

The Hidden Life

or

Walks With God



Charles E. Orr

The Hidden Life or Walks with God

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How Sweet Is My Walk With Jesus

How sweet is my walk with Jesus!
What blessings he breathes on me!
We walk in the golden morning,
And oh, how my soul is free!

How sweet is my walk with Jesus!
His whispers of peace I hear,
His banner of love is o'er me,
And angels are hovering near.

How sweet is my walk with Jesus!
I love all the way he trod;
Embraced in his sweet communion,
I'll walk with the Son of God.

I turn from the paths of pleasure
And closer to Jesus press;
I walk with my dear Redeemer
In his perfect holiness.

Oh, sweet is my walk with Jesus!
How gently he smiles on me!
Yet nearer my Lord so precious—
Oh, help me to walk with thee!

—D. S. Warner.

Introduction

It is the desire of every true Christian not only to know about the “hidden life,” but also to enter the portals and secret chambers that give access to the rich treasures of heaven. It is too often the case that those who take upon themselves the name of Christians plod along the way year after year with scarcely a realization of the presence and the power of God. They have never learned the secret of how to walk with God and to enjoy the sweet communion thereby afforded. There is, however, a plain pathway leading up to the very portals of this treasure-house, where the doors stand open wide before every pilgrim seeking to know the hidden mysteries within and to enjoy the rich blessings of the love of God.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,” are precious and truthful words of the Psalmist. But just how to find this secret place and to enter therein, the anxious soul seeks to know. This little volume reveals the secret and points out the way whereby the life of a Christian may be a blessed one and all his pathway be strewn with roses, even though amidst many thorns. It shows how temptations are overcome and trials are superseded by victory, while the soul is enriched by the grace of God. The perusal of only a few pages will cause the reader to become conscious of the necessity of a closer walk with God, and will plant a desire in the heart, together with a

determination, to know more of the deep things of God to be found in the hidden life.

With a fervent desire that every reader may receive a benefit and learn to know more about the blessings of the Christian life and continually enjoy the love of God, I remain,

Yours in Him,

—E. E. Byrum

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How delightful to walk with those whom we love! How blessed is the companionship of true and faithful friends! As our hearts commune together, we grow deeper into each other's love. The husband and wife grow so deeply into each other's affections that they seem to live in each other. They are of one heart and soul and life, and so much like each other are they that to meet one is to meet both. God is man's true friend. Never was there a love for man like God's love. Oh! the wide, deep, and unfathomable love of God. It encircles the universe. It reaches to the most insignificant of His creatures. You may have other friends of His creatures. You may have other friends and those who love you, but He is the truest friend, and no love is as His love. How sweet must it be to walk with Him! How blessed must be the companionship of such a true and faithful friend! How glorious to commune with Him as heart talks to heart and to feel oneself growing deeper in His love! To live in Him and to have our being in Him and to have Him dwell in us is to have heaven in us and to be in heaven.

In giving the biography of some men, whole volumes have been written. The three-hundred-years history of one man is told in these few words: "He walked with God." Men have conquered nations, discovered continents, built cities, founded empires; and volumes are required to tell of all they have done. But Enoch did more—"he

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walked with God.” What a history! Whole volumes have said less than this.

But this privilege did not belong to Enoch alone; it is yours, reader, and it is mine. We have the blessed privilege of engraving this epitaph upon the hearts and the minds of men: “He walked with God.”

It is not said that God walked with Enoch, but that Enoch walked with God. Some heart might sighingly say, “Oh, that God would walk with me!” Let the sighings of thy heart be changed to saying, “Oh, let me walk with God!” There are many who would be pleased to have God walk with them, but who will not walk with Him. God’s course was marked out before man was created. From this course He never turns. If you desire His companionship, you must walk in His way. Some seek the honor of walking with men of renown, but no higher honor can be given man than the privilege of walking with God. Others may delight to sit in the court of kings and desire to walk in the way with lords and noblemen; but my heart craves naught else than a walk with God.

God will condescend to walk with those who walk with Him; but if you would walk with Him, you must go in the ways in which He leads. Suppose you and another man took a ride through the country. He owned the horse and carriage, and did the driving. He went the way he desired. You went along for the sake of companionship. You do not say that the man rode with you, but that you rode with him. When you see a little child walking by the side of its father with its hand in his, you say that the child is walking with its father. It goes where its father leads. But you could not say that the child was walking with the father if the father was being led aside by the child in its chase after the gay butterfly. To walk with the Lord, you must put your hand in His and go where He leads.

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“But take diligent heed ... to love the Lord your God and to walk in ALL his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.” Josh. 22:5. You will not fail to notice, I trust, that you are here commanded to be diligent to walk **in all His ways**. The ways in which you are to walk, if you walk with God, are all to be His ways. None are to be yours. Let me here speak to you very feelingly. The simple reason why you do not have a satisfactory walk with God is because you have not left all your own ways. Here is a very precious secret not found by everyone. You would walk with God in a great many of His ways and would leave many of your ways; but there is one little way you are loath to leave. Whenever the way of God begins to lead you from that way, you feel a little uneasy and almost ready to murmur. You have had many pleasant hours along that way of yours. The lust of the eye has been so often gratified there that, indeed, it seems like plucking out the eye to leave that way. Oh, how difficult to turn away from it! So many fond recollections are clustering along that way. Some dear friend is walking there, with whom you are loath to part company. It may be a father or a mother, a husband or a wife, or children. It may be houses or lands. But all these must be forsaken to walk with Jesus.

One young man asked, “Must I forsake my mother to walk with God?” The reply was, “Yes, you must forsake your mother—you must forsake all.” But here is the explanation: This is not meant in the literal sense. You need not leave her home, but you cannot walk in her ways if she walks in sin. If she will forsake her ways to walk in God’s ways then you and she will walk in the same way; but you cannot walk in the Spirit with anyone who does not walk with God. When their associations would interfere with your walk with God, you must forsake even that. To walk with Jesus means for you to forsake everything that would hinder your walk with Him. Herein

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lies the precious secret of a safe, prosperous, and happy Christian life.

