

A man in a light-colored shirt and dark pants is walking away from the viewer on a stone path through a forest. The path leads towards a bright, glowing light source, possibly the sun, which creates a strong lens flare and illuminates the scene. The trees are lush and green, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and hopeful.

Steps Heavenward

R. L. Berry

*Instruction and
Encouragement for the
Young Christian*

STEPS HEAVENWARD



By
R. L. Berry

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Contents

Chapter	Page
The New Experience.....	1
What To Do First.....	4
You Will Be Tempted.....	9
Temptations May Be Avoided.....	16
Unavoidable Temptations May Be Overcome	19
Have Faith in God.....	27
What To Do With Doubts.....	34
The Family of Feelings.....	41
One Is Known by the Company He Keeps.....	48
You Must Be Baptized	54
Our Daily Bread.....	60
The Source of Power	68
Work Out Your Own Salvation	74
Stumblings	81
Failures	86
Let the Spirit of God Lead You	90
Grieving the Spirit	96
Conformity to Jesus	100
Conformity to the World	104
Claim Your Inheritance	107

Chapter I

The New Experience

Young convert, through the medium of the printed page we are to have a heart-to-heart talk about the very things that you will most likely desire to know. You have only recently been converted and have started out on the highway that Jesus lifted up for pilgrims to glory to walk upon. You have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation. The burden of sin is gone, and you are free. There is peace in your soul, joy in your heart, and you are tasting that which Paul wrote of when he said, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

Conversion is a wonderful experience; it is a new birth, and that means a new creature. New creatures have a new life, and the new life that you have came from God, and if it is fed and cared for it will grow.

When I say that conversion is a wonderful experience, do not misunderstand me. It is wonderful, really, the change from sin to grace; and yet to you it may have seemed very common, ordinary, and as if there were not much to it. It does not matter. Some people have what are called “powerful” conversions, which usually means that the demonstrations of joy are great, while others are classed as

STEPS HEAVENWARD

“quiet,” and some even as “stillborn.” Pay no attention to what others may say as to which class you belong, for these manifestations follow the natural dispositions of people. An enthusiastic person will be converted enthusiastically, a quiet person quietly, and a very quiet person very quietly. Some shed tears of joy, some shout aloud, some sing, some laugh, and some simply believe on Jesus. Inner emotions and outward demonstrations may vary with each individual conversion; the essential things are repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Tears of observation have proved that one kind of conversion holds out just as well as another.

Cowper, the poet, says of his conversion: “The happy period which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a dear opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and, seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the third of Romans: ‘Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.’ Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the sun of righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon sealed in his blood, and all the fullness and completeness of his justification. In a moment I believed and received the gospel.” Charles Wesley, just before he was converted, threw himself on his bed with groanings and earnest prayer. A poor woman heard him groaning and praying and she ventured to put her head into his door and say, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities.” Wesley cried, “Oh, that Christ would but thus speak to me!” Then he uttered the cry, “I believe! I believe!” and was saved by believing.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, tells of Christian's starting along the highway to the Celestial City. After a while he came to the Interpreter's House, a place where Christian was given instructions and warnings that would be of value to him along the way. This book is a sort of Interpreter's House. We want to stand upon an eminence, as it were, and point out the dangers and pitfalls along the Christian's way. Out of the experiences of those who have been a long time on the way we shall glean things that will encourage and bless the young convert. The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. The hedgehog beat the hare.

“So trudge along though none may know
Your worth or give you glory:
To start out brisk doesn't win the race;
The end will tell the story.” —Austin

Chapter II

What To Do First

Do not expect to do something great the first thing. Act naturally. A young man was converted on the road home one night. He had very little acquaintance with the Bible and was not used to religious or theological modes of thought or of statement, but he had heard a kind of religious expression spoken on occasions, viz., “God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven my sins.” So when he entered the house that night and his old father asked, “What has happened to you?” the boy replied, “God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven my sins.” Such a reply was so unexpected that the old father found no words that he thought would meet the situation, so he said nothing further then. But the thing was so overwhelming that later in the night he put his head into the door of the boy’s room and asked, “How are you getting along?” “All right,” replied the boy; “How are you getting along?” The old father replied, “Well, Otis, stick to it; do not do as I have done.” These awkward, though natural utterances of young converts are much more refreshing to hear than the stale, oft-repeated expressions that one hears.

An old drunkard was converted one time, and when he reached home he declared that from then on there would be family worship in his house. But he did not know anything about prayer, so he knelt down, waved his hat over his head, and said, “Hurrah

STEPS HEAVENWARD

for Jesus!” An old woman who had lived all her long life in sin was converted, and her first words were, “I feel just as though I were somebody else.” She was renewed, made new.

Generally speaking, some expression of or testimony to one’s faith in Christ is given at the time of or soon after conversion. This should be done, because it is like signing up as a soldier in the army, or signing a business contract. This testimony puts you publicly on God’s side, confirms your faith, and strengthens your decision. Once publicly enlisted in God’s army, you will find it easier to resist temptations to back out.

It is best to let your family know of your conversion soon. There may be circumstances under which it would be best not to tell the immediate family of your new experience, but to let them find it out. No definite or arbitrary rule can be laid down accepting this: There is no such thing as a secret Christian, and any attempt to conceal the experience will result in disaster. Better is it to be bold and suffer than silent and secretive and be taken for a sinner.

A great variety of thoughts and feelings surge through the minds of converts on the day of their conversion. To some the joy of conversion is so great that practically all other thoughts and emotions are held in check. Others look forward and, like Paul, ask, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Timid persons and the very young or very old may really wonder whether they should try to hold out faithful, or quit before going any farther. With some the joy of conversion may not last long, indeed it may not yet have begun. It was two weeks after the writer’s conversion before any great joy came to his heart, yet there was never a doubt as to the time or place of his conversion.

The best way to gain courage and strength just after conversion is to do as the old father exhorted his son, “Well, Otis,

STEPS HEAVENWARD

stick to it.” Do not be moved by any kind of feeling, by any want of feeling, or by any suggestion.

Say to yourself: I am a child of God; Christ has given me eternal life. That life has great power, whether I feel that it has or not; the Lord will carry me through. Say also: I am through with sin, the world, and the devil; I will never return to them; I have put my hand to the plow, never to look back; the time past of my life suffices for sin, but now it is Jesus and his way for me. Be thankful; if possible get upon your knees and thank God with all your heart for his mercy in bringing you to repentance and then forgiving your sins. If you will reflect upon what a calamity salvation has averted in your case, saving you from sin and making escape from hell possible, you will not feel as though you want to go back into sin.

Follow the example of the best and most saintly Christians you know. You are a babe in Christ, and since you do not know for yourself just how to walk and how to please God, take the best Christian you can find for your example. Perhaps the best ones you can find will have some faults or weaknesses; do not imitate their faults but their virtues.

Since you have made the start, it is important that you succeed in the Christian life. Decide, then, that you will succeed. Determine to be brave. “If there be one thing upon earth that mankind love and admire better than another, it is a brave man—a man who dares look the devil in the face and tell him he is the devil.”—James A. Garfield. Decision is half the battle. A discouraged man is half whipped already.

Decide to make use of the means of grace. Greatness never comes at once, but comes through the doing of many little things that build one up to noble character. And these means of grace are

STEPS HEAVENWARD

simple things, very simple things. Indeed, young convert, their very simplicity will cause you to overlook them unless you are very careful. Naaman was told to go dip himself seven times in the Jordan in order to be healed of the leprosy. He turned away in a rage at such a simple remedy; he expected some great and grand performance, but no, it was simply dip seven times in Jordan.

The usual means of grace to a young convert are prayer, song, testimony, teaching in the Sunday-school, reading of the Bible, and listening to sermons. It is as natural for young Christians to want to pray as it is for infants to cry. This does not mean that it will be as easy for you to pray in public as it is for a baby to cry. We mean secret, or home praying. Every morning should find you on your knees in prayer, and so should every night. Take God's grand old Book, the Bible, and read from it every day. Attend regularly every service of the local church. Be cheerful and sing a song every day. Visit the sick of your neighborhood, and speak to sinners about turning to God. The devil always finds a job for idle hands to do, hence from the very beginning you must make yourself useful in the kind of Christian service a young convert can do.

Determine never to be a parasite, one who gets, but never gives; one who lives to enjoy all of God's good favors, but never does one act to bring those favors to others; one who sits down, while the others work to make the church a power and the services a blessing. Did you ever notice how bored you felt at public workings, quilting bees, and similar gatherings, when some members of the company habitually slighted their work, pretending to be very busy but really doing little? You know that by and by such persons come to be known, and secretly if not openly are regarded as a sort of nuisance. There are so-called Christians of

STEPS HEAVENWARD

that kind; but, young convert, make up your mind before you finish reading this chapter that that is not the kind you are going to be.

Just as soon as possible, go to the pastor of the local church of God in your neighborhood and offer yourself for service. It will do him much good and you also. Too few, entirely too few, young converts offer themselves in any definite way to Christian work. You may feel that you have no qualifications to do religious work. Perhaps you have not, and this fact may hold you back as it has thousands of others. But here is the danger; so many never do offer their services and never qualify for any Christian work. He who offers himself will most likely qualify.

The little beginnings of your Christian life will point out pretty certainly what kind of a Christian you will be in the future. Great is the force of habit. The child is said to be father to the man, so is a young convert to the Christian to be. It is important to observe the simple duties of the Christian life, and thus form correct habits of Christian living. Most of us are just bundles of habits. We do things a certain way and at certain times because we are used to it. The young convert who fails to pray regularly, to read the Bible daily, to go to public church services regularly, who never testifies for Christ, nor works for Him, will soon be on the background and is near to falling. He is leaving undone the very things that would build him up in God.

Therefore, on this birthday of your soul, summon up all the courage you can command, and solemnly vow that from this day till the day of your death you will be on God's side.

Chapter III

You Will Be Tempted

You may be surprised at the heading of this chapter, You Will Be Tempted, but it is literally true that you will be: perhaps you have already been tempted. It is a great mistake to suppose that to become a Christian means that one's temptations will cease and that from now on through life there is to be nothing but joy and happiness and good feelings and sweet experiences. There will be some of the other kind of things, the very opposite of these. The new life that God gives the new born saint, or child of his, is not something that makes us proof against temptations coming to us, but it is given to make us proof against our yielding to the temptations that come.

There are several reasons why we shall be tempted, and several reasons why it is a good thing for us to be tempted.

You will be tempted because you are a human being. You have the same human desires and human passions that all other human beings have. The greatest prophets, like the mighty Elijah, and even our Lord himself, were men of like passions as we are (and yet Elijah prayed and the earth gave no fruit for three years and six months). You will be tempted to evil just as Jesus was tempted to evil. You may, and probably will, be tempted to lie, to

STEPS HEAVENWARD

steal, to take advantage of someone in business matters, to swear, to be proud or act proudly, to yield to sensual solicitations, to strife and fighting, to angry words, and many such things.

You will be tempted because you still are free to make choices. Your service to God is to be a free service, a voluntary service, given to him in preference to service to Satan. Being bought with the priceless blood of Jesus, you yield to God, soul and body, and all, for love's sake. There is to be no constraint to bring about this yielding, no coercion, no; you are to offer it to the Most Holy God because you want to, because you will to, and every day that same desire and same will hold you true in your love to Jesus Christ. This gives your service moral value. It is this free service that makes your choice most pleasing to God and that makes your resistance to temptation partake of the nature of a divine operation; it makes you like God, for since he hates evil and you love him, so you resist evil out of love to God. This makes you all the more like God. If you were not tempted, you would never know whether you loved God better than sin or not.

You will be tempted because there is a devil, a malignant spirit abroad who seeks above all the destruction of good and of souls. This evil spirit designs to overthrow you, to get you into trouble, but never to help you out; to get you into sin, and then laugh at you for getting in. He will make out that he is your friend and will approach you as if he were trying to confer a blessing on you: but he is, in truth, the greatest enemy man has and plots only your destruction. When he tempts, he does not sound a trumpet before him, saying, "Here I come, the Devil, to make you sin and fall." No, he comes like a thief, like a deceiver, to tempt you little by little till you will yield some, and then the rest for him is easy. Remember, dear young Christian, that there is a devil, a foe whom

STEPS HEAVENWARD

you must fight if you would win the crown of everlasting life. Be on your guard. Be watchful. Be careful. You can win, but only by fighting.

Why, you may ask, is it a good thing to be tempted? Because it tests us, and shows to us and to others the stuff we are made of. All tools, all machinery, all first-class goods of nearly every kind, are tested for purity, strength, running-capacity, etc. And it is a truth that every man must be tested to see what there is in him, so you will be tempted to see how weak or how strong you are, whether your love to God is genuine, whether your yielding to God is freely of your own choosing.

You will be tempted to establish and confirm in you moral character. If you could not do both good and evil there would not be any moral value in anything you did. Hence, as you refuse the evil and choose the good you develop moral character, and character is what God looks at. Resisting temptation develops courage, develops faith, develops grit, develops power. In fact there is no other way in the world to develop character except by way of resisted temptation.

Therefore do not be alarmed when temptation comes. It is a good sign that you are on God's side when temptations come upon you. Satan would not be bothering you if you were still in his control, but because you are out on God's side he throws stones at you, to get you to be discouraged and go back to his side again. But you know what that means, and will not be discouraged.

Forms of Early Temptations

Every stage of the Christian life has its own peculiar temptations.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

1. You will be tempted, perhaps, to doubt the reality of your new-found experience. While you were repenting, and praying for forgiveness, there was a most lively sense of the reality and enormity of sin, and in a very real manner did you seek the Lord for his pardoning love. When you believed you realized the delightful sense of forgiveness. It was a very real and delightful experience, one that seemed to you then to be unforgettable forever, so vivid and plain was it. But now, as you look back, or think of it, there seems to be a vagueness, an unreality about it. The feelings that agitated and surged through you so powerfully then have subsided now and have almost, if not entirely, passed away. Was it real? Is a question pressed upon your mind now and again. If it was real, why do I feel as I do now? comes to your mind. Did I repent, or was I simply under a false impression?

If this is the way you feel and if these are the thoughts that trouble you, all you have to do to overcome them is simply to state to yourself in a very definite manner that you are the Lord's now, having given yourself to him irrevocably, and that therefore it is his business to tend to how you feel; that you repented of sin and are done with it forever; that, Whether I feel it or not, the Lord did forgive all my sins, and since I am not going back to them, I am saved; I am a child of God.

2. You may be tempted to be ashamed. You will be told by some evil spirit hovering around that you made a fool of yourself at the altar, that you prayed loud, or otherwise did things that looked unseemly to your worldly friends. The question may come, What will my friends think of my step? If this temptation comes to you, say to yourself, It is impossible to be

“Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend

“On whom my hopes of heaven depend.”

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Your worldly friends may be ashamed of you, but you have nothing to be ashamed of; it is rather they that should be ashamed of themselves for rejecting Jesus and his salvation. You must expect worldly people to think strange of you, for to them it is unexplainable how anyone can give himself to God, and they may even slight or ridicule you, some of them, while others of them will secretly or openly wish you well. But your success in the Christian life does not depend on your worldly friends, it depends on you. They can not hinder you if you determine to go right on in the service of Jesus Christ.

3. It is probable that you will be tempted to hide your light under a bushel, or to keep your experience all to yourself. There is a story of a young man who was converted and was going away to work in the lumber-camps. He was sent away with the exhortations of his brothers to be true and faithful to the Lord. He said he would. After a while he returned, and someone asked him how he got along with the wicked woodsmen. "All right," he replied; "I never let them know anything about it."

The very best way to start out for the Lord is to start out boldly, by letting everybody know, as opportunity affords, that you are a Christian. It not necessary to go around telling all you meet of your change of life, but on every occasion when one must show his colors, be sure to show yours. Let it be known that you are a Christian and it will be a great protection and a help to you, as well as a blessing to others.

4. Another temptation probable to the new-born Christian is the idea that he cannot live the Christian life through to the end. The tempter may show that there are obstacles in the way of the Christian and may seek to discourage him with the way. He may bring to your mind this or that, and question you, "Could you stand

STEPS HEAVENWARD

for this to be done to you?” bringing some terrible insult to mind, or “Could you bear that?” bringing up some terrible temptation or tragedy at the same time.

