardor of love glowing in your heart. Allow not the world nor aught else to extinguish the tender flame. Everything that has a tendency to suppress love, to cool its ardor, to dilute its sweetness in your soul, to lessen the yearnings of your heart for more of God, to deprive you of the sweet realization of constantly leaning on his breast, -- consider all such things your bitter foes and rout them at any cost. Run life's race with all the energy of your soul, never relaxing effort until the prize is in full possession. The dying testimony of the apostle Paul may be yours. When he had come down to the end of his journey he said as he stood, as it were, one foot upon time and the other in eternity, "The time of my departure is at hand." Then taking a last retrospective view of his life, he said, "I have fought a good fight." Then taking a look at inward conditions, he said, "I am ready to be offered up." Then looking out into the future's prospect, he said, "Henceforth there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me." O beloved young saints, run well your race. Keep your eyes upon the goal, fight the good fight of faith, be in earnest, live every moment for God, and you can have a dying testimony like the above.

CRUCIFIXION OF SELF.

It requires no little courage, coupled with the grace of God, to go to Calvary. There are many Christians who will follow Jesus so long as it is "Hosanna to the King of David," who fail to follow him to Calvary. Most persons love the sweets of grace, and thus many follow the Lord for the loaves and fishes; but when it comes to following him for his own sake, even unto judgment, where our earthliness is revealed, then too often we follow "afar off." Many will serve for reward, who refuse to serve for righteousness' sake. Satan understood this in the case of Job; so he said to the Lord, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" Job endured even unto the end, and proved by actual test his devotion to God and not to His gifts. Saints are like soldiers -- many there be who enlist, but few who fearlessly face death. All like life, though it be a life out of harmony with God. Satan said of Job, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." So Christians' last surrender is their own earthly life. They love the earthly, the dust; and to die to all that is not divine is a price that few will pay. Many talk of crucifixion, yea, claim to be crucified, who know hardly the first step away from self. To let self, the flesh, and all evil within perish; to draw the last drop of earthliness from our veins, -- is a price but few will pay for all the life of God. God through Moses gave to the children of Israel a heritage; but never in their greatest conquest did they attain all of that heritage. So with Christians: how few ever attain all of that God-life offered them through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Israelites made a league with certain of the inhabitants of the land whom they should have destroyed. How many Christians spare those enemies within which should die. They may force the death of many, perhaps most of their earthliness; but somewhere there is that with which they will not part. Of course, the earthliness may not be manifest as before; "hewers of wood and drawers of water" they become, yet they are there and live there. "I will be found of them when they seek me with their whole heart." Wholehearted devotion to God is a rare quality, and only the fewest of the few ever attain it. An idol somewhere, a desire, a wish, a preference, a hope not born of God, but of man or of the flesh, is the separation line. Yea, to cease from our labors as God did from his, and thus reach true rest, is a haven but few ever reach. To literally cease, that Jehovah may be the beginning and the end, means blood, and thorns, and nails in the hands. Yes, it means Calvary and the tomb. This is too much for many who go part way with Jesus. How few realize that perhaps the most of our religious aspirations are born not of God, but of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of man; and this is why our efforts are so barren, futile, and earthly. Yes, to hide away so that every act, every purpose, every hope, centers in God and points to him and away from man -- what a rare spiritual attainment! Many who are said to be very spiritual and leaders in the work of God, if robbed of this glory, would cease. To work for the eyes of God alone is not a sufficient reward for very many who have climbed well up the gospel ladder. To know when we are dead in the highest light. Self-abnegation can not be discerned so long as we want to live. If we never reach the point where we literally "hate our own life," we shall never know how much there is in us not divine. The flesh is ever the veil that separates between the holy place and the holy of holies. Until we have reached that place where we have lost sight of all that is human, and hunger and thirst for all the life of God, Christian perfection is an impossible attainment. This little book has been written for your success in the divine life. We have hoped and prayed for your well being in

the grace of God; but unless you are dead to self our prayers are but in vain. Oh, the beauties and the blessings and the rich glories, and happiness and usefulness for you in life, if you are fully possessed with life of God! Be dead indeed to self, and let God live in you to his praise.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD.