A walk with God is a satisfactory walk. He who walks with God is delighted all the way. Alas! many who are hoping that they are Christians and that they will reach the fair climes of heaven and there delight themselves in God are quite dissatisfied with their walk here. A dissatisfied walk on earth never ends in heaven. Wherever God is, there is heaven, and wherever heaven is, there the soul is satisfied; consequently, to walk with God satisfies the soul. It is only when man chooses his own way and walks apart from God that life becomes dissatisfactory. Those who choose their own way will meet with disappointment and with difficulties that they will not be able to overcome. In God's ways there are no disappointments. When our wills are submitted to Him and we humbly and submissively walk where He leads us, we meet with no disappointments. A trusting saint said in a recent conversation:

“I can be satisfied only when I know I am in the way with Jesus; only when I know my hand is in His and He is leading me. I would not take one little way without Him. One step without His leading may be fatal. I can walk through darkness in safety when He leads. I would rather walk through the furnace flame with Jesus than through the fields of roses without Him. Amid the flowers there may be a thorn to prick me, but the furnace flame cannot kindle upon me when Christ is by my side.”

As remarked before, to walk with God one must follow where He leads. The command is, “Be ye followers of God as dear children.” A friend remarked, “Oh! if I only knew where He would lead me, or if I could only see to the end of the way.” Thou foolish child! Such a faint heart cannot walk with God. One night during a very heavy rain a father and child were compelled to walk a mile to

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a neighbor's through water up to the child's waist. When their wet clothes were exchanged for dry, the neighbor said to the boy, "Were you not much afraid while walking through the deep water?" "No, Sir," said the boy, "Papa was with me." Though our walk with God may lead us through deep water, we need not fear; for God hath said, "they shall not overflow thee." A vessel at one time was in an angry storm at sea. Among the many passengers on board was a skeptic, a Christian lady, and her little boy. During the storm the skeptic was in great alarm, but he could not help noticing the calmness and restfulness of the lady and her boy. After the storm was over, he talked with the boy.

"My child," he began, "were you not afraid during the storm?"

"No, Sir," replied the boy.

"And why were you not afraid?" inquired the skeptic.

"Because my mama was with me," answered the lad.

Turning to the mother, the skeptic said, "Lady, were you not afraid during such a storm?"

"No, Sir," replied the woman.

"And why were you not afraid?" he asked.

"Because," said she, "my Father was with me."

Sometimes the way in which God leads you may be through the storm and through the dark, but you need not fear nor falter. Only listen, and you will hear him saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee. He may lead you over some stony places, but he is only bringing you to the green pastures and the still waters just beyond. He may need to lead you close by a dark and dangerous precipice in order to bring you into the land of flowers in the valley. One time there was something I very greatly desired. I sought for a time, at the advice of

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my friends to seek for it in MY way, but I found it not. At that time I felt the Lord calling me in a way I had not walked before. The way led through some privation and suffering, and it seemed to lead directly away from that which I had been seeking. Nevertheless I decided to follow where Jesus led me, be that where it might. After I had passed through some suffering and tests, behold, he brought me to the very thing I was desiring. Blessed be His name!

Jesus knows best. If you could see down your future way, your eye would rest only upon the dangerous precipice or on the stony place, and you would fail to see the green pastures, the still waters, and the flowery fields lying beyond.

Abraham started with his only son, Isaac, whom he loved, to go into the land of Moriah, there to offer him upon one of the mountains as a burnt offering. The journey required three days. As they walked on their way, the happy, innocent boy said to Abraham, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" The father replied, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." The child went happily on his way, never thinking he was that lamb. Had the father told his son that he (Isaac) was to be slain and burnt upon the altar, in fear he would have seen the glare of the knife and have heard the crackling of the flames, and he would have failed to see the angel's delivering hand.

Behind every cross there is a crown; beyond every shadow there is sunshine; below the rapids is the still water. If you were to see the cross in the distance, you might shrink and consequently never wear the crown; if you saw the deepening shadow, you might never enjoy the sunshine; if you hear the rapids roar, you might never sail your bark on the tranquil waters. Not until the cross is

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reached will God give grace to bear the cross. Put your hand in God's and trust Him every step of the way—

Do not seek to know the future,
Do not stop to question why;
Follow where the Savior leads you,
Trust Him, trust Him all the way.

Never fear. He will be with you in the shadow. He will be with you when the waves are dashing your little bark about on life's sea. Listen, and in His own time you will hear Him say, "Peace, be still."

A devoted brother across the continent related to me by letter some of His experience, which finds an appropriate place here.

"Nine years ago God brought me out of darkness into this beautiful way. He gave me a fixed decision to follow where He would lead me. At the time I did not know what the cost would be, but I realized it would be safe to place my hand in the Lord's and walk life's way with Him. I felt sure that as long as I trusted and obeyed Him, He would do to me as He had promised. God said to walk with Him I must leave my medicine behind. This I did, whereupon He stretched forth His hand in healing power and healed me instantly. Not a symptom of the disease have I felt unto this day.

"My people became much opposed to me and tried in every manner to turn me from the way in which the Lord was leading me. Some time after I had taken the narrow way with Jesus, God in His loving providence saw fit to take unto Himself two of my children in one week. Because I trusted in God, I was bitterly persecuted, and threatened. My people endeavored to persuade me that God was not with me. Like those miserable comforters of Job's, they said that God was against me. I told them that though He should take every child I had and my dear companion and all, yet would I trust him.

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Well, God saw fit to put me to the test, in order to see whether I would hold my integrity. He took my little rosebud children one by one until all the six were blooming in heaven. Then He called for my companion. She who had been my comfort through the tests and the trials was called to join the happy throng on the other side of the river, and I was left to mourn alone.

“My people scoffed at religion. ‘How,’ asked they, ‘do you expect us to believe on God? Do you want Him to take our families as He has yours?’ This was the most trying of all, because I did so much desire them to serve my God. Satan tried me severely. He endeavored to make me feel so lonely; to feel that no one cared for me and that God had forsaken me. I was a poor outcast, my family were all gone, and my friends had turned against me. Satan tried to make me ashamed ever to smile again. There seemed to be no more cheer or sunshine in this world for me. The light had all gone out, and I was alone in the dark. But in the midst of all this I said, ‘The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’ I held fast my integrity and by God’s help did not sin.

“Soon the light of a happier day began to dawn. Some of my people began to be favorable to the blessed gospel truth. One of my brothers yielded to God and was saved. (He is now heralding the gospel which he once opposed.) Next came my dear old mother. Her salvation was the full rising of the sun to my soul. Then came another brother and later another. All these are in the blessed light of God and I am happy. I tasted the bitter, but now I am tasting of the sweet, and it tastes all the sweeter because of the bitter. I walked with God through the shadow, and now He has led me into the beautiful light. Bless His name!”—God has also given this brother a dear companion of gentle disposition and blesses them with a

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happy, sunny home. To take God's way is always best, because it ends best.