This is an old ruse of an old foe. He has been tormenting young Christians for centuries with that same temptation. He knows that no temptation can overtake you only such as is common to man, and only such as you will be able to overcome, for such is God’s promises on that line, so he brings up impossible, or at least improbable, things just to get you to doubt. That is all he wants—to get you to waver, stop, and give up, before you have gone far enough into the Christian life to find out just how it is.

Then it is probable that the enemy of your soul will try to discourage you by pointing out others who started and failed. You will be told by the evil one that you will likewise fail; that if they could not hold out, neither can you. But you know better than this. Because two automobiles started to town and both ran into the ditch is no sign that you cannot run your car to town. That others failed in the Christian life only proves that they were not decided, and that is all. When Satan tempts this way, simply say to yourself and to God, I am a child of God; He will carry me through, I will trust Him only.

5. Another temptation likely to trouble you is the temptation to trust in feelings instead of in Christ. As long as one feels the glow of his new love he has no trouble in believing that he is saved, but when his feelings subside or go the other way and he feels bad, then he has trouble. In such temptations it is wise to consider wherein our part in salvation rests. If it rests in one’s feelings, then one would be saved according to his feelings; but if it rests in the will, then all one needs to do is to look to his decision. If you still give to God your life and desire to serve him,

STEPS HEAVENWARD

then pay no attention to your feelings, but believe firmly in Jesus as your Savior. Say to your soul, I am a child of God, because I repented and because I believed, and I still believe. God has promised to save you, so just let him attend to that part of it. You do the trusting, and God will do the keeping.

6. Besides these forms of temptation there will be the ordinary temptations to do wrong, as to lie, to steal, to swear, to cheat, to lust, to follow the world, to seek worldly amusement, etc. Every temptation must be met with an immediate and strong denial. It is no sin to be tempted, the sin is in the yielding. The battle will be fought in your mind first, and if there is consent in the mind or heart sin has been committed; but so long as the consent of the mind has not been given, no sin has been committed. Sometimes in strong temptations one feels as though he had sinned; but if consent has not been given, one should continue to resist, and if momentary consent is given the soul should rally to its faith in Jesus and compel another decision not to yield.

Chapter IV

Temptations May Be Avoided

A certain man one time wanted to hire a coachman. Three men applied for the situation. The man took the applicants down to a particularly bad and dangerous place in the road over which the coach would have to be drawn, a place where there was a steep precipice on one side of the road, and asked them, "How near this precipice can you drive this coach without going over?" One said he could drive as near as a foot to it without danger; another said he could do better than that, he could drive as near as six inches to the precipice without danger. The last man was asked what he could do. "Well, sir," he said, "I will stay as far away from that precipice as I can get." "You are the one I want for a coachman," said the man.

A little boy was recovering from a serious sickness that made it unsafe for him to eat what the rest of the family were eating. One day his little sister came in eating cake. The boy's appetite was coming back; the cake looked inviting. "Jennie," he said, "you must run right out of the room away from me with that cake, and I will keep my eyes shut while you go, so I sha'n't want it."

As there is more or less danger in every temptation, it is a part of the young convert's duty to avoid them as much as possible.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

There will be enough of unavoidable temptations to meet to test us without our inviting some extra ones to come our way. And the temptations that we can avoid and do not are peculiarly perilous to us; they have a power over us the others do not, and there is great danger of falling. Bunyan tells in his *Pilgrim's Progress* of a man in an iron cage, who said, "I have tempted the devil, and he is come to me," and there he was caged up to his sin.

Avoid temptation, young Christian, as you would avoid a deadly serpent. Avoid associations that will lead you away from Christ. Avoid the frivolous, giddy company that seeks only a laugh and fun, for to mingle with such is a detriment to the soul. Avoid the worldly, irreligious person, whose whole attention is on the present evil world, who scoffs at religion and makes fun of Christians, or if not that bad, is living for himself and not for God. Avoid lovers of pleasures; for they will lead you into questionable amusements and doubtful associations. Avoid the wicked, sensual man or woman. Avoid places of worldly amusement, stay away from the movies, the dance halls, the theaters, the card-parties.

It is not meant by this that there are no enjoyments for young Christians; there are plenty of them, innocent enjoyments, innocent plays and games, games that inform, that strengthen the eye and the arm and paint the cheek with a color which no artificial coloring can excel; and there are associations that will give wholesome pleasure. To be a Christian means to give up the evil; but the Christian can keep all the good things that he has.

Neither is it meant that the young convert cannot associate with those who are not Christians. The young Christian should be friendly toward everybody. What the young convert should avoid are those associations and that company and those things that will be sinful or are of doubtful and unwholesome character. Many of

STEPS HEAVENWARD

your friends will still want to be your friends, and this friendship should be used to bring them to Christ. You can explain in a kindly way why you prefer not to go to places that you feel Christ would not have you go, then, rather than turn from Jesus turn from your friends. You can explain in a kindly way why you prefer not to go with them, and thank them for their intended kindness in asking you to go. By such means one can generally avoid temptation and still retain the friendship and confidence of unsaved relatives and acquaintances.

Sit down quietly, young Christian, and review the momentous step you have taken in accepting Jesus. What did you do that for? Are not the most tremendous possibilities bound up in that acceptance? You have started out for heaven. Consider, then, the things that will help you gain your goal and the things that will hinder you. Work for your own interests. Do those things that will make your success more probable. Avoid those things that will make your success less probable. In the Christian life this means that you are to do all the things you know of that will make heaven the surer, and avoid all those things that will make it less sure.

Chapter V

Unavoidable Temptations May Be Overcome

Since you are going to be tempted, it is of the greatest importance to you to know how to overcome temptations.

There is one lesson to learn that is of supreme importance in overcoming temptation, and that is to learn that Christ is all and that without him you cannot do anything. “Without me ye can do nothing,” is the way Jesus puts this wonderful truth. Reflect on your utter weakness to cope with so wise and powerful an adversary as the devil, and at the very outset of your Christian life learn to depend on Christ to make you able to overcome. In a conflict like the fight of faith, the Christian conflict, it is of supreme consequence that you should be in a stronghold or fortress that cannot be taken. You are in such a fortress; “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Prov. 18:10). This fortress, this stronghold, that cannot be taken, is Jesus. You are in him. As long as you stay within the stronghold you will be safe. All the wiles and arts he can command, Satan will use to get you outside the stronghold, so as to be able to fight you on the open plain by yourself, and if the devil succeeds, you will almost certainly be wounded, probably killed, spiritually. Settle it

STEPS HEAVENWARD

therefore in your heart that you are never going to desert Christ; but in every temptation nestle closer into his arms of protection, and trust him the more fully to fight for you and preserve you.

Learn to fight temptations by faith, is the second lesson to learn. Chiefly, this faith is to be in Jesus Christ. It is he who has overcome the devil and the world, it is he who has won the victory, and from him alone can we receive power and dominion over the enemy. You are to believe in a most literal way that Christ is able fully to keep you from sin. There must not be the least doubt allowed in your heart but that he will carry you through. If such doubts come along, you must resist them as temptations; for they are temptations of the most deadly kind. It is not sinful to have momentary doubts; almost every Christian has momentary doubts, but these are not harmful if cast out at once. But to allow doubts to stay till we doubt the power and grace of God to help and keep us is virtually like going outside the fortress to battle the foe alone in our own strength. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). When a temptation assails you, take it to the Lord; gather in your thoughts and set them on seeking a way out of that temptation, or of overcoming it, and if you will trust God, you will overcome it.

But you must also have faith in yourself. Not presumptuous self-confidence, or selfish pride in your own powers and abilities, but faith in your good motives, in your acceptance of Jesus, in your ability through Christ to win over every temptation. A Christian is a soldier, and soldiers must fight, and victory over temptation is the result, of intelligent fighting on the part of the Christian coupled with faith in the Lord. The victory is won by cooperation; you do your part manfully trusting God to do his part and, lo, the battle is won almost before you know it. Have enough faith in

STEPS HEAVENWARD

yourself to know that you are decidedly on God's side and expect, by God's grace, to win the goal in the end.

One other thing you must learn, also, and that is to resist. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," says James (Jas. 4:7). Do not expect the devil to go away from you by asking him to. He is not a gentleman and cannot be treated as one. He is to be resisted, strongly, faithfully, heroically, steadfastly, and unceremoniously. Give him no place at all; dismiss forthwith whatever he brings, deal with him as you would with a venomous serpent or a mad dog, commanding him in the name of Jesus to depart. Begin at once, at the start of your Christian life, to pattern after Jesus. See how he resisted the devil when he was in the wilderness and on the mount of temptation. He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," "Get thee hence, Satan," and the devil left him, not to stay, indeed, but to come back. But what did Jesus care if Satan did come back when he knew he could resist him and he would flee again!

Moreover, dear young Christian, learn to resist small, foxy temptations just as you do the big ones. One time a brother related how he had been delivered from the tobacco habit. After his deliverance he was in a place and smelled a cigar that was being smoked by another person, and he inwardly remarked on its fragrance. Again he was where there was one, and he was surprised to feel surging in him all the old desire for tobacco; then he thought of the time when the tobacco smelled so good and he did not resist the idea.

Had he resisted the first deceiving temptation, he would not have suffered the great temptation he next had. He fell under a strong temptation, but did not yield, and so did not sin. A

STEPS HEAVENWARD

temptation is a temptation, and the size has nothing to do with it. Any question that has a moral value or issue can be decided only in one way, if condemnation is to be avoided. Like the old saying, “If you take care of the dimes, the dollars will take care of themselves”; so if you take good care not to yield to the little temptations, the bigger ones will not be hard to deal with.

Still another thing on this line is that a fall is rarely occasioned by one great temptation. There is most generally a yielding, of small points, a neglecting of little so-called “no harms,” that blunts the edge of one’s resistance to sin. This may continue for some time, and then some larger temptation comes against which the soul cannot or does not prevail. Solomon tells of the “little foxes” that “spoil the vines,” and that is a good illustration of the little sins that ruin the soul. Hence in the early days and weeks of your new experience there is nothing of more importance than that you learn to resist temptation with all your soul, and never stop till that temptation is gone and has lost all its power over you.

Your Weakness Is Your Strength

It may occur to you that since you are so weak, having just started in the Christian way, you cannot be expected to overcome evil; that being just a babe, you have no strength to combat evil; that you can be expected to stumble and fall. Do not think so. There is a divine secret here that is wonderful to contemplate. It is this: Our weakness is our chief defense. That may sound strange and beyond belief. Here is the Scripture for it “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). The simple meaning of this is that the weaker we are the more the Lord will protect us; and, as is usually the case, the more you feel your weakness the more you will trust the Shepherd

STEPS HEAVENWARD

to keep you. That is it. Another text says: “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength” (Isa. 40:29). As long as you feel weak in yourself and therefore in need of great help from the Lord, your weakness will be a source of strength to you. If ever you should get to where you feel strong and as though you do not need much help from the Lord, then you will be near to falling; for, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Let yourself also consider that just as mothers and fathers take the more tender care of little new-born babes and shield them from everything that would harm them, so the Lord the more tenderly cares for the lambs of his fold and is at special solicitude for their interest. Be encouraged, then, that your heavenly Father knows every temptation that assails you, and will see that you are preserved against them.

We spoke a while ago about your being in Christ, a stronghold, a place of safety. We desire now to encourage you with the thought that you will have power to overcome temptations because Christ is in you. Hear this from the beloved John: “Ye are of God, little children, and overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Here again, as in the former illustration, Christ is all. But this thought is full of comfort to the new beginner that Christ is within; and as long as Christ is within, no power can make us fall. And Paul makes the assertion that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, nothing, no temptation, no persecution, no power or creature. It all depends on ourselves. We can separate ourselves from Christ, but no outside power can separate us from him.

Sometimes people have said, after they faltered or failed and went down into sin after conversion, that the temptation was so great they could not resist it. Did you ever hear such an excuse? It

STEPS HEAVENWARD

is often made, and it may have an influence on you young Christian unless you fortify your mind and will against it. Wrong ideas produce some very bad results sometimes. A boy had an idea that he could kindle a fire with gasoline. He kindled a fire all right but not just the way he expected. There is a very definite Scripture promise on this very point. Read it over, please, two or three times, right now while it is here before your eyes. Contemplate all that there is in such a promise. Meditate on its full meaning and compare it with the excuses that have been made that the temptation was too strong. Here it is: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

Notice the full meaning of this promise. “God is faithful,” it begins. This faithfulness of God’s runs back through all past history, through all the history of the children of Israel, through all God’s wonderful plan of redemption. It concerns his sending Jesus to be the Savior from sin. It concerns his making a way of escape from sin. It concerns our eternal welfare; for if God could not have or had not made a plan, a way, that would protect us from the assaults of Satan and whereby we could know for sure that no temptation would be too hard for us, then we should all the time be in a worry as to how it would end with us. But the faithful God saw to it that no such weakness was in his plan, he saw to it that the devil was to have no more chance of damning us in his hell or of getting us back into sin.

“Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able,” is the second part of it. This is specific. There is no misunderstanding the meaning. We, you young Christian, cannot be tempted above what we are able to overcome. We have God’s

STEPS HEAVENWARD

word for it. Do you think he will not make it good? Over against all the failures of all Christians who started and fell, is this word of God. Their excuses will not stand with God. He said specifically that the very temptation that they fell over was not too hard for them. We must believe that they did not avail themselves of the grace that God had ready for them. It is so with your temptations; they cannot be too hard, nor too long, nor too desperate, nor too severe, nor too anything, for you. When a temptation comes, all you have to do is to remind the Lord of this promise that he made and tell him that you expect him to make you able to bear it.

“But will with the temptation make a way to escape,” that is the third part of it. Who will make a way of escape? God. Here is his recorded word. He is to make it good. There is a way of escape, then, a way out, a way of victory over temptation. God says there will be one. Dear young Christian, this is a most wonderful promise to you. When you are tempted, whether sorely or ordinarily, look for a way of escape, look to God to show you just the way out without being swamped or overcome by the temptation. Oh, that every soul had believed God! There need be no going back into sin; for there is a way to escape from it. Hence there is no excuse for sinning, no answer that will allow one to sin and not be under full responsibility for it; for this promise is comprehensive to cover every temptation of every kind, and God says that he is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation, right along with it, make a way of escape so that we shall be able to bear it.

Take courage, dear young convert; you can stand. You are in a wonderful fortress, a stronghold of unconquerable power. You have in you, Christ, who is greater than the devil and the world,

STEPS HEAVENWARD

and you have the promise of the faithful God to keep you, so why fear? Lift up your head and your heart and go forward for Jesus.

Chapter VI

Have Faith in God

Since you have started in the service of God, young convert, it is of the utmost importance that you begin with a real, strong faith in God. The whole plan of salvation is based on faith, because God is unseen, because Christ is not seen, and because the Holy Spirit, who is to be our leader and our guide, cannot be seen. We have God's Word, which is truth, and we have the testimonies of the brethren that the Bible is true; but the power that renews and converts us is a thing that cannot be seen. The results of that power can be seen, but the power itself cannot. Jesus said, speaking of the new birth: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). There is nothing at all strange about this, however, because there are many powers that we know exist and yet we do not know very much about them and never have seen them. We know there is a power called electricity, but no one ever saw electricity. We know the growing plant has power to push up through the soil, and yet no one ever saw that power. Did you ever see an explosion? What did you see? You saw the dirt and rocks flying, but did you see anything making them fly? No, the power, the force that made the

STEPS HEAVENWARD

dirt and rocks fly, could not be seen; the effects of that power could be seen, but the power itself was invisible.

So it is with God and the power of God. God is, Christ is, the Holy Spirit is, they exist, and reign in heaven and over all the earth; but we cannot see them. Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, but we cannot see his power. We may see someone in prayer to God for forgiveness. By and by we see him sit up and a glow of love and light and grace shine out in his face and we see that a wonderful change has come over him, and yet we saw no power coming down on him. We see wicked men changed into good men, see sinners made into saints, and we know that a great power has made that change—and yet it all was invisible to our eye. It exists, although unseen.

The idea many people have of faith is a wrong one. They seem to think it is some sort of a thing, something like feeling of soul, some religious exercise, or some gracious, inward disposition toward God, a something that you, once you have it, can look at and rejoice over and use as a sort of coin to the storehouse of God. Well, it is not like that at all. It is not something you can handle, it is not something tangible, it is not a feeling nor a disposition. It is simply believing God.