If you value your success in the Christian life, keep a wide gulf between you and this world. By the expression the world I mean its amusements, its revelry, its praise, its fashions, its society, its spirit. The present-day amusements or entertainments offered by secret orders and sects and by others are very destructive to spiritual life. Unless you are willing to walk alone with Jesus and let the blessedness of his companionship suffice for you, you had as well quit the race now. Mingle with worldly people, only to tell them of God's love. To love and enjoy the society of the world is to have a heart destitute of grace. Therefore keep away from the world. Beware of it. It is a bitter foe to grace. It is an enemy to God; and if you befriend it, you make yourself an enemy to God. "Whosoever is a friend to the world is an enemy to God," so says the Bible. To be a friend to the world is to help it along in any sense -- to encourage its spirit; to add to its pleasures, to its levity, its fashion, its foolishness; or to abet it in any way. You go into the world, only for the purpose of saving people from the world, and thus you are the world's enemy; and so you must continue to be, or miss heaven.

HAVE A CARE.

The world has many gaudy wings --

Have a care!

She flits among the flow'rs and sings --

Many a snare.

Beware

Of the hidden poisonous stings. Earth's pleasures are a golden cup --

Have a care!

She bids you take one little sup --

Many a snare.

Beware

Of the hidden sting in the cup. Earth's riches have a charm most rare --

Have a care!

She bids you seek a goodly share --

Many a snare.

Beware --

She will sting with many a care. Vain worldly fame's a painted flow'r --

Have a care!

She dwells in an enchanted bow'r --

Many a snare.

Beware --

She'll chide you in an evil hour. The world is but an empty show --

Have a care!

Of true joys a dangerous foe --

Many a snare.

Beware --

Her greatest gain's oft deepest woe.

AFFINITIES.

By the term affinity I mean that enamored feeling which arises in the hearts of those of opposite sex for each other. This Satan may take advantage of; and in this awful snare many a soul has gone down into the darkness; many a heaven-born and happy soul has received its awful blight, and gone down to an eternity of woe. Some one may ask, "Is not marriage honorable? and does not God join hearts together in love?" He certainly does; but when he does and all is kept in God's order the parties in love will not suffer any loss of spirituality. Courtship can be carried on in the will and order of God, and the parties engaged have a constant growth in grace. But so many times they become silly-headed and allow their love for each other to carry them out of God's order, and consequently they will soon be graceless-hearted. Now I speak the truth when I say that by far the greater number of saints who fall in love suffer spiritual loss. This need not be so. In the first place, the love for each other must be genuine; but, though God is calling two together and the love which springs up is in the order of the Lord, this does not insure them against spiritual loss. If they are not watchful they will lose their heads, so to speak, and step away beyond the bonds of propriety. There is many a young man and young woman united in marriage these days, even young saints, whom wisdom has not directed. Such may succeed in getting through and escaping the damnation of hell, but they will have trouble in the flesh. Now, dear young saint, if you desire to be successful in life and gain heaven, if you will keep your senses you can keep clear from all the meshes of unholy affinities. You desire to have a life companion if God selects you one. I can not blame you for this, neither does the Bible condemn you; but the utmost caution needs to be exercised. Be careful your desire for companionship does not turn your head and render you incapable of knowing or understanding the will of God. Whenever you find yourself losing love for God, you had better beware. Whenever the object of your affection is getting so upon your heart and mind that you think less of God you are going beyond His ordering. If your last thoughts in the evening and your earliest thoughts in the morning are of the loved one, you are being estranged from God and losing spiritual life. I feel like giving you warning and counsel you to move very cautiously and prayerfully in these matters, lest you make a mistake and suffer a loss that neither time nor eternity will ever make up. Young saints must not keep company with the unsaved. Those who do, lose spirituality. If you love God and desire to live a spiritual life, wait on God and let him select your life companion.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