Daniel's walk with God led him through the den of lions, but it gave him victory over his enemies and brought him into greater favor with the king. The three young Hebrews that walked with God were led through the fiery furnace, but their promotion in the king's court lay just beyond. Peter's walk with God led him through the dungeon, but an angel's visit was awaiting him. Paul's walk led him through the perils of the sea, through hunger and fastings, through weariness and painfulness, through cold and nakedness, through perils of robbers and perils in the wilderness, through stoning and beating and whippings. Imagine this old man with his back bared and bowed beneath the lash. Hear the heavy strokes as they fall; see the blood flowing from the wounds; listen—what is that we hear him saying? Is he saying, "The way is too hard; the Lord has treated me too cruelly, and I will walk no more with Him"? Listen more closely. Ah! he is saying, "None of these things move me; nothing shall separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord. I reach forth to those things before; I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Henceforth a crown of righteousness is laid up for me."

My dear Christian reader, will you not seek a still closer walk with God—not for your happiness in life nor for your crown in heaven, but for the good your example may do to others? You know not what effect your life is having upon some other life. Your life is casting either sunshine or shadow behind you. This will linger long after you are gone. It will linger in the hearts and lives of others. Long, ah! long after you are gone from the shores of time, will live the effects of your good example. Many years will be required to efface from the sands of time the footprints you make while

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journeying through this life. In the earnestness of my soul I appeal to your hearts to seek diligently a close walk with God. The closer you walk with Him, the brighter will be the beams of light that will stream from your life down through the future years. Knowing this my soul cries out, “O God! help me to walk close to Thee, that I may be the greatest possible help to my fellow men and leave as much light in this world as I can.”

Recently, while a father and son were conversing upon the subject of inheritance, the son remarked, “Well, Father, since you are giving your life’s service freely to the Lord, I suppose I need not expect any great inheritance from your estate.” The father replied: “No, my son; I shall never have anything of this world and shall not be able to leave you any of its lands or silver or gold; but by the grace of heaven I will leave you the sunshine of a holy life, which, I trust, will lead your feet into the way of eternal life—a richer inheritance than the gold of earth.”—I owe my awakening to my sinful state and the realities of salvation to the example of a godly man.

How blessed it will be when, long after your body is laid in its narrow home, your name is spoken and someone remarks, “Ah! truly, that man walked with God.” Many of Christ’s persecutors in life said at His crucifixion, “Truly, this was the Son of God.” I knew a godly young man who was persecuted by many; but after God called him to a foreign field, many of his persecutors said, “Well, he was a good young man, after all!” You may be scoffed at in life; your name may be cast out as evil; you may be defamed and threatened; but after you are gone, many will say of you, “Truly that was a child of God.” As the pleasantness of summer days is never fully realized until the winter days have come; as the blessings of

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good health is never fully known until sickness comes; so the beauty of your Christian life will shine brighter after you are gone.

The term Enoch means dedication. Dedication is the yielding of your heart, your life, and your ways to God and walking with Him in **all His ways**. It is to follow where He leads; to bow submissive to His will, as the slender plant bends to the evening breeze or the ship is turned about by the helm. Thank God! You can be an Enoch. You can be dedicated to God. You can bow an humble suppliant at His feet and say:

Here is my heart—make it thy throne;
Here is my life—make it thine own;
Here are my eyes, lips, hands, and feet—
Take them and use them, I do implore;
They are thine now and forevermore.

O beloved, be not weary in the way. Toil on; heed not the wind and the wave. God is with you. With all the energy of your soul cleave to Him. As the vine clings to the towering oak, so cling to your God. Live for Him, show forth His praise, exalt His name, honor His word, serve Him faithfully, and from your life will flow the joyful message, “He walked with God.” This, falling upon the hearts and lives of other men, will be echoed to other generations and by them re-echoed to future generations and thus it will be echoed and re-echoed on to the great and final day, and the last earth will hear will be, “He walked with God, and God took him.”

The Hidden Life

“Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Col. 3:3. As the solemn chimes of the village curfew bell reverberate among the hills, announcing to all the close of another day and the bringing in of another night; so from out of this text comes pealing the deep and sacred sound, “Death—life, death—life,” which, reverberating along the corridors of time, announces to every Christian heart the close of a life of sin and the beginning of a life with God. Here is a mystery, O ye saints. Ye are both dead and alive. This inspired writer in another place says, “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” 1 Timothy 5:6.

These two texts include the whole human family. Those in one division are “dead in trespasses and sins” and alive to the world, to the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life. Those in the second division are dead to sin and alive unto God. It is this class that the apostle addresses in our first-quoted text.

In the life of a Christian there are four points we wish to consider— 1. They are dead. 2. They have life. 3. Their life is a hidden life. 4. Their life is hid with Christ in God.

1. The Christian is dead. Life comes only through death. “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” John 12:25. From these words of the Savior’s we understand plainly that he who will not die shall

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not live, but that he who dies shall live. To die is to give up the world, sin, and self, and to yield all to God. Then you shall live. He will give you life. "I am come that you might have life." But you cannot have that life unless you die. The sinner is alive to sin and the world, but he is dead to God and eternal life. The Christian is dead to sin and the world, but he is alive unto God.

There is a wide separation between the Christian and the sinner. Both have physical life, but it is not in this that they differ. The physical life of a sinner and that of a saint are the same in nature. A heart of flesh is in the physical body of each one which propels the blood through the body. The circulation, the respiration, and the digestion are the same in both. They both need to eat, drink, sleep, and breathe. The oxygen of the air is taken into the blood through the lungs of the one the same as with the other. The food is digested in each just alike and answers the same end. The five physical senses are the same in the life of the sinner as they are in the saint. The one has sight the same as the other. They both hear sound alike. Sugar tastes as sweet to one as to the other. The rose is fragrant to both. Both feel heat and cold. The great gulf of separation between saint and sinner is not found in the physical life. Nevertheless there is a vast difference between them, for the one is alive and the other is dead. But the difference is not in the physical life: for in this they both live, and this life in its nature is the same in both.

Man has a higher life than the physical life. He possesses a moral, or spiritual, being; and this spiritual being has life. It is in the life of this spiritual being that we find the difference between saint and sinner. The sinner is alive in sin but dead to God; while the saint is dead to sin and alive to God. The nature of their moral being is directly opposite. There is no communion nor affinity between them in a spiritual sense.