If you asked, “How may I know I have faith in God?” I would reply, In just the same way as you know you have sight. How do you know you have sight? Do you shut your eyes and study whether you have sight or not? No, you see things, and the seeing is proof enough to you that you have sight. If you believe anything you have faith; for just as sight is only seeing, so faith is only believing. The essential thing about seeing is that you see a thing as it is; and the only essential thing about belief is to believe the thing as it is. The virtue does not lie in your believing, but in the

STEPS HEAVENWARD

thing that you believe. If you believe the truth, you are saved; if you believe a lie, you will be damned. The act of believing in both cases is exactly the same, but the things that are believed are exactly opposite, and it is this which makes the difference in the results. You were saved by faith; not that you will be kept by faith, not that faith itself will keep you, but faith will link you to Christ, who will do the keeping.

Good people all down the ages have tried to put forth a definition of faith. Here is Paul's: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Mrs. Phoebe Palmer's is, "Faith is taking God at his word, relying unwaveringly upon his truth." John Wesley asked a godly woman to give a definition of faith, and she said, "It is taking God at his word"; and a little girl is said to have put it, "It is taking God at his word and asking no questions about it." All these mean the same thing and show that faith is not some feeling but a strong confidence, a strong conviction that what God said he means, and is relied on and implicitly believed without a doubt. Faith in God is believing God's Word; it is believing that God either has done something for us, or will do something for us, and then taking our hands off, ceasing to worry, and just trusting him to keep his promises. And as long as you believe that God has done something for you or will do something for you, according to his Word, you may know that you do have faith in God. The thing to do is to keep on believing that God has saved you, that he has made you a new creature, and that he will keep you every day from sin and evil.

It will be well, early in your Christian life, to make a clear distinction between faith and feeling. If you are not careful you will make a great deal more ado over your feelings than over your faith, and you will be more anxious about the way you feel than

STEPS HEAVENWARD

about your faith. Faith and feeling are two entirely distinct things, though they are of very close kin. One is the fruit of the other. Faith is not feeling, but faith produces feeling. The Christian religion is a feeling religion, that is, it is felt and has a great deal to do with one's emotions; yet the foundation of it is not feeling, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When one does believe, he feels, sooner or later (the time does not matter), the good effects of what the Lord did for him. It is useless to try to feel better when the means to a better feeling are neglected. Faith brings, sooner or later, and most certainly, the feeling that all is well with you and God. But even after you do thus feel, do not place dependence in the feelings you have, but continue to walk by faith. Keep your faith strong.

Never, young convert, allow yourself to make the lame excuse made by some lame Christians, that you cannot be expected to do very much for the Lord nor to live very devoted because you have no faith, or because your faith is very weak. There is no need for one's faith being weak, if we will look at this question rightly. And really you cannot afford to be weak in faith, and there is no good reason for such a state. Banish from your mind such weakening thoughts as you cannot be strong in faith; declare you will believe. Put your will to working for your best interests; say to yourself, "I can believe. Lord, I will believe, I do believe," and continue to say this till you are really believing. Insist on believing God and his Word, even though every feeling tries to cause you to doubt him.

The blessed experience that you have just received from God is to be kept by faith. It is not an experience that you will forever afterward have despire of everything, but it is to be kept up moment by moment by faith. The Christian experience is not a thing to be picked up at a certain place and forever after possessed,

STEPS HEAVENWARD

but it is a life to be lived. And the only way it can be lived is by faith. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,” says Paul to the Ephesians (Eph. 3:17). “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col. 2:6). How did Christ come into your heart? He came in when you believed. How shall he dwell in your heart? By faith. In other words. (Please give close attention here.) In other words, as long as you turn from sin and believe in your heart that Christ saves you, you are saved. That is, if you hold the same attitude toward sin as you did at the time you repented, and abhor it and forsake it and will have no more to do with it nor with the devil, and if you hold the same attitude toward Jesus as you did at that time and desire that he be your Savior, then you can let your faith go out full and strong in God that you are a child of God and that all is well with your soul.

You should learn at the commencement of your experience just the use to make of your will in believing. Your will is you, the real man of you, the real personal soul, the “I”; by it you rule over things, make decisions, and compel obedience of your body and all your faculties. If you decide to go to town today, you go, whether your head aches or what happens; that is, your body may murmur at your going to town at this particular time, but if you decide to go, you go, and when you arrive there, it is just as real as if you had felt disposed to go in the first place.

Many Christians have sat down and weakly let doubts ruin their peace of mind and cause them untold trouble and anguish, whereas if they had used their will-power they could have believed and become strong in the Lord.

As an illustration of the right use of the will in believing, take the one just mentioned—going to town when one does not feel disposed to go. Learn to believe, young Christian, when you do not

STEPS HEAVENWARD

feel disposed to believe. This may sound strange to you—to ask you to believe under such conditions. But that is just exactly what you will be obliged to learn to do, if you would have peace and joy along the way to heaven. “But will such believing be real?” you may ask. “Will such believing be right?” you may even ask. It is a fact that many have been kept from gaining a victory by faith because they thought that it would be wrong to try to believe when their feelings were all against it. To obtain a little light on this point, let us take another illustration. You know that the Bible tells us to “search the Scriptures.” You know this is a command of God’s. But you are tired and do not feel inclined to read the Bible. What then? Neglect it simply because you do not feel disposed to read it? No, that is not the way one should do. Get the Bible and read it, meditate, and search; and, behold, soon you will begin to enjoy something that, according to your feelings, you thought you would not or could not enjoy at all when you began. It is so with believing. When you feel as though you can no longer believe, on account of trials, or bad feelings, or temptations, then resolve in your heart you will believe anyway. You may rest assured that such faith in God when your feelings rebel will be most pleasing to the Lord, who knows that anyone can believe when all seems fair and well, but that it takes courage and decision to believe when all is dark and discouraging.

Remember, God can not lie. If he has gone to the trouble of sending Jesus to save the world, and to the trouble of sending out ministers to preach the gospel, and to the trouble of convicting you of sin and begging you to come to him, and if he has forgiven your sins, rest assured that he is intensely interested in your continuing in the holy way. When an honest man says he will do a thing, he does it; following the saying is the doing. So it is with God: when God would do anything, he first says it through his Word, and

STEPS HEAVENWARD

when a man comes to believe that Word, God always does for him what he says he will. God has said that he will keep that which we commit to him, and Peter tells us that we are to commit the keeping of our souls to him as unto a faithful Creator, (1 Pet. 4:19). God will always keep you if you trust him.

Abraham “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; . . . being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform” (Rom. 4:20, 21). The apostle Paul says of faith, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph. 6:16). At your feet will fall harmless all the fiery temptations of the devil if you hold up the precious shield of faith.

Chapter VII

What To Do With Doubts

Every Christian, whether young or old, newly converted or long on the way, knows something about doubts. In fact some know more about doubts than they do of the way of victory over them.

Bunyan, in his incomparable allegory, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, has put this matter of doubting in a most interesting and telling way in the story of Christian and Hopeful in Doubting Castle. These two pilgrims strayed away from the King's Highway a few steps, and old Giant Despair caught them and put them in the dungeon of Doubting Castle. The next day the old giant went down and beat them with a crab-tree cudgel and nearly killed them. Next he threatened them with death and told them that the best thing they could do was to kill themselves. At last Christian woke as if from a dream, and said: "What a fool am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle." Then said Hopeful, "That is good news: good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom, and try."

This is only an allegory; but many a Christian has felt the club of old Giant Despair. Many a pilgrim has sobbed and cried with

STEPS HEAVENWARD

deepest discouragement simply because he was doubting God. When Christian and Hopeful used the key called Promise, they unlocked the doors and ran, with old Giant Despair after them. But the giant had a fit just then, as he always does in fair, sunny weather, and could not follow them.

Now, it is our purpose to show the young Christian how to live in the sunshine of faith, a place where Giant Despair cannot operate, because it is so deadly to his health.

There are a variety of doubts to assail the young Christian. First, the young convert will be tempted to doubt his experience of salvation. There will likely be doubts as to whether you really repented in just the way that the Lord commanded you to, or whether your faith was entirely sufficient, or the doubts may be just a sort of indefinable something that broods over you like a cloud and does not concern any particular point of the great transaction between your soul and God, but blurs and obscures the whole.

Another serious source of doubt is the question whether your experience of forgiveness is real and genuine when compared with the experience which you hear others relate. When they tell their experience of conversion, especially that part which relates to the joy or emotional side of it, then there may steal over you a doubt that surely your experience is not genuine, for you did not feel that way. You hear others tell of how the birds sang more sweetly and the sun shone more brightly, and then you reflect that you did not notice that. In fact, you may have been like many others, as soundly converted as anybody, who did not think anything about the birds, nor the sun, nor of any such things. What have such things to do with salvation? Nothing; we are saved by faith in Christ and we may think the sun shines brighter or we may not; as

STEPS HEAVENWARD

long as our faith is anchored in Christ we are saved. Indeed it is likely that this thing just mentioned, comparing your Christian experience with others, will be, as it has been in a multitude of cases, the most fruitful occasion of doubts.

It is the grand old ruse of Satan to get you to doubt. Of all the imps of his Satanic kingdom, old Imp Doubter is the busiest. Young Christians are his especial object of attack. He well knows that they are sincere and honest and want to be sure, and so he comes as if he were a friend trying to help. He will bring to your mind the terrible consequences of being deceived, and the probability of your being lost after thinking you were all right, and he will offer the suggestion that you had better be sure, very sure, that you are right with God. This idea makes quite an impression on you, especially if your feelings from your new birth have subsided somewhat, or perhaps at this time you may not feel as though you were a Christian at all. Imp Doubter times his approaches in the most intelligent way to do you the most damage. His method is to inject some doubts into your soul as to your standing with God. It matters not to him how he does this; the essential thing with him is to get you to doubt, that is, doubt God. Of course he will not come and bellow at you, saying, "I have come to make you doubt God"; but that is what he will make you do if you allow him. He will point out to you some other Christian and tell you that your experience was not like his. He will try to get you to doubt your faith in Christ, your motive in coming to God, your honesty of intention in repenting, your ability to stand—anything and everything that concerns your relationship with God.

Now, it is of the utmost importance that you know what to do with these doubts when they come. Your happiness and peace of mind depend on it; for if they come in and abide, they will make

STEPS HEAVENWARD

you weep and mourn and bewail your state, and there will never again be peace till you do learn how to overcome them. Doubts are the most weakening, the most painful, the most pernicious things that afflict Christians in this world. They do those who engage in them more damage than all the persecutions and trials and troubles that they have in this life. Doubts are deadly. Either you must overcome them, or they will overcome you. If in the beginning of your Christian life you learn how to overcome doubts quickly, you will have learned one of the greatest lessons to be learned in the journey of life.

To overcome doubts, young convert, go back to bedrock facts. Do not allow any side issue to come in. Stick to the main subject. Satan will try to inject a doubt of your salvation by comparing your experience with that of others. Do not allow any such comparisons; for what has their experience to do with yours? Suppose that your experience was not identical with theirs, that does not weaken or destroy yours. It would be just as logical for them to doubt their experience because it does not tally with yours exactly as for you to doubt yours because it does not tally with theirs. God promised to save you, so just let him do it in his own way. He will give you an experience that will just suit your case. And we must know also that there are a great many types and kinds of people in the world, some sober, some emotional, some quiet, some noisy, some demonstrative, some imaginative, some without imagination, and it stands to reason that the experience of salvation will affect each of these in a somewhat different way, as regards the human side of it. So allow no comparisons; stick to God by faith.

If the doubts seem to involve the whole transaction between you and God, get right down to the facts in the case. Cease the agitation and come to some decision. In the first place, remember

STEPS HEAVENWARD

that good feelings are not the evidence of salvation, and the lack of them is no proof that you are not saved. Settle that point well, and for all time. Then ask yourself whether you really want to serve God. If the answer is, Yes, then you are to consider yourself still on God's side. Your feelings in the matter have nothing to do with the case at all. If you, down in your heart, desire to serve God and live holy, and if you still abhor sin and turn from it, then all you need is to know that Imp Doubter is after you and needs a good rebuking. Doubts are seeking to overcome you; but you are to overcome them—how? Just by using a little faith. Simply believe that God saves you, as he said he would, and worry no more about it. Faith is believing what God says; to doubt God means to believe what Satan says. Take your choice; but if you want peace, believe in God with all your heart.

There is another class of doubts, a class that revolve around one's own self, that seem right to be indulged in. For instance, one will say, "It is myself that I doubt. God will do his part; but I have not done mine, or I have not done my part as I should." Many think that since it is themselves they doubt, it is all right to doubt. The fact is, a great many of our doubts seem so reasonable, so just, almost as though we should not be true to facts if we did not doubt, that to believe in spite of them seems out of place, really impossible. There are honest souls who have done all that anyone could do to have peace with God, and yet they doubt and blame themselves for not enjoying that peace. They are not sure they repented. They are not sure they believed. They are not sure the Lord loves them. They are so wayward, or so sinful, or their case is so peculiar, or there is something else on the human side of it that, they think, gives them the right to doubt. They have no such right. Why so? Because such doubting is as really doubting God as is the other kind. God has promised to save you. All he asked you to do

STEPS HEAVENWARD

you have done the best you can. Then there is only one thing for you to do, and that is believe that He saves you. To doubt reflects upon the mercy and love of God.

Suppose a lamb that is lost should say, "I am so small and weak that the shepherd cannot think of me nor care for me, and he does not remember me; for he loves and cares only for the sheep and lambs that never wander away." Suppose a sick man should say, "I am sick, so therefore no one will come to see me, and pray for me, or help me get well; for the physician visits only well people." Your very need of Jesus is the greatest factor in your favor, and if you have done the best you can, count it all right and believe in Christ as your Savior.

The thing to do with doubts, then, is to give no place to them. Resist all doubts steadfastly believing in God.

Many young converts have had the experience of being specially assaulted with doubts in the early morning, just on rising from rest. A whole army of doubts seem to be in camp around you, all night, ready to pounce upon you as soon as they can gain your attention. All religious feelings seem far away. Nothing that you did when you were saved seems real now. Nothing seems true. And especially you feel that it is not possible for you to be the object of God's care and love, because you do not feel either that he loves you or that you love him. As soon as you awake they begin their din. You do not feel this and you do not feel that. And you admit you do not. "Well," says old Imp Doubter, who leads that miserable host, "you have no Christian experience anyway; if you had one you know you have lost it. See how you feel!"

What are you to do when this occurs? You should lift up the shield of faith, and hand the whole army of doubts over to the Lord. Say most emphatically that you are the Lord's, that you

STEPS HEAVENWARD

know you are his child because you did repent and do still believe in Jesus. Jesus saves you now by faith. You must declare this by faith, whether your feelings say so or not, and chase the army of doubts away, or you will have a hard day of it with them as company. They will camp with you day and night if you allow them to.

Doubting is so weak a thing to do. It seems so unmanly, we might say. It is kind of cowardly. It is the cry of the weak and despairing souls, who bestow much self-pity upon themselves.

Consider, for a moment, what consternation would ensue among your friends if you doubted them as some people doubt God! You arise in the morning and say, "I cannot eat this food, for I doubt the ones who prepared it, they may have put some poison in it." After a while you take up the newspaper and read a happening, but you throw down the paper with a sigh and say, "I doubt this paper, and how do I know that these things which it says are so?" Someone comes with a message from a friend; but you doubt the message and imagine that it may have been a forgery. If we accept the witness of men, shall we not accept the witness of God? Shall we believe the newspapers and doubt God's Word? What shall we do with doubts then? Cast them out and give no place to any of them. Be a man. Be a strong man for God. Stand your ground like a soldier. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. Believe, believe, and keep on believing that you are a child of God. By faith you will grow and become strong in the grace of God.

Chapter VIII

The Family of Feelings

A chapter on this subject, the Family of Feelings, could and would be amusing if the trouble some young converts have with them was not so dreadfully real. Many of us know by experience how really painful feelings can become. There is Mr. Feeling, his wife Mrs. Miserable Feeling, their children, Depressing Feeling, Accused Feeling, Envious Feeling, Impatient Feeling, Imitation Carnal Feeling, Oppressed Feeling, Discouraged Feeling, Hopeless Feeling, Despaired Feeling, Forsaken Feeling, Hypocritical Feeling, and maybe some others whose names I have forgotten; for I used to be very well acquainted with the whole family, but since I moved out of the Vale of Doubts up on the Mountains of Hope and Faith, I very rarely meet with any of them.