When you entered the Christian race God gave an angel to guard and guide you in the way. You need have no fear of this world. Live in God's service and do his will, and this guardian angel will keep you. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." It was this angel that stood with Daniel in the den of lions and with the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. It was this angel that led the weeping Hagar to the well of water when her child was dying of thirst; and that led the righteous Lot out of the wicked city of Sodom and saved him from its awful burning. When Elijah was hunted for his life and sat down to weep and to starve under the juniper-tree, it was this guardian angel that brought him a cake and a cruse of water. It was this good angel that unbolted the prison doors and set Peter free. When Paul and Silas were lying fast in the stocks singing praise to God at midnight, it was the angel of the Lord that shook the earth and opened the prison doors. [Illustration: LIFE.] You once were lost, but the Son of man came to save you. Now you are saved; you have entered his fold; you have become one of his "little ones." Once lost, but now saved. Jesus says to this cruel, mocking world, "Take heed that ye cause not one of these little ones to stumble; for their angels do always behold the face of their Father which is in heaven." As you journey along the way of life, Christian reader, there is an angel of mercy guarding you by day and night. Naught in all the world can harm you. 'Their angels do always behold the face of God.' By this we understand that your guardian angel has constant access into the presence of God to bear him an intelligence concerning his little one under his charge. Glory be to God! If you will but live holy and confide in God, he will guide you safely and triumphantly through this world and bring you in a ripe old age to an eternity of rest. Trust not in the world, trust not in man, trust not in yourself; but give up all; give up your life to God and trust in him. You are safe in his care; nothing can harm you. You need not have a fear. What a blessed life to live! how peaceful! how secure! how full of rest! And when the last hour has come those guardian angels will be gathered round waiting for your spirit to come forth from the tomb of clay, and they will waft it in rapture to the God who gave it.

FLEDGING THE WINGS.

The inspired Word of God abounds in evidences of the twofold nature of man's being. Man, entire, consists of an outer physical being and an inner spiritual being. The one is for time, the other for eternity. The physical being is the transient home of the spiritual being, and is, therefore, called an earthly house. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor.5:1. When the earthly house in which the soul is tabernacled comes to dissolution, we (the spiritual beings) pass to our eternal home, a building not made with hands, but builded by the Lord of heaven. The passport from the earthly house to the home in the heavens is spoken of by the Psalmist as a "flying away." "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Psa.90:10. The physical being is cut down, or comes to dissolution, and we (the souls) fly away, when redeemed by the blood, to our eternal home of rest. Since it is spoken of as a flying away, the idea of wings is suggested, from which we derive our subject. The inspired apostle said, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Cor.4:16. As the outward, physical man, day by day, becomes more feeble, the furrows on the brow grow deeper, the locks more silvery, the steps more tottering, the voice weaker and more husky, the cheeks more sunken, the ear more deaf, the eye more dim, and the heart-beats more slow; the inward man is gathering strength, or fledging his wings, ready for his upward flight to his beautiful mansion in the sky. Oh, how often the redeemed soul, full of life, love, and hope, looks out through the fading windows of the crumbling house of clay, to its fair home on the Elysian shores eternal, and longs to take its flight! May you, dear reader, and I, as we travel along life's swift journey, so live in prayer and devotion to God, walk in such purity, so feed upon the divine life, that we shall gather strength to our souls day by day and be ready for the hour of our departure. Amen.

SOME TIME

Some time, when all life's lessons have been learned, And sun and stars forevermore have set,
The things which our weak judgments here have spurned, The things o'er which we grieved with
lashes wet,
Will flash before us out of life's dark night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue;
And we shall see how all God's plans are right,
And how what seemed reproof was love most true. And we shall see how, while we frown and
sigh,
God's plans go on as best for you and me;
How when we called, he heeded not our cry,
Because his wisdom to the end could see.
And e'en as prudent parents disallow
Too much of sweet to craving babyhood;
So God, perhaps, is keeping from us now
Life's sweetest things, because it seemeth good. And if, sometimes, commingled with life's wine,
We find the wormwood, and rebel and shrink,
Be sure a wiser hand than yours or mine
Pours out the potion for our lips to drink;
And if some friend we love is lying low,
Where human kisses can not reach his face,
Oh, do not blame the loving Father so,
But wear your sorrows with obedient grace. And you shall shortly know that lengthened breath
Is not the sweetest gift God sends his friend,
And that, sometimes, the sable pall of death
Conceals the fairest boon his love can send.
If we could push ajar the gates of life,

And stand within and all God's workings see,
We could interpret all this doubt and strife,
And for each mystery could find a key. But not to-day. Then be content, poor heart;
God's plans like lilies pure and white unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
Time will unfold the calyces of gold.
And if, through patient toil, we reach the land
Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest
When we shall clearly know and understand,
I think that we shall say, "God knew the best!"