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You see two men driving by in a carriage. They look very much the same to you. They look the same because you see only the physical being, and in this way are flesh and blood alike; but in their moral being they may be as unlike as day is unlike the night. The condition of the moral being has some effect on the physical features, but it makes no change in the nature of the physical life. But spiritually speaking, one is dead; the other alive. One is sinful in his nature; the other righteous. The one walks in sin; the other walks with God in holiness. The one has eternal death in his soul; the other has eternal life. If the physical life of these two men should suddenly come to an end, the spirit being of one would be carried by the angels into the sweet paradise of God, while the spirit being of the other would be borne down to the regions of torment. Why is this? Because one has eternal life and the other eternal death. The one is a sinner and the other a saint.

Spiritually speaking, correspondence between saint and sinner is as completely cut off as is the correspondence between the creatures of earth and those on the planet Jupiter. No instrument has yet been invented whereby man can receive any intelligence from the beings on other worlds. Neither is there any communion between saint and sinner except in the physical realm. The Christian is raised up to a heavenly plane. He has been resurrected to a higher life. In the physical life the Christian and the sinner dwell together; but in the spiritual life the Christian is as high above the sinner as Jupiter is higher than earth.

There is correspondence between them in a physical sense. They converse together and do business together. They can talk about the beauty and the grandeur of the landscape because they can both see it. They can talk together about the sweet warbling of the birds, because they can hear both. They converse together

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concerning the pleasantness of the evening breeze, because they both can feel it. They comment together upon the delicious flavor of the peach, because they can both taste it. They speak together of the fragrance of the rose and comprehend each other, because they can both smell it. But when the saint begins to talk of the sweet tastes of the love of God and says the word of God is sweeter than honey and the honey comb, the sinner is silent. He knows nothing about this. These things are found in a higher life than sinners possess. If they will but die, they can then be resurrected to a life where they can have sweet tastes of God. Oh! thank God for the high and blessed life of a Christian!

To have your life hid with Christ in God is a sweet and safe and blessed experience. My soul adores God and tears of gratitude unbidden start at the remembrance of His goodness in elevating us above this world and in bringing our souls into correspondence with heavenly things. Oh, that we can be raised up so near to the golden gates of glory that we can hear celestial strains of music; that we can have sweet visions of God, can taste His love, and feel its warmth in our soul! Blessed experience! One little thrill of heavenly rapture rippled over the soul by the Spirit of God is worth more than years of the pleasures of this world.

There is a death fixed between the wicked and the righteous. If the unrighteous would get into communion with the righteous, he must die. We find in the natural world that life is gained only through death. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." This same law is found to exist in the spiritual world. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Except ye die, ye cannot live.

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Let me give you a panoramic view of the natural, sinful life of a human race. See a company of dancers in the brilliantly-lighted ballroom. See the gamblers at their crafty work. See the inebriate at the saloon counter drinking down the fiery liquid. That horrid scene yonder is a young woman of lost virtue seeking to wreck the lives of young men. That yonder is a secret-order hall, where heart appalling oaths are taken, where men practice abominations, and where God is blasphemed. Take a look at the pride and the revelry of the world; the cold, proud formalism of sectarian worship. See the sect professors in their church fair, their festival bazaar, and their many moneymaking and pleasure-affording amusements. See the spectators at the prize fight; at the wrestling match; at the horse race; at the football, baseball, and basketball games. See the cursers and the swearers, the chewers and the smokers, the jesters, and the jokers. Hear the vulgar, ungodly stories, the slang, the idle words. See the cheating and the stealing, the false vows and the broken promises. See the young lady dressing in her profusion of laces and ribbons and jewels. See the jealousies, the envyings, the strife, the confusion, the hatred, and the malice. See the young in their misguided courtship. See the abomination of the theatre. See the women of the world, decked with jewels and finery and paints and powders and bound by corsets. Look at the quarreling, the fighting, the murders, the divorces, the illegal marriages, the adulteries, etc.

Look this picture over carefully from top to bottom and from side to side, and include every sin that is not mentioned herein. See every heartbeat of a worldly, sensual life. To such a life the saint is dead, **dead, DEAD**. This is what the apostle meant when he said, "Ye are dead."

2. These Colossian saints had life. I have already brought in some points respecting the Christian life, but I will say further that

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this life is the Christ-life. It is gained by resurrection. Those Colossians were risen with Christ. They had passed from a state of death in sin to a life in Christ. They were new creatures. In Christ the Christian lives and moves and has his being. The miser loves to be near his gold. Its jingle is music in his ear. His life is tied up in the bags with his treasures; and when he is compelled to be separated from them for a time, how eagerly, when opportunity affords, does he return to them and commune with them! So the saint loves to be near Christ. There is music in His sweet whispers of love. When called apart by the secular things of life, the Christian returns with eagerness, when opportunity affords, to commune with Him who is his life.

Whatever is the life of a man, that is what he loves and that is what he would ever be near. That is what he feeds upon and what gives him delight. It nourishes him, and his life grows stronger. He would have more of that which feeds him and delights him. That is why Christians seek after God. They seek Him in prayer; they seek Him in the Bible; they seek Him in nature; they seek Him first of all in everything and in every place. They flee away from that which would hinder them in their pursuit. They lay aside every weight and everything that would come in between them and the object of their heart's love. A spirit-filled soul pants after God. It pursues His presence with as fervent desire as the miser seeks for gold. "My soul followeth hard after thee, O God," says the saint.

Some professors of religion can be satisfied and contented when absent from God; they can satisfy themselves with empty forms and cold ceremonies, because God is not their life. But the saint must often be admitted into the presence of God, must commune with him. His soul reaches forth for more of the divine life as the physical being does for air and food. As the physical man

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must breathe, or he will die, so the Christian's soul must feed upon God, or it will die. As man will sacrifice everything for food and breath, so the saint sacrifices everything for God. He forsakes all and he watches and prays lest something alienate his heart from God. The life that makes a man a Christian brings him into fellowship with God. It separates him from the world even as Jesus was separated from the world. This is life eternal. If he maintains his Christian integrity, he will die no more. The physical part will come to dissolution; it will lose correspondence with the world; but he (the man) will live on and on forever; he will never see death. Oh, wonderful and glorious life!