The whole trouble with feelings is caused by supposing that salvation is a matter of feelings. When this is done feelings become the standard. No greater mistake could be made by the young convert. This mistake has caused as much or more sorrow, pain, discouragement, and backsliding than any other thing that Christians have to meet.

Generally speaking, the trouble with feelings begins about the time that the first good and joyful feelings that attended our

STEPS HEAVENWARD

conversion begin to subside, or when they disappear entirely. Then doubts begin to come. Attention is called to our state of feeling, which admittedly at times is very unsatisfactory. Sometimes the whole transaction of having been converted seems so unreal that it makes one feel as though he were a hypocrite to say it was real or that there was or is anything to our experience.

We might say allegorically, that just at this stage the Feeling Family are very busy, Mrs. Miserable Feeling takes quite a hand in talking to our souls. Then the whole family come in, Depressed, Accused, Hypocritical, Hopeless, and all. If one tries to pray, these feelings keep up such a din one cannot make any progress; if a little faith does come in, the feelings seem to be determined to hold the fort. Under these terribly painful feelings some young Christians have felt as though God had utterly cast them off, that they were lost, hopelessly lost; that if God did forgive, they had doubted till they had lost it all, and despair settled down until the mental faculties were almost unable to bear the strain these agitations brought upon them. Under the power of these bad feelings all seems perfectly black, and the future is full of dark forebodings. All such souls have our profoundest sympathy, because from experience we know how dreadful the condition is.

But there is a way out, and that way is FAITH. At the very outset learn this one grand truth—that salvation is by faith, not by feelings. We are commanded to “believe” on the Lord Jesus Christ; not “feel” on him. We overcome the world by “faith”; not by feelings. Christ will stay in our hearts “by faith”; not by feelings. Thus it is all the way through the Bible, always it is “faith,” “have faith,” “believe,” “believe in God.” Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be

STEPS HEAVENWARD

established” (2 Chron. 20:20). “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Eph. 3:17). “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Faith is simply believing. You have asked God for something he has said he would give, you have met the conditions upon which the promise was made, and faith rests upon God’s Word that he has done, or is doing, or will do in his own good time, what we have asked him to do. That is faith.

The difficulty with feelings is that they are taken as indicating our real state, whereas in reality our feelings may be wholly deceptive. After a person repents and believes unto salvation, when the first joys of it subside or cease then often bad feelings take their place. These bad feelings are taken as an indication that we are really bad ourselves. We feel bad and consequently we are bad, is the logic of feelings. But really we may be as good, as near God, as holy, when our feelings of joy cease as when they were flowing full and strong. On arising in the morning one may “feel” as though he were no Christian at all, and if feelings were really indicative of the state of the heart then he should conclude he is not a Christian.

Depending on feelings leads inevitably to discouragement. Feelings go up and down despite all one can do, and he who depends on his feelings is encouraged and has faith when he is feeling good and is discouraged and has doubts when he is feeling bad. Instead of having faith in God, he has faith in his feelings. If he feels good and joyful, he has faith in his feelings, and believes he is all right; if he feels bad, he has faith in his bad feelings, and

STEPS HEAVENWARD

believes he is partly or wholly wrong. This is the sum and substance of the whole matter. We have put it plainly so that none can fail to understand. We are not commanded to have any faith in our feelings, but to have faith in God.

There was in one congregation where I was pastor a certain brother who had not learned the secret of keeping the victory by faith. At some services a dark, blue look would spread over his countenance, and almost anyone could see that he was discouraged. At other times he would come in with his broad face wreathed in smiles, a bright, joyful look in his eyes, and with a cheery voice he would tell of how precious Jesus was to him. "I am on the mountain-top," he would say. By and by he overcame the discouragements and became known as "Mountain-top Richardson."

When a young convert turns from faith to feelings, the enemy of souls takes advantage of it and makes that soul a dumping-ground for all kinds of ugly feelings. One will feel envious, angry, impatient, petulant, hard and ill toward man and God, unloving, unsympathetic. In fact, experience proves that there is scarcely any ugly feeling but what Satan can throw it over the poor Christian who has allowed feelings to be his guide. To such an extent can these things go that one may feel unnatural a good portion of his time. When others rejoice, he feels bad, when others weep, he feels no sympathy. And thus a person is doomed to live his life in spiritual misery if he does not cut short the career of bad feelings, by faith.

There is no other way but the way of faith. Struggling, praying, thinking, becoming agitated—nothing is worth anything except faith. Years ago the writer experienced the full misery of all kinds of bad and ugly feelings. It seemed perfectly impossible ever

STEPS HEAVENWARD

to win. Hours were spent daily wrestling in agony with doubts and bad feelings and all kinds of evil suggestions. He was shown most clearly by the direct voice of God in his soul that faith, simple faith, was the only remedy. And he was compelled under divine influence to renounce feelings of every sort and to consecrate to pay no attention to any of them, not to care even if he did feel bad, and to trust God wholly, absolutely, and without a waver. Right out of the midst of discouragement, of doubt, he cast himself on God absolutely. That was a good many years ago; but it has never been forgotten. After that when he was filled with bad feelings and when doubts surged through and through his soul, he calmly declared he was God's child, and he did not care how he felt. Of course this sounded much like a lie, for his feelings did care; but once having resolved to pay no more attention to his feelings, and counting on God to preserve him, he held fast and was soon rewarded by feeling better. Despite all the inner clamor of the old doubts and feelings for a discussion, he pushed them all aside, declaring he was God's child and that God was keeping him just as he wanted to. To the suggestion that he would be deceived if he did not pray, he declared he would not pray a moment about it, that he was all right. To the suggestion to investigate the feeling, he declared there was nothing to investigate, that he was saved. To the suggestion that he felt very bad, he declared that the way he felt was God's business, that if he felt bad evidently God allowed or wanted him to have such feelings for some good and beneficent purpose, unseen at the present time, but which would be revealed at the right moment. Such a course brought him out more than a conqueror over all bad feelings.

Do thou likewise, young convert, if you have allowed feelings to be your guide. If you have not met this temptation yet, take a lesson from the lives of other Christians and do not go by feelings,

STEPS HEAVENWARD

but by faith. Feelings will vary all through life; but faith will hold us steady, like the ship's anchor, safe through every storm. Between the life of faith and the life of feeling, you will have to choose every day. Doubly happy will you be, young convert, if you have once for all made the wise choice, and every morning renew that choice, not to seek or listen for good feelings, but to walk by faith, according to God's Word.

He who seeks for good feelings in the Christian way will not find them; but he who cares not how he feels but believes in God will have all the good feelings he will need. Good feelings are a result, not something to be sought for directly. Faith in God unto salvation causes one to feel more or less good, but doubts will bring in many a bad feeling. There is something a little selfish about wanting good feelings. Babies are given "sugar-teats" to keep them quiet, but the Lord desires that we serve him, not for good feelings, but from principle and love.

Take these simple rules as guides in your daily life:

1. As our faith is in the Word, so God will be to us; therefore live by faith, not by sight.
2. When there is no feeling that you are saved, believe that Jesus saves you anyway.
3. When there is no feeling that Christ is in you, trust his word that he will dwell in your heart by faith.
4. When there is no assurance of feeling, look wholly to the assurance of faith.
5. When you feel cold and dead, live by faith in a risen Lord.
6. When you feel that Jesus is far off, believe he is nigh, even in thine heart.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

7. When there is no feeling of liveliness in prayer, trust in God.

8. When you have no feeling of interest in the Bible, read by faith, trusting God to work mightily in you.

9. When you feel no joy, believe in Jesus.

10. When there is no feeling of gladness, believe in the great rejoicing there is in Christ for you.

Faith is the victory, the blessedness, the joy. Christ will fulfil his Word. “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?” (John 11:40).

Chapter IX

One Is Known by the Company He Keeps

(A Chapter on Association)

There is a law of influence that affects every human creature. From the worst to the best of us we are molded by our contacts, by our associations. Whatever our society is, we like to be in harmony with its general ideals and strive to uphold them. We become like those with whom we associate. Without being conscious of it, we take on the characteristics of those we are habitually with, at home or in society. Husbands and wives who have traveled down the road of life together, grow to be more and more alike.

Solomon said: “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Prov. 13:20). And in a magnificent passage, Prov. 1:10-19, Solomon says: “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, . . . cast in thy lot among us; . . . my son, walk thou not in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path.” And the very first verse of that wonderful collection of songs known as the Psalms begins: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (Psa. 1:1). In these texts we see the general principles of the power and influence of associations.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Our associations of the present are a prophecy of our future character and destiny. Goethe said: "Tell me with whom thou art found, and I will tell thee who thou art; let me know thy chosen employment, and I will cast the horoscope of thy future. The old saying, "A man is known by the company he keeps," is as true as ever. By a man's company you can tell what he is going to be. "We unconsciously fall into the habits of thought and feeling of those with whom we are associated. We grow better or worse, nobler or meaner, by the influence of our companions. Our ideas are molded by our ideals; our conduct by our examples. To choose refining, purifying society, is the greatest step up and on; to keep the company of the vicious and vile, is as sure a step toward ruin. The church is mainly given us to meet this demand of our social nature."—Pierson.

It is impossible to live in this world and not have some association with evil men and women, casual, or occasional, but such association rarely influences one deeply, and the grace of God is sufficient to keep us in all unavoidable contacts with sinners. Now and then a Christian may have a sinner friend whose ideals are noble and whose influence may be mostly for good. Sometimes one's family is unconverted, and some young convert may ask, "What shall I do if all my family is unsaved?" You should strive with all your power to wield so great an influence over your family that they also will turn to God; if they will not turn, resolutely set yourself to do God's will, to live a sunshiny, happy life, and leave the results with God.

Close by the city of Geneva, Switzerland, is the place where the waters of the River Rhone and the River Arve join in their course to the Mediterranean Sea. The Arve flows into the Rhone. The waters of the Rhone come from the high mountains of the

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Swiss Alps, the source being a melting glacier ten or eleven thousand feet high, the glacier being kept up by the snows and the cold. From this great height the Rhone rushes down into Lake Geneva and on to the sea. The waters of the Rhone are beautifully clear and sparkling, the waters of the Arve are pale and muddy. As the traveler stands at the juncture of these two rivers he notices a remarkable sight, the waters of the two rivers meet but do not at once coalesce, but remain apart. On one side are the swift-moving and dark clear waters of the Rhone, on the other the slow-moving and pale waters of the Arve. They are together and yet they are not together, one channel holds them, yet they are separate. The reason for this is the Rhone has a much swifter current than the Arve, and this force or momentum prevents the comingling of the waters until further down the stream, where the force is spent, there the waters finally mix.

The Christian has the source of his new life as high up as the throne of God, fed by a ceaseless supply, unadulterated and pure. But the Christian is in the world, by his side are the evil and wicked, and the problem is to prevent unwholesome contact and commingling with the world. Like the waters of the Rhone, as long as the force and power is there to keep the young Christian moving more swiftly and stronger than the other he is safe. If he comes to a standstill, he is swallowed up in the world.

“I am not a rose,” says an Eastern proverb, “but I have been with the rose, and therefore I am sweet.” Men unconsciously carry signs of their lives around with them; the miller, and the blacksmith, the worker in lime and mortar, and the farmer bear signs of being workmen and of their work. A merry face or a sad one testifies of where its owner has been. Notice how in the minds of people a person with a Bible is quickly associated with religious

STEPS HEAVENWARD

work. Irreligious people and sinners do not carry Bibles under the arm. When one comes in with fresh fruit in his hands, we say, "You have come from the orchard." If he comes with his hands full of flowers, "You have been to the fields or woodlands." And when one comes from secret prayer, from a season of conversation with God, from divine presence, he will show in act and look and word the sacred tokens of divine intercourse. On the other hand, if one has been with evil companions, then there will be the signs of it; a lack of poise, a frivolousness, a worldliness, or something that betrays the fatal company he has been in.

The evangelist Moody, it is said, frequently told the story of how he carried in his pocket a gold chain. Into the same pocket he carelessly placed a lead bullet. After several days he took out the chain and found it covered all over with a coating of lead. The contact of the two substances was greatly detrimental to the gold. Bad companions will tarnish the noblest and best character.

There are certain young converts who will find it necessary to break entirely with their old associates and associations, even stay away from their usual meeting-places and haunts. There is no safety in any other course. Generally these are they who were "brands plucked out of the fires" of iniquity, debauchery, adultery, card-playing, gambling, drinking, and such like.

Young convert, if you are a brand plucked out of the fire, remember you will catch fire easily, if you return to your old associates and old haunts of vice. A poor man one time fell into drinking habits, but was converted and reformed. He often spoke of himself as a "brand plucked out of the fire." "Come, go with us, and have a drink," one said to him. "Look here," he answered, "you know there is a difference between a brand and a green stick. If a spark falls on a brand that has been partly burned, the brand

STEPS HEAVENWARD

will soon catch fire again. Not so with a green stick. I tell you I am that brand plucked out of the fire; and I dare not venture into the way of temptation for fear of being set on fire again.”

There are some young converts young in years who well need to pay careful attention to the matter of associates. The best thing may be to sever intimate association with those most calculated to lead you astray and be on friendly terms with the best of your former friends. No general rule will fit all cases.

One thing must be borne in mind, and that is that there is such a thing as predominance of influence. Either the young convert will influence, his evil companions to go God’s way, or the evil companions will influence the young convert to go the devil’s way. This point must be carefully kept in mind, and when, young Christian, you find that your associates are having more influence over you than you are over them, it is time to sever the intimate social contact between you. An old colored saint was fond of going to a certain livery-stable. But every time he left the place and its jolly “hangers-out” he felt lean and unspiritual; not exactly guilty, but somewhat tarnished by the sinful contact. He finally, through prayer, was led to make the wise decision that he would stay away from that place until he grew stronger. “If you always live with those who are lame, you yourself will learn to limp,” says a Latin proverb, and means that our associations have a tremendous influence over us.

Too much cannot be said in favor of the young convert’s association with Christian people. Through conversing with, them he will receive much information that will be of great value throughout life. There was once a young convert who made the usual mistakes and had the usual doubts and conflicts of young Christians, but who made it his business to go two or three times a

STEPS HEAVENWARD

week to see an old brother long in the way. This young convert would go over, worried and tried and discouraged; but the good conversation and the prayer following would invariably lift him up and send him back home as if on wings. Make some older Christian your companion, for your soul's sake.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). Looking at Jesus changes us. Association with Jesus makes us like him. Just as we are uplifted by associating with people better than ourselves, so we are uplifted by associating with Jesus. Living in every-day contact with Jesus brightens and ennobles the meanest existence and paints a halo around the head of the humblest. Once there was a man riding in some timber-land in one of the Southern States. All at once he came upon a little clearing in the timber, and there was an old tumble-down house and an ancient colored woman standing near.

“Living all alone, Auntie?” he asked. “Jess me’n Jesus, Massa,” she replied.

That saying transformed the whole scene. Me and Jesus! There was something sacred, about that place.

So live, young convert, in association with Jesus that his beauty will be somewhat reflected through you to others.

Chapter X

You Must Be Baptized

The last commission to the apostles was: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15, 16). And again: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19, 20).

This language is very plain, both to the ministers whom the Lord sends out, and to those who believe. The believers, according to this command of Christ’s, are to be baptized. Not only that, but believers are to observe all things that Jesus commanded the apostles to do. As the Chief of the Lord’s army and the Captain of our salvation, Jesus has the right to command us what to do, and as volunteers in his army we are to obey. Soldiers are taught obedience. Whatever the command of a superior officer may be, the soldier is to give unquestioned obedience to that command. To obey is better than sacrifice.

The early apostles followed Christ’s command to the letter, baptizing the new converts soon after their conversion. On the day

STEPS HEAVENWARD

of Pentecost, three thousand were baptized. That must have been a very great day. The Philippian jailor was converted one night and was baptized straightway. When Peter went down to Cornelius' house and preached the gospel to the first Gentile audience, the Holy Ghost fell upon the congregation and Peter commanded them to be baptized, seeing they had received the Spirit. When Paul made his extensive missionary journeys, he, mostly by the hands of his helpers, baptized the new believers.

Baptism in every Scripture instance was administered to the new converts soon after their confession of faith in Christ. In no case do we find long delays, and we infer from this that as soon as convenient or as soon as opportunity presents itself, every new convert today is to be baptized; There is no definite command as to how soon after conversion one should be baptized, as conditions in all the world are sure to vary widely. But the safe rule is to determine to follow Christ in baptism at the first opportunity, or even asking for baptism, in order that the commands of Jesus may be fulfilled.