THE PRECIOUS OINTMENT.

In the Bible we learn of a woman who took "a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus." This spikenard was very rich in perfume. It was the very best gift she could bring to Him whom she loved. This is a very beautiful symbol of the life work of a Christian. We, as Christian, are a sweet odor unto God in Christ Jesus. Everything you do for Jesus scents the air around the throne of God with a sweet fragrance. Every prayer you offer in the Spirit perfumes the corridors of heaven. I read somewhere of a little girl who told her mamma that God bade all the angels in heaven keep quiet when she prayed; then all the angels hushed their songs until she said amen. Amid all the songs and shouts and playing of harps in heaven God hears the prayers of his humble ones on earth. The odor of prayer from the hearts of God's children on earth is as sweet to him as the songs of angels. The things the saints at Philippi sent to Paul were an odor of a sweet smell to God. Cornelius' alms-giving and prayers were kept in heaven as a memorial. So all your gifts and doings and prayers are a rich perfume, which God keeps bottled up in heaven as a memorial of you. Your whole life, dear young saint, in all of its giving and doing, its sacrifices and prayers, its humble service and devotion, is to be constantly sending forth a sweet smell to God. This is spoken of in a beautiful figure in S. of Sol.1:12: "While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." The king is Jesus, who sits at the table of our hearts; the sweet spikenard is our Christian lives. In Rev.3:20 Jesus says, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The Christian's heart is the dining-room; there is a table spread with the graces of the Spirit, the fruits of the garden of the Lord. There Christ and the Christian sit down to dine together. While the glory of the one lights up the room, the holy life of the other perfumes it. O God, my soul doth magnify thee for the preciousness of these thoughts. When Christ was born wise men came and presented him frankincense and myrrh, and in after-years Mary came and poured upon his head the precious ointment of spikenard. These things were literally done, and now when we bring our very best gifts, in the fulness of love, to the Lord, we are breaking the alabaster box of sweet ointment and pouring it upon his head. You owe Christ the very best of your life; yea, you owe him your life. He must have all the affections of your heart. Christ must have the very best of everything out of your life. Do not use the dollars for yourself and give him the pennies. Do not sip the honey from the flower and give him the leaves. Do not eat the fresh bread yourself and give him that which is stale. Do not give him the well-worn garment and keep the best robe for yourself. But how can we now give to the Lord! "As oft as ye do it unto the least of these ye do it unto me." As you go about your life work as a Christian always do what you do as to the Lord. When you pray in public talk to Jesus the same as if he were there in person, and not to be heard of men. When you give money to the needy do it as if you were giving it to Jesus himself, for such it really is. If Christ should come to your door and ask for a drink, how eagerly you would get it for him! You must remember that to give a cup of water to one of his little ones is the same as giving it to him. When you visit a sick-chamber and are invited to sing you should sing just as sweetly as if you were singing purposely for the Savior, and all your words should be spoken as tenderly as if you were talking to him. [Illustration: THE TREE OF LIFE.] Jesus has given you the purest love of heaven; he has clothed you with the whitest robe; he gives

you the very best heaven affords; and, O beloved, will you not give him the very best life? Live with all your soul for Jesus; serve him every moment. Bring the best of your life, its love, its service, its perfume, and pour them upon the head and feet of Jesus.

THE TREE OF LIFE.

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life," says Proverbs. How wonderful! how inspiring! The fruit borne by a Christian is a savor of life to many. If you live a true Christian life all the way through, God will use the fruit you bear to bring another soul to life. Your Christian life will not be lived in vain. That "beloved disciple" said, "On either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month." Your life is compared to a river; and if you travel along down its course in the fulness of God's grace, upon its banks will grow the tree of life, of which others may eat and live forever. Such thoughts are almost too wonderful for me; they overwhelm my soul. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life," and, "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever." This same Jesus has come into your life. You are dead, but Jesus lives. He lives in you. The fruit you bear will be eaten by others and be life to their souls. O my young reader, will you not be watchful and prayerful and let God live in you and bring forth fruit to his own glory? Cultivate the Christian graces, and see to it that there is never a withered leaf on your life's tree, but be ever green and full of fruit, scattering a holy influence everywhere. May your life stand out upon the shores of time heavy laden with the fruits of the Spirit, of which others may eat long after you are gone to your reward. You can make it so. Will you do it? As for me, from the fulness of my soul I answer, I WILL.