It may be that some reader who once had this life, did not guard it as he should and today is lifeless. He has lost his first love. Sad, indeed! but there is hope. The river of life is still flowing in all its crystal pureness and revivifying power fresh from the throne of God. Fly to the Savior this moment. He will give you life. Commit your soul anew unto Him; throw yourself upon his mercy. In humility and repentance seek His face. Knock as one who knows that heaven and immortal glory depend upon the door's being opened now. Some day it will be too late. Knock now, seek now, and Christ will give you the Spirit of life.

The Christian's life on earth is a life with God; it is a life of holiness and peace, a life of faith and rest; it is heaven on earth, heaven begun below. Wonderful life! Oh! how blessed! God is in the soul; His love and peace fill the entire being and lift man above the material things of earth and bring him near heaven. Jesus did not say only, "I am come that they may have life," but also, "that they may have it more abundantly."

This abundant life brings us near heaven. Earth is lost sight of. Crucified to the world and the world unto us, we realize that we are

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only strangers and pilgrims here. This is not our home. We are not in our element here. We stay here for the sake of Him who died for us and for the souls He died to save. Our home is in heaven, and we are here waiting for the angels to come and carry us home.

This life which Christians have is the life of God. It binds us to heaven. It transports us far above this world. We are here in this world as physical beings, but our hearts are not here. Our affections are on heavenly things. The more abundant the life, the nearer we are to God and heaven and the farther we are from the world. O beloved pilgrim, seek those things which will strengthen the life of Christ in the soul. Seek God until every fiber of your spiritual being is quivering with life. So live with God that heaven daily opens more and more to your view and the world fades away. Mount up higher in the realms of joy and love; and drink in of that abundant life until your soul is a gushing well-spring of life.

The word of God is the chief means by which this divine life is wrought and supported in the soul. Man does not live by bread alone. Bread is needful to the physical life; but the Christ-life in the soul needs the word of God. The Christian feeds upon the blessed Scriptures, and they nourish him in the divine life. In the sacred page he beholds heaven's purity. Grace and glory shine forth resplendent, and his soul bows in holy awe and adoration before the eternal word of life. Sweet walks with God are maintained, and the hidden life of a Christian is supported, only by daily feeding upon the Scriptures.

The Christian has life. Not to have the life of Christ is not to be a Christian. This life does not consist in external acts alone. Men eat, drink, sleep; this is natural life. Men hold converse, or communion, with each other; this is social life. They buy, sell, and carry on their business industries; this is civil life. They attend church services and

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take an active interest in the external duties, this is the outward form of a religious life. But the true Christian life is more than all this. While the Christian has the natural, the social, the civil, and the external religious life, he has more. He has down in the depths of his inner being a well-spring of living water.

Some of the ocean currents, I am told, have a double flow. They have a surface current flowing in one direction and an undercurrent flowing an opposite direction. This well of living water in the soul has a double flow. It flows out to God and men and flows in from God. There must be a constant flowing in from God, or there can be no outward flow. A well that is flowing out, but that has no inward flow, will soon become empty. And a well that has neither flow will soon contain only stagnant water. This inward flow from God is maintained by prayer and meditation. This well of water in the soul is a well of living water; it is a well springing up into everlasting life. It is fittingly represented by an artesian well, which needs no surface pump. The outward flow is maintained by the pressure of the inward flow. If you have and use a surface pump, you have not a well-spring of living water. If your religious life consists in external duties, and if it costs considerable effort to pray, to witness for God, and to talk to men of God and heavenly things, yours is a surface pump.

The force that produces the outward flow from an artesian well is down in the depths below. It is the pressure of the inward flow. Open the check-valve at any time and the water flows. The force that produces the inward flow of the water of life in the Christian heart is the exercise of the soul in prayer. The more the soul is thus exercised the stronger is the inward pressure. Without the soul's being exercised in converse with God; without its being deeply concerned about the affairs of eternity; without examination of the

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heart; or without secret reading, meditation, inquiries, and seekings—the inward flow from God will not be maintained.

The outward flow is necessary. The pressure of the inward flow raises the water so high, and if there is no outward flow, the inward flow ceases, and all will become stagnant. The exercise of the child only increases the demand for food. The food eaten by the child produces a force which must be spent, or else the demand for the food will diminish. Life in the soul will manifest itself in the eager performance of Christian duties. He who neglects the external duties belonging to the Christian life, will diminish the demand for spiritual food and interrupt the inward flow of the life from God.

3. The life of a Christian is a hidden life. The men of this world wonder how the Christian can enjoy life as he does. “The hours he spends in his closet—what can he be doing there?” wonders the worldly man. “How can he be so indifferent to the gay things of the world? What strange business can he be in? He is not in the political strife, not in the contest for fame, nor in the rush for money. He is very peculiar. We do not understand him.” His life is hidden from the world. The Christian does not desire rich and gay clothing, fine carriages and the pomp and show of the world. His heart pants not after these things. The saint envies no man his gold or name. He does not live in these things. His life is hid with Christ in God, and oh, how he loves to meet God in secret! This is his life. How sweet to get an hour from the duties of life to hold communion with Him who is his life! It is in the closet this secret, hidden life receives strength. Neglect the secret chamber, and the spiritual life will weaken. How true! but as I write I weep because so few will be benefited by these truths. Many people acknowledge that they do not pray enough, but after making the acknowledgement they go on the same as before.

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Too many people are too greatly interested in the forms of godliness and not enough in the power. They admire the shining formalities, the empty show of religion. These things are ruinous to the hidden life of a saint. If he values this secret life, he will guard it from the attacks of the world. If the company he is in, if the occupation he is engaged in, alienates his heart from God, then let him free himself. Be watchful and careful that the things of sense do not call your thoughts out and away from God.

Allow me now to give you a panoramic view of the secret, hidden life that Christians live. You see a woman retire to the quiet of her closet. She engages in prayer to God. She tells Him of her trials and burdens of life. He comforts her by His grace and sheds over her soul a peace and joy that make the place seem like the gateway to heaven. She there receives food and strength for the divine life in her soul.

Yonder under a tree is a man in prayer. He has come to the fountain of life to drink. This is foolishness to the man of the world, but there the Christian drinks. He feels life fresh from the throne of God reanimating his spirit, and he says, "I know my Redeemer lives." Oh, the blessedness of communion with God! The soul tastes the sweets of heaven. Nothing on earth can equal it. The pleasures of the world fade away; heaven draws nearer. The eye of faith is looking into the glory-world, and that glittering crown of life and unfading inheritance is brought distinctly to view. The rapturous songs of angels can almost be heard, and wondrous delight ravishes the soul as the glory of the immortal One is beheld.