There is a blessing in obeying every command of God. Baptism is a great blessing to the believer. When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended and sat upon him, and a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." You, young convert, can expect a spiritual blessing to accompany your baptism. You will have the joy of obedience, which is a great joy of itself. Then the testimony you bear to the world as you go down into the water, as into a grave, that you are now dead to all its vain pomp, and show, and glory, and sin, and that you are living a new life, will be a blessing. A blessing to you, because your decision is renewed in the baptism and because Jesus, as he looks down upon you, will be pleased

STEPS HEAVENWARD

with your testimony that you will to serve him. A blessing to your friends because it will refresh their minds that they too should take the same step that you have taken. When you arise from the water and take your place among the saints of the Lord, the Holy Spirit will witness “sweet and clear” that what you have done is well-pleasing to God.

You should approach your baptism with suitable preparations of heart. So many go through a mere form. They arrive at the bank of the river or baptismal pool chewing gum, talking lightly and frivolously with their companions, or otherwise taking it as a sort of joke. To such it is a joke, a huge mistake, a caricature of true baptism. One had better far stay away from the water of baptism than to go through a form, or mimic a holy ordinance of God.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3). Baptism symbolizes death, a spiritual death; not a death in sin, but a death to sin. Baptism represents a burial, a baptism or immersion into Jesus Christ. “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death” (v. 4). “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Here we reach the real meaning. This alone is the right life for a baptized disciple; he has put on Christ. He, with Christ, dies to the world and the devil. Baptism symbolizes a raising, a resurrecting. Like as Christ was raised so we rise to walk in newness of life. Thus baptism symbolizes all that is vital in the plan of salvation, and an early opportunity should be sought to be baptized.

Christ, the Great Commander, has asked us to do some other things besides be baptized. He has asked us to eat and drink a Lord’s Supper and wash one another’s feet. How often these things should be done is not revealed, being left to the conscience or

STEPS HEAVENWARD

convenience of the people of God. Both of these ordinances bring deep spiritual blessings, draw the Christians closer together, and rekindle the fires of fellowship and love.

The Lord's Supper is not a literal eating of Christ's body nor a literal drinking of Christ's blood. There is something far deeper than that. Christ's flesh, if eaten, would not affect the heart. Neither would his blood if drunk. But the true partaking of Christ, represented by the Supper, is by faith. Christ gave his life and blood for us; we, as we surround the Lord's table to participate in his Supper, partake of the divine spiritual blessings that he purchased for us.

Still deeper, perhaps, is the truth Paul speaks of when he says "we are members of his [Christ's] body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30). Redemption is extended to both soul and body. The soul is redeemed from sin by faith, and the body, while death lays it low, will yet arise again in the resurrection of the dead. The Lord's Supper is symbolical of our future bodily redemption. The partaking of the Supper also publicly announces on our part a faith in Christ as the dying Lamb and as the returning King.

In the Supper, as in baptism, we have symbols of our redemption brought forcibly to view. It goes to the very center of Christ's salvation work—the shedding of his blood, the breaking of his body.

In the Lord's Supper all that Christ did for us is remembered. We see him hanging on a cross on the hill of the skull. We see the blood trickling down his face and flowing from his pierced hands and feet and side.

We know it was all for us. Our hearts palpitate with fresh love to the Son of God. And in this Supper we profess anew our love to

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Jesus; our minds go back to the time when love wiped out the score of sins against us; we renew our covenant to be true to God and to one another. Such blessings come from the Supper, that as oft as you have an opportunity, young convert, avail yourself of it, and participate in this ordinance.

“Bound thy table here we gather,
And commune, dear Lord, with thee.
In thy consecrated emblems,
Lo! thy precious blood we see—
See thy dear atoning passion
And our holy unity,
Oh! we’ll keep thy blest memorial,
Till anew we sup with thee.”

As in baptism, so in the Supper, a proper heart-preparation should precede our participation therein. Paul says, “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat . . . and drink” (1 Cor. 11:28). There should be harmony and fellowship between you and all the saints. If you know of anything you have done to cause any lack of fellowship, go and adjust that matter first. Be at peace with all, let all quarrels and strifes and offences one with another be cleared up. Examine yourself: if others unworthy, eat, that is their responsibility.

The communion emphasizes the need of Christian humility and brotherly kindness. In a proud world this lesson is sorely needed. Like Mary, we might delight in breaking an alabaster box of ointment on Jesus and wiping his feet with our hair; but Jesus assures us that what we do for our brother is the same as if done to him. We are to show our entire willingness to serve our brother in any way we can. How blessed are these ordinances!

STEPS HEAVENWARD

The things we have mentioned are specific commands, set ordinances of the church, instituted by Christ. Obedience to them strengthens the soul, neglect of them weakens the soul. Fall in at once with these commands, and join with the church in observing them. If the church you commonly associate with rejects these commands, it will be well to enquire for a church that keeps them all.

Baptism is not a door into the true church; the young convert is a member of it as soon as he is converted.

There are many commands in the New Testament. All are to be obeyed. The results of disobedience stand out vivid and plain in the history of man. Saul was sent on a mission; but he took counsel of himself, disobeyed the divine command and met a telling rebuke at the hands of the prophet Samuel. Adam and Eve's disobedience in the garden brought sin into the world and planted a depravity in all their posterity.

"I wish I could mind God as my little dog minds me," said a little boy, looking thoughtfully at his shaggy friend. "He always looks so pleased to mind and I don't." What a painful truth did this child speak! Shall the poor little dog thus readily obey his master, and we rebel against God, who is our Creator, our Preserver, our Father, our Savior and the bountiful Giver of everything we love?
—Spurgeon.

Chapter XI

Our Daily Bread

Every kind of life must be sustained by food. Unless the animals find food they will starve and die, and the living plant will wither away if it is deprived of the substances that sustain it. Man is both physical and spiritual. His is the most wonderful organism in the world, being just a little lower than the angels, and high above the brute creation. On his physical side, man partakes of material things like any other animal, and works; and on the spiritual side he reaches up to angels and to God and communicates with them. This of itself is a most wonderful truth to contemplate.

Young converts are likened in the Bible to new-born babes. The prophet Isaiah thus beautifully portrays the young converts to the church: “For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. . . . Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, . . . that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory . . . Then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees” (Isa. 66. 8-12).

This picture of the new convert is full of tender meaning and brings fond recollections of mother and home to our minds. There

STEPS HEAVENWARD

we see the infant nursing close up to its mother's breast the warm, soft milk that is both food and drink to its precious young life. Now it is satisfied with food and it is being dandled and amused on the mother's knees. Again, the father takes it in his strong arms and carries it about for its pleasure and profit.

A young convert in the church is like a new-born infant. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. 3:1, 2). Not so much is expected of young converts as of older Christians. Sometimes this point is overlooked by those who have been a long time on the way, and young converts are condemned for things that they should not be condemned for, because they are babes, and things do not look the same to babes as to old men. The young convert should not take refuge behind this fact and insist on remaining a babe, he should use every means to become strong in God. The Lord has told us how to do this.

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and all hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:1, 2). The Word, God's Word, the Bible, is this sincere milk upon which the young convert must feed.

Young Christian, the new life that you have received from God can be sustained only by the Word of God.

Your life, my young brother, will largely depend on whether you learn to deal wisely and well with God's Word, whether you learn to use the Word from the beginning as your milk.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

See what a charming parable the Lord has given us here in the mother's milk. Out of her own life does the mother yield food and life to her child. The feeding of the child is the work of the tenderest love, in which the child is pressed to the breast, and is held in the closest fellowship with the mother. And the milk is just what the weak child requires—food gentle and yet strong.

Even so is there in the Word of God the very life and power of God. His tender love will, through the Word, receive us into the gentlest and most intimate fellowship with himself. His love will give us out of the Word what is, like warm, soft milk, just fitted for our weakness. Let no one suppose that the Word is too high or too hard for him. For the disciple who receives the Word, and trustfully relies on Jesus to teach him by the Spirit, the Word of the Lord shall practically prove to be gentle, sweet milk for new-born infants.

—Andrew Murray

This writer has the right point of view. He sees the Word as the very food prepared by our loving heavenly Father to sustain his new-born children in spiritual life; not only sustain, but the food that will induce and produce growth, until by and by they can take, not milk alone, but the strong meat of the truth.

Come with me, young convert, and listen to some words from the lips of Jesus. He is probably standing in the doorway of the house of Simon Peter, who runs a fishing business on the Sea of Galilee and who has placed his home at Jesus' disposal. Yesterday Jesus fed several thousand people over on the other side of the sea, and he returned by walking most of the way on the water, while the disciples returned in a boat, after a hard time in a storm. The

STEPS HEAVENWARD

miracle of yesterday, multiplying fish and bread, is still the uppermost thought in the minds of the crowd that fills the street in front of Peter's house, and Jesus is saying, "I am the bread of life." And these Jews think that Jesus probably means that he will give them his body to eat. Jesus sees the wrong idea and says further, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:1-65). Jesus' words are in the Bible, and reading and believing and receiving it is hearing and believing and receiving Jesus himself. The Word of God is the chief sustenance of every Christian.

Christians throughout the ages have always gone to the Word of God for comfort and sustenance in time of need.

A poor soldier in the Crimean War fell to the ground to die. "One drop! one drop!" he cried. "Not a drop in my canteen," said his comrade; "what can I do for you?" "Bill, open my knapsack and get it—my Bible—and let me have a drop from it." Bill obeyed, and began to read. "That's it," said the soldier. "It's the blood that heals the smart. The blood of Christ makes peace. I shall never get home to England again; but I shall get to a better country, through Christ, the living way. Ah, Bill, if the Bible was written for any man, it was written for me." He drew sustaining grace in a dread hour.

A remarkable instance of the power of the Word to sustain a Christian is concerning the reformer Luther. He was on his way to the German diet at Worms, where he was to appear to be judged for writing against the papacy. Luther well knew that if he were delivered up to his enemies, it would mean a burning stake for him; but he went, trusting God. A certain Count Eber-hard determined to ambush Luther and make away with him. Luther came into the town and took a room. About five the next morning

STEPS HEAVENWARD

he arose, laid his Bible on a chair, and knelt down on his knees and read and prayed, “O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: lest he tear my soul like a lion, . . . while there is none to deliver” (Psa. 7:1, 2). The Psalm he read was his prayer. He read on and prayed.

In an adjoining house the man who was going to kidnap Luther rose early also, as he was agitated about his project. He looked out and down to a figure kneeling before an open book in a room across the narrow alley from where he was. The Count heard the prayer, and it made an indelible impression upon him. Yet he had no idea it was Luther. The Count asked the landlord who that praying person might be, and was told it was Luther. He was thunder-struck; but he went across, found Luther's room, fell on his knees, confessed his evil device, implored pardon, and told how Luther's words had overpowered him. “Not my word,” said Luther, “but the word of the Lord . . . for the Word of the Lord endureth forever.” God's Word was a sustaining power to Luther at the most trying hour of his life.

The Word is our bread. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4). Faith is developed by reading or hearing the Word of God. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). It is impossible to read the Bible diligently without having one's faith increased.

How to Read the Bible

Young converts, unless they are well-versed in the Scriptures, should first read the New Testament. Begin with Matthew and read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four Gospels. Next read the Acts of the Apostles, which tells what some of the apostles did after Jesus ascended to heaven. Then the Epistles may be taken up

STEPS HEAVENWARD

and read in order. Revelation is written in highly figurative language and is hard for a young convert to understand; but it does not matter particularly about reading that for a while, as it is a prophecy of the church through the ages and can be studied later.

The Psalms is the best book of the Old Testament for young converts to read. The Psalms cover every phase of human existence and religious experience, and are full of prayers, praises, exhortations, just fitted for new beginners.

Read carefully, slowly, grasping the meaning. Read to get the food out of it. Some people read so carelessly or so rapidly that very little good comes of it. Do not be in a hurry; cultivate the art of meditation. It will become a wonderful blessing. Read in faith, believing with all the heart everything you find written. Read the Bible, especially the New Testament, as if God had written to you, personally, a letter. If you should receive a letter from a dear relative or friend, stating it was their last, and telling you many things you desire to know, would you not value it highly and preserve it carefully? The New Testament is God's last message to man, and though he wrote it by inspiring men, yet it should be received as the very word of God to us.

You will find, young convert, commands, promises, exhortations, instructions, and doctrine in the Testament. When you are tempted, read Matt. 4:1-11; 1 Cor. 10: 9-13; Jas. 4:7, 8. If you have hard trials, read 1 Pet. 1: 6, 7 and 4:12-19. If you are sick, read Jas. 5:13-18. If you feel weak, read 2 Cor. 12:9, 10 and Romans 8. If you feel discouraged, read John 14 and Joshua 1.

If you feel that your faith is weak, read Matt 15:21-28; Mark 9:14-27; Matt. 28:19, 20 and Mark 11:20-24. If you want to do just right when one does you an injustice or injury, read Matt. 18:15-17, and be sure to follow it. If you feel as though you would like to

STEPS HEAVENWARD

stay away from services, read Heb. 10:25. If you want to grow in grace, read 2 Pet. 1:5-9. If you desire to know how to use your tongue, read James 3; Col. 3:8, 9 and Eph. 4:29. If you feel angry, read Eph. 4:26, 27. If you feel as though you would like to pout, read Rom. 8:28, and if you believe it you will never pout again. If you are persecuted, read Rom. 8:35-39.

If you want to know how to be blessed; read Matt. 5: 2-12. If you want to know more about love, read 1 Corinthians 13; if about the resurrection, read 1 Corinthians 15.

By careful reading one may soon learn just where to look in the Bible to find something that will satisfy every need of the soul. There is no state, no discouragement, no trial, nothing, so dark or gloomy but that there is some Bible text to drive it away and give the soul peace and rest.

Use the Bible, that is, learn to use it to aid you. Some young converts, and old ones too, seem never to learn that the Bible is really God's Book, and that it means what it says and that it contains instructions on what to do and how to meet every situation in life. They read the Bible, but not closely enough to know where to go in any special time of need. How much better to know just where to find a promise that exactly fits our need!

Read the Bible daily. You eat three meals a day for your body's sake and think you can let the soul go day after day without food and yet grow in grace. It cannot be done. If the young convert is the head of the family, the Bible should be read as a part of family worship, both morning and night. If he is not head, then take some time to read the Bible. Workmen have been known to carry a pocket Testament and read it at noon or at other times during the day. Make the Bible your constant companion and guide

STEPS HEAVENWARD

through this life. By and by life will end, and if you have followed God's Chart, the Bible, you will be safe forever.

Chapter XII

The Source of Power

(A Chapter on Prayer)

Do not make the mistake, young convert, of trying to live the Christian life in your own strength. Thousands have tried it and have failed. There is a source of power, and from it you must draw the strength you need for daily living. That source is the throne of God, where grace abounds and is free to all who ask for it. "Ask," said Jesus, "and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And the supply of grace that you need you will obtain by prayer.

Jesus told us the very best way to pray that there is: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6). To enter into thy closet means to be alone with God somewhere; to shut thy door means to shut out everything else but yourself and God, you must be where you can say, Here are God and I only; I am going to talk with God, and he with me.

Do you ask how to begin? It does not matter how you begin, so long as you pray from your heart. Down in your heart you feel certain needs, or wish you had certain things; or you may feel as though God were a good way off and you desire to ask him why he

STEPS HEAVENWARD

seems so far away. It matters not what you want, just tell your Father in heaven as you would or did your father on earth when you wanted something from him. The Lord does not care for fine, well-worded prayers, nor long prayers, nor loud prayers; he likes to hear sincere prayers, honest prayers, prayers that come out of the heart.

Do you want to know what you shall ask for? Ask for anything you need. Jesus said: "What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11: 24); "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14). "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). There is no limit to the things Christians may ask for. They may ask for grace, for health, for healing from sickness, for patience, love, and faith, for boldness and humility, for wisdom, for a job if out of employment, for help in business or at one's trade or vocation, for aid in the home, at school, in company, for the salvation of sinners, and for help in every time of need. "Call upon me in the day of trouble," saith the Lord, "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psa. 50:15). Many people call upon the Lord in time of need, but never think of him at any other time. You are not to do so, young convert, but you are to learn how good it is to go to God in prayer every day.