ETERNITY.

Did you ever attempt to look to the end of eternity? Have you endeavored to comprehend its duration? Alas! it is something beyond the conception of the finite mind. Look into it as far as you can and no less of it lies beyond the end of your vision. Eternity is something never begun and something that will never end. It is a circle which has no end of beginning and no end of closing. It goes on and on and on until millions upon millions of ages have passed away, and then on and on to other millions upon millions of ages, and then still on, being no less in duration than before. When you have been there ten million years you will be no nearer the end than when you first entered this boundless duration. What a vast and awful thought! Eternity! I stand upon the shore of ocean and looking out upon the broad expanse I see nothing but ocean; I see no other shore. I stand and look out upon the ocean of eternity, and see nothing but eternity. I can see out for millions and billions and trillions of years, and yet it is eternity. Where shall I spend it? My soul answers, "In heaven through the blood."

NEARER TO THEE.

Nearer to thee, O my Savior,
Nearer I would be each day.
As I cross life's stormy ocean
Never from thee let me stray. Nearer, nearer, ever nearer,
Is the language of my soul
As I journey down life's pathway,
As I near bright heaven's goal. Lead me through this world of sorrow,
Let my hand in thine e'er be;
Throw thy arms of love around me,
Savior, let me walk with thee. When the storm-clouds round me gather
In the clefted Rock I hide;
When the surging billows threaten,
Fold me closer to thy side. There's a home for me in heaven,
By the crystal, silvered sea;
Some sweet morn the golden portals
Opened wide will be for me. There in amaranthine glory
I will sit at Jesus' feet;
There I'll sing the sweet old story
As I walk the golden street. O my heart, wait on in patience,
Each day brings me nearer the goal;
In some blissful dewy dawning
Heaven will receive my soul.

CONCLUSION.

Our introduction is upon the subject of Life; our conclusion is upon Death. To many people the word death is full of horror. Thank God, it holds no horror to the pure in heart. Death has no sting for those whose souls are in fellowship with God. Those who love God hail with joy the hour in which they are to meet him. Death to a Christian is only his removal from earth to the paradise of God. If some man of wealth were to tell you he had a rich home prepared for you in a distant land, where you could have all your heart could wish, and be happy as long as you lived, if you had confidence in the man, you could say good-by and cheerfully go to your new home. Death is nothing more. Some may shudder at the thought of the pain in death. How often we hear remarks like this: "This pain is almost like death," or, "it's like taking one's life." Have you not stood beside the infant's crib and watched it go peacefully to sleep? Where was the pain? Death to a Christian is only a going to sleep. You have had far more pain in life than you will have in death. There may be pain just prior to death, but none in death. Death to a saint is as peaceful as going to sleep. Have you not often been in some solitary place and given yourself into the arms of Muse? You have fallen to thinking about heaven and the angels and the Savior and your crown. You seemed as your soul was wafted upward on the wings of meditation, to lose consciousness of all on earth. Such will it be in death. Your soul will begin to see the glories of heaven; you will hear the sweet strains of music; you will begin to lose consciousness of earthly things and comprehend more of heaven. Then soon you will draw your last breath on the shore of time and sound your first note of praise on the shore of eternity. This is all there is in death. It is precious to fond parents to see their little children, with folded hands, go peacefully to sleep. So to our Father in heaven is the death of his saints precious. In fancy I can see many of my young readers, after a well-spent life, gathered in ripe old age on the banks of old Time's-river, waiting in bright hope to be summoned over to their rich possessions in the verdant fields of heaven. There is nothing more of death than this to a Christian. I pray that the life of many of you will end like this. I believe it will be so. Amen. A strange, sweet vision fills my soul,

A glimpse of glory and of God;

Am I not near life's final goal?

My feet scarce touch this mortal sod. The zephyrs blow divinely sweet,

With fragrance fill the balmy air;

Are heav'n and earth about to meet?

Who can this vision bright declare? I hear the notes of seraph song,

The rustle of an angel's wing;

Do signs like these to earth belong?