The man of the world knows not the tastes of heavenly glories that the Christian has while in secret prayer. As his soul is wafted upward on the spirit of inspiration, he beholds the wondrous majesty of the Creator, the myriads of shining angels, the unfading crowns,

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and harps of gold, and he longs for the day when he shall fly away to the bright, beautiful land. What becomes of this old world, do you suppose, when one gets such a view of heaven? Does it any longer fill the mind or draw upon the affections? As glow worms and stars and moon grow dim and fade away before the light of the sun, so this world with its pleasures fades away as heaven's bright glories dawn upon our soul.

In another place you see a family gathered around the fireside reading the Bible and conversing about heavenly things. The father is telling the children of the crucified One, that He loves us and died for us and went into heaven to prepare a bright mansion for us to live in forever. See the expression of hope on their faces. Look at the light of their countenances. Ah! do not tell me that any pleasure of earth can be compared to the joys and the blessings of the family worship.

There you see a plainly-dressed young lady going with a message of love and encouragement to a sick-chamber. That group of saintly young people you see yonder are talking of the excellency of Christian virtue and the blessedness of saving grace. They are conversing about the glories of heaven and what will be their joy when they pass through the gates into that sweet land of rest. They do not know just what they shall be in that eternal home, but they know that they shall be like Jesus.

In an upper room is a company of saints washing each other's feet, as Jesus told them, and partaking of the bread and wine in remembrance of Him whom they love. Down in yonder peaceful stream is a man being buried in baptism, thus testifying to the world of his death to sin and of his resurrection to a new life.

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All this is a beautiful picture. Look it over. There is nothing in it that the sinner loves. It is a hidden life to him. He has no existence in it. It is life from above. It is life eternal. O blessed, wonderful life!

4. The life of a Christian is hid with Christ in God. Oh, that my pen could picture to your mind the glory and the strength of these words! Christ is hid in God, and there with Him our life is hid. We have no need of fear. Nothing can touch the Christian's life. When Jesus was here He said, "He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." Every one that comes to Christ must give up his life to Him. What does he do with it? He hides it in God. Is it any wonder the Christian's soul pants after God? Is it any wonder his heart yearns and longs for Him and reaches forth to Him? His life is there. Does not the miser long for the presence of his gold? It is his life.

Some have thought it a reproach or a disgrace to be a Christian. On the contrary, the poorest and most illiterate Christian on earth is a much more glorious person than the most learned and refined sinner in the world. The Christian has communion with God. He has the life of God; and where the life of God is, there is moral excellence.

The Christian does not live upon the things of the world; he lives upon God. The creatures of earth were not intended to be his life and his joy. They are too mean and coarse a food for a Christian. He has a high and noble life that cannot be supported by the coarse things of earth. He eats angels' food. The food of his best life is infinite and immortal. The man of the world is in hot pursuit for the things of the world because they are his portion and his life. It is different with a Christian. He has a higher life, a nobler origin, and he sustains a higher character. His life is divine and must have divine food to support it.

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Oh, the wonderful condescension of divine grace! What great honors are bestowed upon a humble saint! His lowly home is graced with heaven's glories. God and Christ come to dwell with him. While the king on his throne is attended by servants, the humble backwoods Christian is attended by angels. But God and Christ and the angels are unseen. The Christian's company is unseen by the world. His life is hid—hid with Christ in God.

Why does a lively Christian love to be so often and so much where Christ and God are? It is because they are his life. His soul pants after God; it cries out for the living God. Oh, to be in His presence continually, to revel in His love, to dwell in the light of His countenance and see more and more of Him!—these are the cravings of the Christian's heart.

These men whose soul and life are wrapped up in the things of this world are ever seeking, searching, striving after them. The covetous man loves to be near his gold. He ties up his life in his bags of silver. He is very unwilling to be long absent from them. The politician is ever seeking the society of his political friends and pushing his political claims. What a man lives upon, that is what he longs after and would be ever near, so that he may have the high pleasure of feeding upon it and by it being nourished and sustained.

What things of the world are to sensual men, God and Christ are to the Christian. Christ is his life. He is crucified with Christ. He lives, and yet he does not live. His life is hid with Christ in God. He has tasted the sweet waters of divine life and he would ever have his soul invigorated by them. When he is near God he feels secure; he feels that he lives. He is satisfied because he is near the spring of his life. He has nothing to fear. The name of the Lord is his strong tower, where he is ever safe. When the arrows of death are flying thick around and pestilence is walking abroad everywhere; when

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thousands are falling at his side and ten thousand at his right hand—he experiences no terror, for he has made the Lord his refuge and the Most High his habitation. In God only does he feel safe. The Lord is the only refuge for his life. No other place is secure. When dangers threaten, he feels secure because his life is hid with Christ in God.

Is it any wonder that the Christian seeks after God? Is it any wonder the apostle tells him to “seek those things which are above?” They go often into the closet, because God is there. They go to the family worship with delight, because God is there. They go to the Bible with a keen relish, because it is life to their soul. They go to the place of public worship, because God is there. They are ever seeking to be where God is and do not go where God is not. A Spirit-filled soul seeks after God with fervency. It flees to His presence. It is only there the soul is satisfied, because only there is it safe.

O pilgrim to that land of rest, you need have no fear! It may sometimes seem that the storms of life are going to wrench you out of the hands of God, but fear not; trust in Him; He will never let you fall. The vine clings to the oak in the wildest storm. Storms may uproot the oak, but the vine still clings to it. Notice why this is. If the vine is on the opposite side of the tree from the storm, the tree is its protection; and if the vine is on the exposed side, the storms only press it closer to the tree. In some of the storms of life God intervenes and protects us, and in others He exposes us for the purpose of having us pressed more closely to Him. Nothing can separate us from Him. Christian, go on your way. Remember where your life is and go rejoicing. Trials may come, the storms may blow, you may be scoffed at, you may be persecuted and threatened; but go hopefully, trustingly on, and some day, when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall you appear with Him in glory.