Cultivate a feeling of dependence upon God; think and feel that you need God so much, and that you cannot get along without his help and comfort. If you will begin from the very first day of your new birth to take everything to God in prayer, it will be one of the very best habits you can form. The more you rely upon God the more peace you will have, and the more things you take to him in prayer the less trouble you will have. To find comfort and peace

STEPS HEAVENWARD

through prayer you must learn to commit things to the Lord; and once committed, they are to be left in his care without worry. Sometimes Christians carry their burden to the Lord, they lay it out before him in all its completeness, they describe it to the Lord in great detail, recounting how it was or is, how it feels to carry it, how distressing it is, how very great it is, and they show the Lord all about it, and then after going to all the trouble of showing it to the Lord in prayer, they solemnly shoulder up their burden again and carry it off with them. Maybe in a few days they go again in prayer and show the Lord all about it, and perhaps they carry it away again. Why not leave your burden with the Lord? “Cast thy burden upon the Lord; and he will sustain thee,” says the Word. Take your burden to the Lord, but leave it there.

Do not be surprised if the Lord does not answer at once. Elijah was mighty in prayer; he prayed for a drought and it came, he asked God to show by fire who was the true God and God sent the fire, and at once. But when he went to pray for rain he had to pray seven times before there was any answer. He prayed and then sent his servant to see if there were any signs of rain. The servant returned, saying there was neither rain nor any signs of rain. But Elijah did not cease praying. Again he prayed, and again, and seven times, and then the servant said there was a cloud about the size of a man’s hand. That was enough; Elijah quit praying, and soon there was rain. But suppose Elijah had quit the first, the second, third, or any time before the small cloud appeared?

Jesus told a parable one time to the end that Christians should pray and not faint. The parable was about a widow and a judge. The judge was unjust, a bribe-taker, perhaps, who had no conscience and cared nothing for justice. The widow had trouble and came to the judge to obtain relief, but the old judge did

STEPS HEAVENWARD

nothing. The woman came again, she presented her case anew; she seemed not to know that the judge was against her. He again refused. But this woman was persistent, she would not cease, she did not recognize defeat when she saw it. She came to the judge with her grievance again and again so that out of sheer desperation the judge granted her request. The moral or truth of this parable is that if God does not answer when we pray the first time, we should pray until he does.

The Lord knows best, and we must trust him with everything. The Lord will answer prayer sooner or later, or he will give some sort of an answer. It may be an answer such as he gave to Paul once. Paul had prayed most earnestly three times that the thorn in his flesh might depart from him. The Lord did not see fit to take it away nor to relieve him in any way, he simply said to Paul, "Paul, I want thee to bear this infirmity, this thorn, and I will make the grace of God sufficient for thee that thou shalt be able to bear it." So when Paul wrote of it, he added that since the Lord told him that, he gloried in the very same thorn that he had previously prayed earnestly to have removed. So if the Lord will not remove your burdens, he will bear them up to the extent that they will not be so hard for you to carry.

Like all young converts, you are without experience in divine things and will make mistakes, maybe a good many of them. Make all of these the subject of prayer. Be perfectly open and frank about them. I know a fine, strong Christian worker who was accustomed to using profanity before he was converted, that is, he habitually uttered curses. About the following morning after he was converted, he was down in the cellar repairing something and it went all wrong and he swore. He did not mean to, "it just popped out." But he knew it was wrong just the same, and down he

STEPS HEAVENWARD

dropped on his knees and prayed. He told the Lord he had quit swearing, quit sinning, quit the world and the devil, and that he was sorry the oath had come out. He took a firm stand against cursing, and never has been bothered in the least with it since. Prayer was the means of his rescue and his source of power over a very bad habit.

If you make a mistake, admit it to the Lord, and in all sincerity pray for more grace. Here is a testing time, and if you are able, which all are, to carry a mistake to God in prayer, and through grace be not discouraged with yourself, then you will gain an important victory.

Prayer should be definite. Prayers for things in general have their place; but, young convert, you must learn to pray definitely for what you need. A woman prayed for ten minutes sleep one time and obtained it. Jonah had a poor place to pray, but he knew what he wanted, and his prayer reached God, and about the next thing Jonah knew was that dry land was under him. There were two newly converted people who made it a practice to pray to God for certain of their friends, mentioning their names, and asking God to save and bless them.

Pray in faith. All through the Bible we are told to ask in faith, believing, nothing wavering. Abraham, we are told, was strong in faith, giving glory to God. "All things are possible to him that believeth," said Jesus. "When ye pray," said he again, "believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Since there is nothing too hard for God, all we need to do to have our prayers answered is to believe, if other conditions are properly met. There is no use praying if no answer is expected; and if an answer is expected, then we might as well do as Jesus said, "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

STEPS HEAVENWARD

There are thousands of recorded answers to prayers. The Bible is full of them, and many books are given entirely to telling of answers to prayers. Every Christian will be able to tell of some answer to his prayers, so, young convert, expect an answer to your prayers. Your supply of grace will depend largely on how you pray, that is whether you pray sincerely and earnestly and in faith. The new life that God planted in your soul in regeneration needs a great many things. In your life will come a great many problems. Along the way to God's city there will be many byways, deceivers will be close at hand ready to lead you astray, false shepherds would pen you in some other sheepfold than the Lord's—these and many other things will call for more grace and wisdom than human hearts know of themselves. Hence you must pray.

Last, pray every day. Let no day's work be commenced without prayer. Before you go out to meet life's problems and conflicts, joys or sorrows, kneel down and pray. Pray till there is the knowledge of divine love in your heart, if possible, if not, pray in faith, and trust. Make a habit of praying every day. If it is convenient, it is well and wise to have a place of secret prayer, where you may go to converse with your heavenly Father. If you are tempted to neglect prayer, resist the temptation and pray anyway. To overcome lifelessness in prayer, remember the goodness of God and thank him for it fervently, and have some need that you feel should be supplied. As long as one has any needs he is not liable to have listlessness while at prayer.

Prayer is the most wonderful and yet the most simple thing a Christian can engage in. Prayer moves God, provokes him to work. Oh, young convert, begin now to live an earnest life of prayer!

Chapter XIII

Work Out Your Own Salvation

Every Christian is a worker. All those Christians who do nothing for God nor for others are Christians in name only, they are dead, unfruitful branches of the vine and have long since been cut off.

God said to Abraham, “Get thee out of thy country . . . and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” (Gen. 12:1, 2). God was going to bless Abram, and in consequence of that blessing upon him Abram was to be a blessing to others. This has always been God’s plan—first to bless some soul that came out from the world and then to make that soul a blessing unto others. God does not save us just to keep us from sin and hell and give us a happy time (he gives this indeed), but to make us a blessing. This truth must become thoroughly grounded in your mind and soul, young convert, if you would be a real Bible Christian and prevent your growing cold and finally backsliding.

The first thing the stricken Saul of Tarsus said after being convinced that Jesus was the Christ, was, “Lord, what will thou have me to do?” The young convert who begins that way is most likely to be a worker and to be successful as a Christian. The new babe in Christ that asks of his Master, “Lord, what shall I do next?

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Have you any work that I can do? Here am I, send me,” or “Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth,” will find something to do and will both be blessed and be a blessing in doing it. This is the entire secret of the Christian’s happiness—being a blessing to others.

There are a multitude of ways in which the new convert can be a blessing. Most of you are members of a family, you are a father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister. The happiness of your relatives is largely in your keeping. You can be cheerful around the house, you can do your work cheerfully, singing a song while you do that piece of work which you ordinarily do not like to do. You can be patient, having a kind regard for the weaknesses of the other members of the family, overlooking their failures and making the best of the matter. You can help lift a burden now and then and make yourself as useful as possible. Such little things have a wonderful influence and are too often forgotten, while the young Christian dreams of doing some great thing. Cultivate a cheerful, sunshiny disposition and make an effort to speak kindly and cheerfully to all you meet. These are simple things, but they are fundamental things, very essential to Christian character.

Every young convert is called upon to be a witness for Christ. “Ye shall be witnesses unto me,” said Jesus to the apostles just before he ascended. They were to be witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea, to their own Jewish race, and then to their neighbors, the unloved Samaritans, and then to the uttermost parts of the world, to strangers and foreigners everywhere. Not each individual Christian could do all this; but this was the command for a universal testimony to be given by all Christ’s followers. Each Christian is to bear personal witness concerning Christ to those around him.

A testimony to your salvation, young convert, is absolutely essential to your being true to Jesus and to your being a blessing to

STEPS HEAVENWARD

others. A testimony is the words of a witness who has knowledge of some facts. A preacher may expound the gospel and declare what God can do, but witnesses are needed to testify to what the gospel has done. A medicine might be widely advertised as a cure for a certain disease and be little known, but when some person declares that that medicine cured him then its popularity increases rapidly. The blessings of God's salvation travel fastest when individuals testify to its wonderful blessings. This is God's way of spreading the truth.

One of the commonest causes of deadness, backsliding, and indifference among professing Christians is the neglect of public worship. And you, young convert, will soon find yourself as dead as the deadest if you neglect the common means of grace. Paul warned thus, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. 12:25). And Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). A Kentucky gentleman on horseback overtook an old colored man walking through the snow several miles to a meeting.

"Why are you out walking this kind of a day, Uncle?" he asked.

"I am on my way to the meeting. One never can tell when the blessing is going to fall, and I want to be there when it does," he answered.

The blessing "falls" where two or three meet in Jesus' name, and this blessing is a special one obtained nowhere else.

Public worship, singing, praying, preaching, and testifying, are necessary to the life of the church and of every member of the body of Christ. In timbered countries the farmers used to burn

STEPS HEAVENWARD

refuse logs in large heaps. After burning for some time these logs would roll away from each other. Then the farmer would come and roll the logs together again, and the flames would once more mount up high. Public church worship is like placing the burning logs together again; as Christian greets Christian, as songs ascend in praise to Christ, as prayers go up like incense, as the gospel is preached, then it is that the flame of devotion grows more fervent and the children of God are blessed. You must go to receive that blessing.

Attend regularly on public worship. You have a duty that you owe to your fellow Christians. They have a right to expect you to be in your place and do your part. Never fail in this important duty.

Another duty, a blessed work, which the young convert will delight in, is personal work among others. There are hundreds of people who would welcome a personal interest in their soul's salvation. This interest must be genuine, born of love, and tactfully exercised. Be free and frank to talk personally to others about Jesus. Get rid of bashfulness and backwardness by boldly pushing out in Christ's name, relying on the Lord to be your sufficiency. As General Booth said, "For God's sake do something." Do something to bring some soul to Christ. No greater joy will you ever know than that of being instrumental in bringing some soul to Jesus.

Begin on a small scale in all these things mentioned. Do not despise small beginnings. The greatest ministers were at one time mere beginners, who could scarcely speak at all. You will feel awkward and self-conscious in your first efforts to do something for Jesus, sometimes you may feel that what little you can do will not be missed if left undone. But such is not the case. Youths going to school sometimes slip over certain subjects without mastering

STEPS HEAVENWARD

them, but by and by they may have need of that very information or knowledge which they neglected to gain. If you expect to become established in the grace of God, become strong, and please God, you must be a worker, and to be a worker you must begin to work.

Let me enumerate some things a new convert can do. Carefully go over the list and, see if you cannot find something that you can do.

Go to meetings of the church regularly. If you can and will, your very presence will be a blessing and a sermon on faithfulness. Great is the power of example, and regular attendance is a good example to set.

In testimony-meetings always, give your testimony. Do not mind how it sounds to you; be yourself, speak naturally, even if awkwardly, and say in your own words and tell in your own way what the Lord has done for you.

At prayer-meetings, often, if not always lead in public prayer. As in testifying, mind not how it sounds, simply pray as you feel.

Before the services begin be very friendly to those you meet. If you see strangers at the meeting, shake hands and greet them pleasantly.

After services take notice again of strangers and of others. Do not purposely pass by any one, but be friendly, and if there are any to whom you feel it would be in place to speak a word about Jesus and to whom it would be a blessing, go to those persons in a quiet, tender manner and ask them about their souls.

Find out whether there are any sick people in the neighborhood where you live, and if there are visit them if

STEPS HEAVENWARD

possible. Perhaps you can take some flowers or some delicate food, or read some from God's Book or sing a song or say an encouraging word to them, or pray with them. Do what you can.

If there are any poor people in your locality, a visit from you might be like a ray of light in a dark place to them. If they find someone is interested in them, it might give them new life and courage.

Take part in singing. Learn to sing by note and help in special singing if capable.

Take as active a part in Sunday-school work as your abilities justify; teaching a class, as secretary, usher, book-passer, or in any capacity that will advance the school.

Canvass, under the direction of the pastor, if there is one, the neighborhood for Sunday-school students.

Give a proportion of your income to church work, to God's cause. A part of all you take in is the Lord's. Set the percent at what you feel would please the Lord and give it regularly. Many give a tenth.

Take an active interest in the financial end of God's business on earth, as the support of the pastor, church expenses, revivals, Sunday-school work, home mission and foreign mission-work.

Make a list of things to pray for or keep them in your memory and pray daily for them till your prayers are answered.

Do something good every day.

If your circumstances limit you or you are bound with burdens of children, etc., take it all to God in prayer, and be the very best Christian you can, kind and patient in the trials, joyfully bearing your burden whatever it is. If you cannot possibly do anything else

STEPS HEAVENWARD

for Jesus, you can live for Jesus. Your time will come by and by to do more for Jesus if you will but live for him.

Some Christian work is a protection against temptation. An idle Christian is a particular mark for the devil to shoot at. Ask God to give you something to do. “Who will consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?”

Chapter XIV

Stumblings

You may comfort yourself, young convert, that while you make mistakes and stumble along, others had the same to go through when they first started for heaven. And it might encourage you to know that the very best Christians now and then make mistakes. Mistakes are not necessarily sins. The fact is that mistakes and stumblings are a part of life as it has to be lived in the flesh. It would take an infallible being, a God, to avoid all mistakes, and since we are men and not God we shall make more or less of them as long as we live here.

It is common for young Christians to imagine and feel that they make many more mistakes than anybody else. It is a case of every man knowing his own troubles while he is ignorant of his neighbor's. Your brother may be feeling the same about himself.

Mistakes follow as a natural consequence of our human natures. The mind of man grows and develops largely through experience, which is a dear though thorough teacher. And experience consists in a large measure of doing the wrong thing and finding it out just a little too late to prevent trouble. A little child usually learns the fire burns by putting his fingers on the stove.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

A new-born babe in Christ must learn the things of God much as babies and children learn natural things. Little children do many things that should not be done, yet no one condemns them, because they did those things innocently. Mother puts a clean dress on Mary, and Mary goes promptly to where there is some nice mud and water and makes mud pies. This is great fun for Mary, but Mother does not think it is much fun when she sees Mary's dress. Mary may be scolded or punished for this, or she may simply be told not to do that again, or she may be given something to do that will be as great fun as making mud pies and still keep her dress clean. But whatever happens, Mary promptly does some such thing again the very next day, because Mary is very full of life and that life must find some expression. Hence Mary makes a great many mistakes. But how shall Mary ever learn any other way? As Dr. Frank Crane said, "Every man has the privilege of making his own mistakes."

Awkwardness goes naturally with inexperience and childhood. How amusing it is to see one ride a bicycle for the first time, or skate, or play ball, or do almost anything! Many mistakes are made in the learning of a trade. It takes years of training in some lines of business to perfect one's knowledge and experience so that mistakes can be avoided.

Young converts are awkward, every one of them. But they have a new life from God planted in them, and awkward or not awkward, mistakes or no mistakes, that life must find expression, so they again go ahead doing what they feel God would have them to do. When a young convert first prays in public, it usually sounds very poor to him; but to the older Christians it is the sweetest of sounds to their ears. And the first testimony, may be awkward, but it, too, is sweet to the other saints. In the doing of such things as

STEPS HEAVENWARD

the young convert thinks to be the will of God, mistakes may be made.

Not only in matters of worship may mistakes be made, but also in the daily life. For instance, the convert may be too quick in speaking his mind, may judge another too soon or too harshly, may slight a brother, may do or say a number of things that had better not have been done or said. But the right way to do things is usually learned by first doing them the wrong way. In other words, we feel disposed to do or say something and we go ahead, only to find out a little too late that either we should have kept still or silent, or we did or said the thing in the wrong way. Such mistakes point out the right way, and in the future the Christian has his past mistakes as a guide-post saying, "This is not the way, go some other way."

Every mistake is a step toward success, because every detection of what is false or erroneous helps us to find what is true.