Do men and angels meet to sing? Life's journey seems about complete;

I con it well, yet know not why.
My heart with longings is replete,
And yet I do not long to die. A holy calm my bosom fills,
And silence like the hush of morn;
Such joy through all my being thrills
As swept men's hearts when Christ was born. Amid the crowds I look around
To see who bear love's fragrant flower;
I fain would walk on holy ground
Made sacred by the Spirit's power. God has the keeping of my ways,
His laws I rev'rence and obey;
My prayers seem almost turned to praise,
And yet I can not cease to pray. If this is death, I do not dread
To lay me down in peace to die --
To be with all the sainted dead,
Far, far beyond the arching sky.

CLOSING EXHORTATION.

God has forgiven you all your sins; he has sanctified you wholly. You stand to-day in the way of life; you are fully out upon the Christian way. You have on the whole armor of God. You possess the power of God's Spirit in your soul, the love of God is in your heart as a burning flame. You are tasting the sweet joys that flow from heaven's throne. In your soul is imprinted the image of Jesus. Your heart is a garden of opening buds, which emit the sweet fragrance of heaven. But, notwithstanding all this blessedness of experience, I want you to remember you are just starting on the pilgrim's way. I thought of bringing this little work to a close with the preceding letter, but it seems that I am loath to say the last word. I wonder if there is one word more I can say to help you in your Christian race. It is impossible for me to express how my heart yearns in love and tenderness for you. God wants to use your life on earth to his glory. He wants you so to shine in the glory and splendor of his grace that you may light others in the way. He wants the opening buds of grace in your soul to burst into full bloom. He wants to lead you higher up the mountain of joy, to the very fount of blessings. He wants to lead you down into the lowly vale where there are greater riches than gold. He wants his image in your heart to stand out in greater beauty and perfection; the features are yet too dim. While in this life your immortal soul is wrapped about with a veil of mortality; but God wants to shine such a radiant light and amaranthine glory into your soul that the veil of mortality will not be able wholly to obscure it. It will shine out through the material part and glow in transparent beauty upon the surface. If you will follow where he leads, he will lead you on from virtue to deeper, truer virtue; he will lead you on to fountains of sweeter joy. It may be through the vale of sorrow; but never fear nor distrust, and you will find your joy rising higher in the cup. If you will follow, he will lead you from peace on to broader, deeper rivers of peace. It may be through angry billows and past rough rocks; but if you trust him and follow on, he will bring you to yet calmer and more peaceful waters. If you will stay in his presence, he will impart unto you his own lovely character, and you will grow up into a holier life, into sweeter fellowship with God, into richer beauty and greater usefulness. He will sometimes call you where the flowers are blooming and sweet fragrance fills the air, where the birds sing sweetly and the zephyrs blow gently; he will lead you along the rippling streams, and delight your soul with the music of the wave; he will lead you through the shady glens and leafy bowers, -- until your soul will sing, "Is not this the land of Beulah?" But he may sometimes lead you through the desert, or over the rugged mountain, or across the stormy seas; he may lead you away from all that is dear to your heart; he may lead you into paths where the shadows lie deep, and thorns spring up on every side. He will lead you on to duties that may oftentimes seem too hard for you to do; but this one thing I assure you in Jesus' name: he will never call you to a duty or a sacrifice but that will prove a blessing to your soul and enrich you in his grace. You must follow on. To get the sweetness out of your life, he may sometimes bruise you. There are flowers that emit but little fragrance until they are bruised. Many trials, no doubt, are awaiting you; but do not live them until you get to them, then his grace will be sufficient for you. In closing, I beseech you from the fulness of my heart to follow Jesus all the way. Let nothing turn you back. Never mind the storms and cruel winds. What if the thorns prick your feet? they pierced his brow. What if the duties do seem hard and the way seems weary? Follow

on, linger in his presence, breathe in of his fulness, live in humble submission, never murmur but in every sorrow draw the closer to him, never falter, labor on, and you will find joys in every sorrow, blessings in every sacrifice, and delights in every duty. He will perfume your life with the odor of heaven and make you a blessing on earth to man. He will make your life a well of water where many a weary traveler may drink and thirst no more; he will make it a tree of life where they may eat and hunger no more. And when life is done he will bring you with all your golden sheaves through the gates of glory into the haven of eternal rest, where I hope to meet you. With this, I will say farewell. [Illustration]

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net