Drawing Nearer to God

After beholding the goodness of God, the power of His right hand, and the wisdom of His council, the psalm-writer's soul was so enraptured and ravished with love that he exclaimed, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." His whole heart and soul was turned toward God. The world lay behind him. He was looking upward, and as he caught a deeper vision of heaven's glories and the greatness and the goodness of God, he exclaimed in eagerness, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." The same passion filled the breast of that intensely-devoted man of God, Paul, when he said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

God is unchangeable in His nature. The attributes of God are as beauteous in perfection now as they were then. The several glories of God are as radiant and the love and blessings of heaven as full of sweetness now as they were then. The nature of the soul has not changed. The love of God and the beauty of His perfections will enrapture the soul now as it did when David said, "My soul followeth hard after thee," and when Paul said, "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." The breathings of the soul of every true saint is, "Nearer, my God, to thee." Ofttimes the desire for God is so great

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that they long to go to Him and satisfy their soul in His presence. Those who have no desire to get nearer Him are indeed very far from Him. Those who are nearest Him have the greatest desire to get nearer. The words of a holy man of God is the language of every devoted heart.

“Oh, sweet is my walk with Jesus!
How gently he smiles on me!
Yet nearer my Lord so precious—
Oh, help me to walk with thee!”

Another poet breathed forth the longings of every soul filled with heaven's love:

“Oh, for a closer walk with God!”

He who has tasted the love of God desires to have deeper tastes of that love. He who has heard the gentle voice telling the sweet redemption story desires to hear it over and over. He who has felt the touch of the Spirit of God upon his soul desires to feel that touch more sensibly. He who has seen the beauty of the Lord desires to dwell in His presence that he may see more of that beauty.

The pleasures of earth have no attraction for the soul embraced in sweet communion with God. He who has tasted heaven's pure love turns not to the world for enjoyment. He seeks not the company of the worldly-minded. He enjoys not so much the talking about the vulgar things of the world as he does the conversing about the goodness of the Lord. He is looking above to get clearer visions of God. As the little flower instinctively opens to receive the falling dew, so his heart is open to catch the blessings as they fall from the censers swinging around the throne of God. His soul is listening to catch every strain of heavenly music, and in his heart he would that he could draw a little nearer, so that he might hear it more distinctly.

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There is so much clamor and confusion in the world that he longs to be lifted higher above it, in order that he might hear more of heaven. O, that the veil of mortality might be lifted, so that he might see the grandeur of the celestial fields! As the bee goes from flower to flower, sipping their sweetness; so the soul ravished with the love of God, goes from one divine attribute of perfection to another and from one glory and grace to another, gathering material for building and garnishing the temple of God in the heart.

If we draw near to God He will draw near to us. As we stand before a mirror, our image is pictured just as far in the background as we are distant from the mirror. As we approach the mirror, our image comes toward the front. Then we can see the features more distinctly. God is just as far from us as we are from Him. As we come nearer to Him, He will come nearer to us. Bless His name! The nearer we come to Him, the more distinctly can we see the perfection of His character. Therefore the nearer we draw to God, the deeper conception will we have of His holiness. We are made to exclaim as we draw nearer, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is filled with his glory." We see greater purity in God's work. Oh, how our souls stand in awe and wonder before the perfection of God's works! As we look upon the sun, moon, and stars, and take a survey of the universe as far as the mind and the vision can carry us, we say, "In purity and wisdom has He created them all."

As we get nearer to God, we see more clearly the purity of His word. We exclaim with that admirer of God's law, "How pure is thy word! therefore thy servant loveth it." Oh, what purity and beauty we see in such expressions as these! "Bear ye one another's burdens." "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also unto

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them likewise.” The nearer we get to God, the greater beauty we see in these plain, simple words, and the more we love. How wondrously pure they are! How sweet the life in which they are fulfilled! How our souls reach out to receive these beautiful words! Our hearts feed upon them with a sweet relish. They delight our souls. How dear is the Bible to the heart of those who walk with God! and the closer they walk, the dearer is this precious book.

Drawing nearer to God includes getting a deeper consciousness of our own nothingness. The Lord recently helped me to feel my helplessness, insomuch that I saw I was helpless to realize my helplessness unless God helped me by His Spirit to realize it. The nearer we get to God, the more clearly we see His greatness and the smaller we become. Oh, how infinitely little! We simply sink into insignificance. We make such a tiny speck on the scroll of creation that we can hardly be found with the most powerful magnifying glass. A mere weak worm. Just one light stroke from the hand of God and we are blotted out. The very greatest man that ever lived is utterly nothing. Oh, shame on the poor mortal that thinks himself something! When we see God in His greatness, we see ourselves less than the least.

As you get nearer God, you get into greater light. You see more clearly what true holiness is; you better understand the nature of His beauteous grace. If you would know whether there are any imperfections in your heart and life, draw near to God, and you will make the discovery. Maybe there are some idle or hasty words in your general conversation, and you are not aware of it. Maybe some article of dress tells you of pride in your heart, and you do not see it. Maybe you have too much thought for the world and do not know it. Maybe you have acted from a selfish motive and are not conscious of it. If you will draw near to God and examine yourself in the light

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of His holiness you will be able to see these blemishes. You examine a piece of cloth in a dimly-lighted room and think it perfect, and you are surprised to find so many defects in it when examined in the clear light of the sun.

Drawing nearer to God implies getting a better understanding of the relationship that exists between God and His children. You might be told of the closeness of this relationship and of God's love to you, but you will never understand it until you get near to God. If God's children only knew, could only comprehend, the yearning love God has for them, they would never have a fear, and oh, how carefully they would walk before Him, lest they wound that love! The nearer you get to God, the better you will understand this. Just recently God gave me such a vision of His love as almost overwhelmed me. I could not feel more of the power of God's love and live. See how He feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the lily of the field, and now hear Him say to you, "My child, you are much more to me than they." If you understand what this means, it will take all fear and distrust out of your life. You will take no thought for the morrow. You will not have a care. You will be wholly free from fret and worry. God is real, and you will understand Him so as you get nearer to Him.

Drawing nearer to God is getting a deeper work of grace in the heart. The character of God will be imaged in our souls just as we see it to be in Him. If you have but a faint conception of God's holiness, His holiness will be but faintly imaged in your soul. The same is true of all the graces. Just as you see them in God, so you will bear their image in your heart. As when standing far away from a mirror, you cannot see your features so plainly as when you get nearer; so when far away from God, you cannot see His attributes so plainly as when you draw near. Oh, how beautiful are the

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perfections of God! They captivate my soul. I stand and look upon His lowliness, His meekness, His gentleness, His long-suffering, His mercy, and His love, and oh, how my soul does desire Him!