Force of habit sometimes causes young converts to err. And there are many things some young converts do that are not right but which are not counted as sins to them because they do not as yet have the true, Bible light on them. Among these we might class tobacco using, wearing of jewelry and of apparel for adornment, going to places of worldly amusement, keeping bad company, using slang or by-words or coarse, near vulgar language, joking, gossiping, exaggerating, taking offense at slights, and such like. As light comes, these things are laid off.

Mistakes are not sins. To err in judgment is human. God knows that man is imperfect in knowledge, that he always will be. Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." And as we continually hold a forgiving attitude toward

STEPS HEAVENWARD

our fellow men who may occasionally not treat us just right, so God will overlook the mistakes which his children make.

But what shall one do with a mistake? Shall he ignore it entirely? or shall he become discouraged by it? Some mistakes may be ignored, some may have to be corrected and apologized for; but over none of them should one be discouraged. The apostle Peter was a very human disciple of Christ's, and his natural impetuosity led him to commit many mistakes. If any man had a right to be discouraged with himself it was Peter. But in spite of his stumblings Peter became a great apostle and a mighty man of God.

Old Giant Discouragement knows by long experience how to attack a soul who has made a mistake. He begins by making the mistake look a great deal larger than it is, and he suggests that so faulty a person should quit professing. He will crush the poor, trembling disciple to utter despair unless that disciple flies to the Lord and renews his strength.

There are two things to avoid in the matter of making mistakes: First, do not take them too lightly so that you leave yourself undisciplined, and, second, do not take them too seriously, which may lead to discouragement. When a mistake is made, face it like a man, acknowledge it on the spot, and if it has wounded someone else apologize for it at once. If it offended the Lord alone, acknowledge it to him and ask pardon for it.

After a mistake has been acknowledged and apologized for and the Lord has pardoned it, then it should be promptly put out of mind and forgotten. To think and ponder over a mistake is folly. They should promptly be disposed of—brought out into the light, apologized for, and pardoned, and then the young disciple should go forward as though nothing whatever had happened, committing

STEPS HEAVENWARD

it all to the Lord in prayer, asking him to overrule it to his glory and enable his young pilgrim to profit by it.

Chapter XV

Failures

It occurs in actual experience that a young convert may find that he has yielded to some temptation and has committed a sin. A young convert was, soon after his conversion, surprised into swearing. Something did not go right, and partly from force of habit the words came out of his mouth before he thought of what he was saying. He fell on his knees, and made no attempt to justify himself or to shield himself, by saying he did not mean to swear. He had said those words and he was responsible, he told himself, even if he did not mean to say them. So he promptly asked the Lord to pardon the words, and he then and there renewed his covenant, promising God that never more should such words be heard from him, and he claimed grace to overcome. The result was perfect deliverance from the habit of swearing.

A fine Christian gentleman was once beguiled into sin by the cunning power of a crafty person, and he fell grievously. For a few days darkness and despair hovered over him and he was tempted to follow the example of Judas, who betrayed the Lord. Finally he came back to the Lord, bitterly repented, and was restored, and is doing a good work for God. Peter the bold disciple denied Jesus, cursed and swore, and sinned, but he went out and “wept bitterly,” and was fully restored to divine favor.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Christianity is the religion of mercy. There is grace sufficient for every temptation, and the promise is that no temptation shall overtake us except what is common to man, and that God will not permit us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but will, with the temptation make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. Notwithstanding such great promises some do sin, and the great question then is, "What shall I do?"

We find a good answer to this question of what shall one do with his sin in the story of Achan, found in the book of Joshua. Through Achan's sin of covetousness, Israel suffered a defeat. Weeping and wailing arose and discouragement swept over the camp. Joshua fell on his face before the Lord and uttered all that was in his heart. He looked for utter failure. But the voice of God was: "Up, sanctify the people," which meant the people were to be presented to the Lord. A test was made to find the guilty one. At last Achan came, and the lot fell on him as the sinner. Poor Achan confessed the evil he had done. To put away the sin that had caused so great a failure, Achan and all he possessed were killed, and a great heap of stones was raised over the place.

Sin must be confessed and put away entirely, if the soul would go on for God.

Failures are very unpleasant things to deal with; but after one is made, the question then is what to do with it. A variety of methods may present themselves. Some may have it suggested to them to hide it, cover it up, keep on professing without repenting of it, to others it may be suggested that all is lost, to hope is useless, and the best thing to do is to give up and drop out of the Lord's army. Young convert, if you should fail, do neither one. Satan suggested both of these methods, for in either case he will have a strangle-hold upon your soul.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Discouragement only hinders when a failure is made. Nothing is gained by spending several days in dark discouragement. One may feel that to chastise oneself for the failure for several days, and to feel very miserable for a long time, is the right way to get back to God. And after some time of this, then the soul goes to God for pardon. The idea underneath this is that God will not pardon at once for Christ's sake, but might pardon us if we will feel very bad a sufficient time to reconcile God into a forgiving mood. This idea is wrong and leads into vexatious delays in returning to God, and such a course is full of danger. Some wait to seek pardon till some future public service is held, a week or a month hence, and in the meantime the enemy works hard to prevent the soul from ever starting again.

What shall you do if you sin? First, do not become discouraged, for it does no good, and second, do not cover the sin, "for he that covereth his sins shall not prosper." But do as Peter did, go and weep bitterly; or as David did when he sinned; "I acknowledge my transgressions," cried David. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean . . . Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Psa. 51:1-13).

Drag your sin out into the light of God. It is not necessary to tell man of it, unless man is affected by it, but tell God of it. And in the face of that sin renounce it, condemn it, abhor it, slay it as Israel did Achan, and take a stand against it. Then ask God to pardon it. Make a full, clean breast of the matter and a good, open confession of it to all concerned, and God will pardon you and restore the joy of salvation.

Will the Lord forgive as soon as we ask him? Yes! A little girl one time expressed herself on this point in this way. She asked if God would forgive as soon as we asked, and she was told that he

STEPS HEAVENWARD

would. “Just as soon?” she questioned doubtingly. “Yes,” replied the teacher, “the very minute we ask, he forgives.” “Well,” she said, “I cannot believe that. I should think he would make us feel sorry for two or three days first. And then I should think he would make us ask him a great many times, and in a very pretty way, too, not just in common talk. And I believe that is the way he does, and you need not try to make me think he forgives me right at once, no matter what the Bible says.”

There are many who act just as this little girl said she believed. They forget that God is just as eager to forgive this one sin as he was to forgive all their sins when they were converted. His love reaches out with the same abounding mercy as at the beginning.

Sins are grievous; but once committed there is only one thing to do. “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

Chapter XVI

Let the Spirit of God Lead You

The Christian life is a spiritual life, fed on spiritual food, by means of spiritual agencies. The young convert has started for a distant goal, heaven, and the way he does not know only as it is revealed to him. There are duties to perform in the service of God, and of these also the new-born babe in Christ is ignorant except as the Spirit may make known what they are.

The first thing for the young convert to realize is that God knows all the way to heaven, knows all the duties the convert is to perform, knows all the dangers, byways, pitfalls, and traps of the enemy along life's pathway, and that he will lead without a misstep those who seek his guidance and will listen to and obey his voice. Let this point be fully established in your mind, that it is God's work to see you safely through to glory, and it is your business to trust God fully to lead you every day. You are to learn and to follow the voice of the Spirit: "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

The voice of the Spirit is the same voice as convicted you of your sins, the same voice as spoke peace to your soul when you believed, and which is now to lead you into the right, away from wrong, and into paths of duty. That Spirit is to show you how to

STEPS HEAVENWARD

walk and please God in your every-day life; your whole inner spiritual life is to be guided into being what the Lord would have it be.

God has more than one way by which he will reveal his will to you. Among these are: By the Word, by providential circumstances, by common sense, and by the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. God may speak in more than one way, but the message must always be the same. When God tells you by one voice to do or not to do any given thing, he is not going to tell you the opposite by another voice. When the voices contradict each other, the speaker is not the same. If all would follow this rule, it would prevent much fanaticism and trouble.

Of these agencies, the one by which the Lord chiefly leads us is the Word. When in doubt on any subject, consult the Bible and see whether it has anything to say on the point. The Bible is marvelously complete in its directions for holy living. Suppose you desire to know how to dress to the glory of God; read 1 Pet. 3:3, 4 and 1 Tim. 2:9. If instructions are desired on conversation, read Eph. 4:29 and 5:4; on conformity to the world, read Rom. 12:2 and 1 John 2:15-17.

Whatever is plainly taught in the Bible will not be contradicted by the Holy Spirit. A certain woman, instead of doing as the Bible said, went to pray about the wearing of gold, and asked for a special revelation. When the revelation came it was in direct opposition to the Word of God. We are to try the spirits, the impressions, and all such inner movings and promptings, we are to try these by the Word, and when not in harmony with it, they are to be rejected.

There are a great many things, however, that you cannot find specific directions upon in the Bible. The Bible is a great book of

STEPS HEAVENWARD

principles. Many problems in life confront one that require some other leading to know the mind of God. For instance, the Bible says it is honorable to marry; and yet one would not think of yoking for life with the first person he meets. It says to go into all the world and preach the gospel, but yet none should go without a special call to that work. Therefore there is a place for the direct leadings of the Spirit. These “leadings” of the Spirit will be along simple lines of duty in the beginning, as public testimony and prayer, exhortation, praying for the sick, working at the altar with sinners, and similar religious work.

Providential circumstances also may lead us in God’s way. If an opportunity comes before you to do good, take it as the voice of God. I knew of a young Christian girl whose hope and ambition was to marry and preside over a home of her own, but who gave up her plans, for a time, to care for her aged father. That, she felt, was her duty, and the call of duty is the voice of God.

Impressions must be tested by the Word and by common sense to see whether they are of God, of man, or of the devil. If the thing you are impressed to do is in harmony with the Bible, if it appeals to your better judgment as being the right thing to do, and if there are no spiritual checks or warnings against it, it is safe to do that; but otherwise the impression had better be rejected for the time being at least, as out of order. Sometimes we may be impressed that such and such a work is God’s will for us; but the way must be opened before it is time to enter upon that work. No two God-given duties conflict, and the duty nearest at hand is the one God would have us engage in, until he opens the way for some other duty.

Young convert, when you go to a testimony-meeting and hear God’s children telling what the Lord has done for them, you may

STEPS HEAVENWARD

suddenly feel some inward impulse impelling you to testify also. That is the voice of the Spirit, he is leading you to glorify Christ by witnessing to what he has done for you. Arise at once, open your mouth and speak just as you feel to speak, and as soon as the impulse leaves, sit down. At another service you may as suddenly feel that you should lead in public prayer. This is the Spirit of God leading you to glorify Christ. Kneel and pray, speaking the words as they come naturally to your mind. At still another time you may be at a public meeting and a time comes when an exhortation to either saints or sinners is to the glory of God, and you feel an inner impelling to exhort. This is the Spirit's leadings, prompting you to Christian duty. Arise and speak as God gives you words. These simple beginnings lead on to higher responsibilities. And on the other hand you may just as plainly feel the voice of the Spirit warning you against doing wrong. Thus the Holy Spirit leads into duty, away from sin and evil, and prepares the Christian to glorify Jesus Christ in this world.

No one knows the traps, snares, and spiritual pitfalls set along the way to heaven by the enemy to capture unwary Christians. But God knows every one, knows where they are, at just what point or period in life we shall strike them, and how to protect us from them. Place your hand, young convert, in the hand of God, and like a child by its father's side look up to God and ask him to guide you safely through all the rugged way and into heaven. If you will live humble and trustful and obey the Spirit's voice, you will never be ensnared into evil.

Travelers to Switzerland usually climb the Alps. Guides who know the way are provided for the climbers, and it is the duty of the climbers to obey without a question the commands of their guide. No independent action is allowed, not even a general

STEPS HEAVENWARD

opinion is permitted to develop into action; all must do exactly as the guide says, and a false step might endanger the lives of the whole band, who are bound together by a long rope. It is the same with you and Christ; his every command is to be instantly obeyed, for your own protection and for your own good.

Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets." Here is another danger to the young convert. There will be cries of, "Lo here is Christ," "Lo there is Christ." Many will solicit you for membership in a church, every "ism" will try to enroll you as a member. Remember, young Christian, that the very moment you were converted you became a member of the true church of God. Nothing can ever make you any more a member of it than you were then. Your name is enrolled in the "Lamb's book of life," the church's roll-call.

The conditions of membership in God's church are salvation. Your heavenly Father's will says to you, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). You will find many churches that have as many unbelievers as believers. Enter them not. Abide with Christ in the church he built. If you ask, "What Church shall I join?" the Bible answer is, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12: 13), which is the same as saying, Join nothing, but be inducted by the Holy Spirit into that spiritual church of which Jesus is founder and head.

In this life of yielding to and following God, do not fail to have faith in him. Have faith that God will really lead you, and trust him implicitly to lead you. Your friends and worldly companions may often wonder at the way you go, and even some of your best friends may advise you against following out what you deeply feel to be God's will. But follow God. The worldly point of view is vastly different from God's point of view. Your friends see things as they think they are, and they plan for you a

STEPS HEAVENWARD

life which they think will be most successful. But God can see all the way, and what they call success may be failure with him.

The only safe way is to give ourselves fully to God, and be glad to be led by the Holy Spirit. In the plan of God for you, young convert, lies the largest, fullest, and most successful life. Do not mar that divine plan by listening to other voices, nor by following your own inclinations. Yield to God and let him direct your way. On and on he will lead you, more and more beautiful will grow your life and more and more abundant your labors of love, and at the end eternal heaven and bliss forevermore.

Chapter XVII

Grieving the Spirit

The Spirit of God brings new life to the new-born babe in Christ. That new life is of the same nature as the Spirit. It came from God and delights in all that the triune God delights in. Whatever is contrary to the nature of this new life from God is displeasing to the Spirit, therefore the young convert should be careful to do those things which he knows are pleasing to God and refrain from those things which he knows are displeasing to him. Anything that will grieve the Spirit of God is hurtful to our best interests, and anything that is beneficial to us will have the sanction of the Holy Spirit. Grieving the Spirit means doing things, not exactly sinful, but that are harmful, tending in the wrong direction, and weakening to our faith and hope in God. Grieving the Spirit may lead to open sin, and cause the Spirit to leave us dead and lifeless.

Indifference is very grieving to the Spirit of God. "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth," said the Spirit to an ancient church (Rev. 3:15, 16) . . . Lukewarmness means indifference. To be indifferent means that it makes little or no difference to one how he lives or what becomes of him. Satan will tend to all the indifferent ones. He is at work now on the

STEPS HEAVENWARD

chains that will bind the indifferent ones to their own destruction. Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is represented as being coaxed and persuaded to tarry behind in the City of Destruction and not be in such a hurry to go; but instead of listening to the deadly appeals of his worldly friends, he stopped his ears against their pleadings and ran, ran away from them, crying "Life! life! eternal life.", When the angel came down into Sodom to take Lot and his family to a place of safety while the Lord burned up the wicked place, he took them out of the city, and said: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Gen. 19:17).

Neglect is very grieving to the Spirit. Neglect of prayer, neglect of reading the Bible, neglect of assembling together—neglect of Christian duties, neglect of the soul's best interests.

Your progress in the Christian way, yes, your very life, young convert, depends upon your being wide awake to the things of life and death. Feelings of indifference and temptations to be neglectful must be most earnestly resisted. Backsliding and loss of soul seldom come of a sudden, they are generally preceded by indifference and neglect.

Carelessness is very grieving to the Spirit. Careless of the company you keep, careless of keeping your promises, careless of how you think, speak, and live, such as this leads to sin and backsliding.

Anything that opposes your soul's higher interests is grieving to the Spirit of God. You must never lose sight of the main issue, the great fact that you have an immortal soul to be saved or to be lost. Anything that obscures that main issue or prevents your doing everything possible to save your soul is grieving to the Spirit. You, of course, have or will have many temporal interests to care for,

STEPS HEAVENWARD

and it will be entirely right to care for these interests provided they do not take the lead and become matters of chief concern. Jesus told of a man who had so many “things”, that he pulled down his old barns and built greater, and there he put his goods. And he then said he had so much that he would eat, drink, and be merry. That night he died. Jesus said he was a fool, because he neglected his soul to take more care of the body than it needed.

Earnestness is very necessary to your success. We are told to “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.” We are told that the Christian life is like that of a soldier, and that it is like running in a race, things that require most strenuous application. A soldier in the battle has all his energies centered on one thing, the gaining of the battle; a runner in a race has all his powers concentrated on one single issue, the winning of the race. This is the spirit with which you must start out on the Christian way to heaven. You must determine that everything must stand aside when the interests of your soul are at stake, that to gain heaven is the chief business of your life. When you put such earnestness into your Christian life as a runner does into his running, you will find yourself rapidly growing in the grace of God—and the danger of grieving the Spirit is greatly lessened.

If we grieve the Spirit of God, it leads to chastisement—in plain words, a whipping. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb. 12:6). “Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness” (Heb. 12:9, 10).

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Whenever you, either knowingly or ignorantly, engage in something not to your soul's best interests, the Spirit will check you in it. There will be an inward doubt about the propriety of doing that thing. If you continue, you will be chastened of the Lord. His stripes he will lay upon you just as a good father sometimes lays the stripes on the back of a son who has been disobedient. If you knowingly go against your soul's higher interests, you will be beaten with "many stripes"; if ignorantly, with "few stripes." Whenever you neglect your duty, you will feel the inner conviction that you have not fully discharged all your duties, and again will the Lord scourge you.

This chastening or scourging may be done in a variety of ways. It may be the direct chiding of the Spirit in our hearts. This is the most effective chastisement, if we are wise enough to take it that way. In this kind the Lord shows us the mistake, the neglect, the error, or whatever it is, and points it out very definitely, gently admonishing us of the misstep, while we acknowledge it with sorrow and with promises to do better.

If this is not effectual, or if, rather, we are too hard-headed to listen to the Lord directly, then he may let trials or distresses or losses come upon us. We are in the Lord's school, and if one method will not teach us to listen to his voice, he tries some other way. A certain man was called to preach, but he was so set against it that not till after his wife died, his children died, and various losses came upon him did his will yield to the will of God.

Young convert, "despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him" (Heb. 12:5). You are called to walk in a holy path, and your Father's corrections and chastisements are exactly what you need to prevent your going astray.

Chapter XVIII

Conformity to Jesus

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pet. 2: 21, 22). And Paul says we were foreordained to “be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18).

Nothing is plainer in the Bible than that the Christian is to be like Jesus. Look at the apostles! When they first came into contact with Jesus, they were not very much like him. Every now and then in their association with him we see the contrast. Once in a storm they saw Jesus coming on the water and they thought it was a ghost, and they cried out for fear. Once they wanted to call fire down from heaven to kill some Samaritans. And they quarreled about getting the chiefest place in the kingdom. They were not just like Jesus; there were some differences in the point of view and in the disposition of heart. But after three years of looking at Jesus and especially after Pentecost the apostles became like Jesus. They were brave, they were kind and full of love, they bore persecution humbly like Jesus, and nearly every one of them died for Jesus. The transforming power of Christ made them act like Jesus.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

Jesus is the Christian's great pattern, the one perfect model and example. A Christian is a *Christian*, a follower of Jesus, one who learns of him and lives like him.

Young converts are called to live again in a sinful world the life of Jesus. Young converts, like the apostles, cannot at once live just like Jesus, they have begun to live as he lived, but there must be considerable correcting before they become full men in Christ. But the young babe in Christ is a son of God, and that divine life will most surely produce a mature Christian by and by. Everything that lives must have time to grow, and all things that begin must be given time to come to perfection. Babies are perfect babies but not perfect men; so a new convert is a perfect babe in Christ, but he will become more like Christ as he continues to view in the mirror the glory of God.

The important thing to do is to keep our promise to the Lord to live for him. He will see to the keeping of us, and our life will be more and more like his.

To be like Jesus we must have a clear idea of whom Jesus is. The picture of him must be clear. Where do we obtain that picture? You have seen photographs that were taken on a cloudy day or in places where the light did not shine upon the object being photographed. The result was a blurred, dim picture. Some people's picture of Jesus seems to have been taken in the dark, in the gloom, and not in the clear light of the gospel.

We obtain a true picture of Jesus in the New Testament. The light of him shines forth from it. The young convert should take pains to read the New Testament thoroughly. Its meaning may not always be plain, and you will find obscure passages, but the more you read and meditate the clearer becomes the meaning and the brighter becomes the picture of Jesus. Always remind yourself that

STEPS HEAVENWARD

you are the Lord's never to turn back, and always keep in mind that you are to be a Bible Christian, like Jesus, not a mere average Christian as we see them today.

There are only two possibilities on this line of conformity. We shall either be conformed to Jesus or be conformed to the world. We cannot be conformed to both at the same time. One excludes and drives out the other. And more than this, young Christian, the tendency of your life, now, since you are saved, will be one way or the other. You will be conformed either more and more to Jesus or more and more to the world. And if you become so conformed to this world that you become like it, Jesus himself would not know you as a Christian if he should see you. Take great care which way you are going.

If a farmer or a plow-boy wants to make a straight furrow, he marks something across the field to look at. From that object he does not take his eye. If the newborn babe looks steadfastly to Jesus, he will see more and more the beauty of Jesus, and that seeing will make him more like Jesus. He will be changed into the same image. But if he gets his eyes on the world, he will become more and more worldly, he will be changed into the same image as the world is. Alas! many young converts get their eyes on the wrong image.

There is a secret about this seeing Jesus and being conformed to him. When Christians in olden times were burned at the stake, the spectators and executioners wondered from whence came the sustaining grace to those martyrs. Jesus said we should pray to the Father in secret and he would reward us openly. The Christ like life manifest to the world must feed in secret upon spiritual food. The Christian must find his strength renewed by constantly looking to Jesus.

STEPS HEAVENWARD

We become like those we associate with, and if in the secret closet we hold intimate conversation with Jesus, drink of his Spirit, gain his view of life, become filled with his love—we shall be conformed to him. The measure of our conformity is the measure of our usefulness. Strive to represent Jesus to the world by close conformity to him.

Chapter XIX

Conformity to the World

“Be not conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2). Conformity to this world is the opposite of being conformed to Jesus. Jesus and the world are enemies. The world crucified Jesus. The world persecuted and killed the apostles. The world murdered the early saints. And the world hates righteousness and Christ today. The spirit of the world is the disposition that rules unregenerated man, and that disposition came from the devil, who planted it in man at the disobedience in Eden. All worldly people are under the dominion of the devil, subjects of his kingdom. The spirit of this world and the spirit of God exclude each other, where one is enthroned, the other cannot be.

How does the spirit of the world manifest itself? John says: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

This plainly sets forth the spirit of the world. Conformity to this spirit means to crave for worldly pleasure, to desire to enjoy

STEPS HEAVENWARD

the world; to crave for property, or to desire to possess this world; to crave for glory, or to desire to be honored by this world—these are the chief manifestations of the spirit of the world: viz, to have pleasure, to have property, to have fame.

The manifestations of the spirit of the world all have one end—the glorification of man. This spirit of the world makes man himself the central point of the world; all creation, so far as he can control it, is to serve him. The man seeks his life in the visible and in the present time. Man himself becomes the end, center, and whole of everything. He seeks his own life, his own blessings, his own pleasure and prosperity. Let others do the same, he says. And they do; and so the world has clashes—strife's, wars, and constant trouble. The spirit of Christ is to live, not for self and not for the visible, but for God and for the eternal and invisible.

One can easily know for himself as to whether he is moved by the spirit of God or by the spirit of the world. Whenever we care for the earthly, for what we shall eat, drink, or wear, for what we possess or hope to possess, for what we can have brought forth and made to increase, when these are the chief concern of our lives, then we are moved by the worldly spirit, we are conformed to the world.

When one looks at the average Christian professor he is forced to say that most of them are moved by a worldly spirit. If the young convert does not make for his aim in life a higher mark than the average Christian, he might as well not have started.

Worldly pleasure is perhaps the most deadly foe of young people lately converted. Youth's natural exuberance of spirit calls for something as a diversion. The worldly spirit has made thousands of inventions which cater to this spirit of youth. And many inventions are used to gratify the intense craving for

STEPS HEAVENWARD

excitement that exists in most young people. The spirit of this world invented the modern dance, with its intermingling of sexes, it invented the theatre, the moving-picture show, the playing-card games, the dice, pool and billiards, and many others.

Young convert, you will not find Christ in these places of amusement. Be not conformed to this world. There are plenty of ways, innocent ways, in which you can find wholesome amusement. It is entirely right to play most of the common games, the only ones you need to avoid being those of a questionable nature. Social affairs if wholesome and free from foolishness, are in keeping with Christ's standard.

As you love your soul, beware of this world; for it has slain its thousands and its ten thousands. Jesus said; "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Paul mournfully said, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." The Demas' are yet with us, and the Judas', and those others who are ensnared by the spirit of the world.

In one of the most wonderful parables Jesus gave, we find that the coming in of the world choked out the good seed and it brought forth no fruit. "The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Pray that this be not your fate.

Chapter XX

Claim Your Inheritance

If news should reach you today that someone had left a rich inheritance to you, what would you do? Would you treat it indifferently—throw the letter away, and say you did not care anything about it? Of course not. You would be interested through and through, and you would seek to find out all about your inheritance—where it was and of what it consisted. You would bubble over with joy, and run to tell your near friends about it.

Just so will you be pleased to know that a new-born soul is an heir of God. “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:7). “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29).

There is provided for you through the blood of Christ the most wonderful portions of grace, there are in God’s storehouse riches of spiritual blessings the half of whose greatness has never been told. God’s plan of salvation is so deep that the stains of the deepest sins are completely wiped away, so wide that no extent of evil is wider, so reasonable that the simplest person can understand it. Paul prays that we “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be

STEPS HEAVENWARD

filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:18, 19). And he prays again that, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we “may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph. 1:18).

Reference was made in the first texts quoted about an inheritance, about being “heirs.” Paul in these texts refers back to the Abrahamic covenant, a promise by which God would bless all the world through Abraham, besides giving to Abraham’s seed the Land of Promise, Canaan. Now, says Paul, “if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). Heirs, we ask, of what promise? The land of Canaan? Does God now promise each child of his a temporal home in the Holy Land, Palestine? No, that is not the true meaning of the promise. That was the true meaning of that part of the Abrahamic covenant which pertained to Abraham’s literal seed, the literal, blood-line descendants. They inherited the literal land of Canaan. And thereto hangs an interesting story, a type or shadow of God’s twofold salvation of men through Jesus Christ.

You will remember, or will find by reading, that Abraham’s children, the Israelites, were terribly afflicted in Egypt. This corresponds to the bondage you once endured while in sin, before your conversion. Just as they had to slave with taskmasters at their back, so you and I and all others once were driven by the power of sin where we would not. But the cry of the poor enslaved Israelites reached the ears of God, and he planned a miraculous deliverance under Moses. At the crossing of the Red Sea the power of God opened up the water, and the Israelites went through on the dry ground. Once across, they sang the Song of Moses, the song of deliverance. Thus did God also miraculously convert your soul and bring you out of satanic bondage, and you sang a new song of

STEPS HEAVENWARD

praise unto the Lord for salvation. But Canaan was the home of Israel. God had, hundreds of years previous to this, promised it to Abraham and to his seed, and Israel was on its journey to that Canaan land. Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey, a good land: by and by they possessed that good land.

Now, we said a while ago that if we are Christ's we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. This, we saw, could not be literal Canaan, and, hence, we see it must refer to some spiritual Canaan, some spiritual experience corresponding in some way to the Canaan experience of the Israelites. Paul himself explains it when he says: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14).

Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16, 17). "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). Do you comprehend the greatness of Christ's promise? "I will send him unto you." He says, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Jesus says, "I will send him," the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, "whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

This is your inheritance then, to possess and be possessed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to the apostles just before he ascended to heaven that, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost

STEPS HEAVENWARD

is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came, filled them, and gave them power to witness for Christ. Every Christian needs this power, this spiritual victory which follows the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon God’s dear children. After the Jews had seen, on that great day of Pentecost, the remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, and at the close of preaching the gospel to them, Peter said, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38, 39). Therefore, young convert, the Holy Spirit is for you in his fullness, and you need that Spirit to lead you, teach you, and seal you to the day of the resurrection.

In John 17, Jesus prayed that all who believe on him might be “sanctified.” This word may be a new one to you; and some people make light of the idea of being sanctified. But Jesus prayed for you, as one of his believing disciples, that you might be sanctified. Paul said he was sent to the Gentiles “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18). Here again this great inheritance is spoken of as being sanctification. But the outpouring of the Spirit and sanctification are one and the same thing: for the offering up of the Gentiles is made acceptable, “being sanctified by the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 15:16). And we are “elect . . . through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:2).

STEPS HEAVENWARD

One thing you will desire to know, and that is how to obtain this outpouring of the Spirit, this blessed experience of entire sanctification. It is by consecration, “present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1), and by faith, “sanctified by faith” (Acts 26:18). We are both to consecrate ourselves and have the faith—these are the conditions upon which we shall obtain our inheritance. Consecration means giving or dedicating ourselves in a solemn covenant with God to be his forever and to let him have his way with us, always. It is a consecration to obey and trust God, obey his commands and trust his providences. In this consecration we lay ourselves upon God’s altar, like the Israelite laid his animal sacrifice on the ancient altar, and forever after consider ourselves as God’s, and his will is to be our delight. Whatever, after this consecration, God asks us to do, we shall do, or say, we shall say, or wherever he asks us to go, we shall go. We are to belong absolutely to the Lord and our wills are to be brought to harmonize with God’s will. We place ourselves on the altar and there we stay. Whether we live or die, be sick or well, rich or poor, persecuted or slain, we are still the Lord’s alone. Our talents, time, property, and mind and spirit, all are surrendered and given over to God’s service.

When we give all over to God and feel assured that nothing is reserved to self, then our faith can ask for the Spirit and he will come, to fill, and cleanse, and seal.

Since the inheritance spoken of is for God’s saved children, it follows that salvation is twofold; we are first converted to God and justified from our sins, and in the second step we are sanctified, or cleansed from “all sin,” and made “pure in heart.”

You will feel, if you have not already felt, some things in your heart not exactly in harmony with righteousness. Many young

STEPS HEAVENWARD

converts have been surprised to find elements of anger and malice and such like stirring in their souls at times, and though they may have kept quiet and held all in check, yet the presence of sin within is very uncomfortable. But it is there and it is that very thing the Lord wants to save you from in the blessed experience of sanctification.

You may find professed preachers and teachers of the gospel, young Christian, who will tell you that you cannot expect to be delivered from all sin while you live. They will quote various texts of Scripture and pervert their meaning to prove this contention for sin. They are false prophets, and to listen to them is dangerous. Why should it be thought illogical for God to save from all sin? Is it consistent for him to forgive past sins and leave the roots of sin in the soul, roots that are liable to sprout up into actual sin? Such is not a consistent view of God's plan. Can we forget that the same holy God who hates sins in the sinner cannot tolerate sin to remain in the believer? Sin is the work of the devil, and Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil. When man was first created, there was no sin in him, hence sin is not a necessary part of man, furnishes nothing for his well-being, and only does him harm. Jesus is the Redeemer, the Restorer of the soul, the Savior, and by the power of his blood the least and last remnants of sin can be purged from your heart.

This, then, is the inheritance standing ready for you, ready to be yours whenever you claim it as your own by faith. Spiritual Canaan, holiness, sanctification, perfect love, is promised to you, and if you will give God yourself by a new and perfect consecration and by faith appropriate this great favor of God, it shall be yours. When Jesus prayed that his disciples might be sanctified, he included all believers (John 17:17-21). That includes

STEPS HEAVENWARD

you. He prayed that you might be sanctified, and you will want his will to be done in you and his prayer to be answered.

Your hope of standing true, of resisting steadfast unto the end, of finally entering the eternal home of the soul depends upon your being fully saved from all sin. To allow any sinful element to remain within or about you will be tolerating an enemy that may overthrow you. The chances of being overthrown are more when sin is in the heart, the chances and probabilities of being successful in the Christian life are heightened if we receive the perfect cleansing. As you love your soul, love God, and value heaven, come to God for all he has for you.

Will you have your inheritance? Will you press your claim? God's part is done, Jesus' part is complete, the Holy Spirit stands ready—what will you do? With joyful heart yield your life anew to God and prove his good and acceptable will. Prove for yourself what riches of grace God has for obedient and consecrated souls. Never be satisfied till you have tasted the joys of full salvation, the entire sanctification of yourself to the will of God. You will then indeed be one of the “elect,” and if you keep your part of the contract you are certain to abide with God forever.