Proud world, my soul to you has said adieu,
There is no room in my heart for you;
Your charms may gratify some other mind,
But all my spirit seeks, in God I find.
I answer not, proud world, unto thy beck or call;
My heart is fixed—to me my God is all.

How to Have a Closer Walk with God

The breathings of the Christian's soul are, "Oh, for a closer walk with God!" This is no evidence of emptiness, stagnation, or aching void. It is evidence of thrift, growth, health, and appetite. Every spiritual child of God desires to cling yet more lovingly to Jesus' hand and to lean more affectionately upon His breast. The children of this world are in a rush after the fashions, the wealth, the show, and the pleasures of the world, but the Christian is following hard after God; he is seeking those things which are above. The children of the world obtain because they seek. If the child of heaven will seek after the things of heaven as earnestly as the child of earth seeks after the things of earth, he will surely find. "Seek, and ye shall find."

The children of this world do not go among the children of the kingdom of God in search of worldly treasures, but they seek for those things among those who are of their own spirit. Oh, may the children of light be as wise as the children of darkness! Do you desire a closer walk with God? Are you seeking after more and more of heavenly things? Do not go in search of these treasures among those who are of a worldly spirit. Seek for heavenly things among those who have heavenly things to give. Jesus has heavenly things to bestow upon you. He will give you grace, He will increase your love and faith and give you more meekness, humility, gentleness,

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etc.; therefore seek His companionship. As the gentle night emits the soft siftings of dew upon the flower, so from the presence of the Lord is emitted the siftings of the heavenly graces. These will fall upon your soul if you but linger in His presence. As the fragrance of the flower perfumes the air and leaves its scent upon our clothing, so the fragrance from the sweet life of Christ will perfume our souls.

Also, those who walk with God have heavenly things to bestow upon others. As the heavenly graces shine upon them from the presence of the Lord, they are reflected by them upon others. Seek therefore for heavenly things among the children of God. I love to be in the company of those who love the Lord and are walking near Him. I love to be with those whose souls are full of grace and whose hearts are reaching out after God. I would a thousand times rather be in the backwoods man's humble hut conversing with his God-fearing family about the things above than to be in the court of kings.

A sister, poor in this world's goods but rich in grace, came into my home a few mornings since. I made inquiry concerning her spiritual prosperity. She told me that the Lord was very precious to her soul and that He was dealing most graciously with her. I asked her to tell us of some of the Lord's gracious dealings, that we might see some of the manifestations of His love to His children and that our hearts might be encouraged. She then related several instances wherein God had answered her prayers. One of these instances I will relate. Her provisions were daily growing more scanty. The flour was almost gone. She went again and again in prayer to God. One morning she baked the last of the flour and knew not where bread for her and her children's dinner was to be had, only her trust was in the God that miraculously fed Elijah. Before noon a boy brought her a bag of wheat. This was taken to the mill and exchanged for flour,

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and thus God supplied their needs. As she related this simple story of God's love and goodness to her, He became dearer and more precious to our hearts and we were reminded again how blessed it is to trust Him. Such sweet stories of God's gracious dealings with His trusting children lift our souls heavenward until we feel more as if we were in heaven than on earth.

One autumn day I went to baptize a sister who had been converted at our campmeeting two months before and whom I had not seen since the meeting. She met me at the door with a hearty, "Praise the Lord!" There was heavenly music in her voice. When we were seated, she began to tell me of God's goodness to her since her conversion. Her soul had been full of joy; day and night she had sung praises to God. She had made her wrongs right. Among her wrongs to make right was a small sum of money she owed to a jewelry firm. But she could in no way obtain their address, as some years had gone by since the jewelry had been sent her from some firm in a distant city. Being unable to obtain the address, she sent the money to a minister to help in the work of God. Once she longed to go to a certain meeting; but her husband said if it rained that day so he could not get a certain piece of work done, he could not take her to the meeting the next day. Although it looked very rainy, her faith staggered not. She told God of her love to Him and of her love to His people; she told Him how she longed to go to meeting. She then asked God to disperse the clouds and to stay the rain so that her husband might get his work done. In a few moments the sun was shining out clear and bright, and it did not rain.

At this juncture a tramp peddler came to the door. She invited him to a seat and went on at once telling me of the goodness of God to her. She said she prayed three times every day for her husband's salvation. At one time he was away from home for a few days upon

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the sea. On Sunday morning at ten o'clock she asked God to convict him of his sins, to make him uneasy, and to give him a deep concern for his soul. When he came home, she asked him whether he had had any concern about his soul while he was gone. He replied that he had, and especially on Sunday morning. All this time the peddler sat there listening to the story of God's goodness to her, he seeing no opportunity to show his goods.

As I saw her simplicity, innocence, and childlike confidence in God, I thought, "I would rather have her humble station in life and her knowledge of God than to be the president of our nation." Oh, how we delight to be in the company of those who have hearts full of love to God and never weary in talking of his righteousness! Such conversation bears our souls upward and onward and makes us more like God. This world fades farther and farther away, and we approach nearer and nearer the gates of glory.

If you desire a closer walk with God, seek the companionship of those who are spiritually minded and who live where the heavenly breezes blow and where the fragrance of Christian graces perfume the air. Oh, that I could help the reader to feel in his soul the importance of keeping his heart and mind turned heavenward! Oh, that I could help him to see the deep truth contained in the following words! As tobacco users and whiskey drinkers so deaden their sense of taste that they become unable to tell by it whether the meat they are eating is beef or mutton or whether the jelly is apple or peach; so they whose minds are stayed on earthly things and whose conversation is of the things of the world so benumb their souls that they lose the spiritual sense of taste or that delicacy of moral perception which enables those who walk with God to have such sweet tastes of His love. I have seen those who would sit and sleep while someone talked of how God hears and answers prayers and of

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how real He is in all the common affairs of everyday life, but who as soon as a conversation was begun about earthly things were wide awake and ready to join in the conversation. Shame on such a professed Christianity!

God has the sweets that tempt the Christian's soul. He has those things that delight us and lead us on to follow Him. He has the word of eternal life; He has rest; He has peace; He has love; He has all for which our souls pant or hunger. Oh, how the Christian's soul clings to God! He is the fountain of life. He has the sweet viands that delight it and satisfy all its longings. Nothing satisfies the Christian's heart but God. As the child shrinks back from the poisonous reptile, so the Spirit-filled soul shrinks back from the world. As your little child clings tightly to your hand while you walk near the cage of wild beasts, so the Christian clings closely to God as he sees the allurements of this world.

It is the sweet life of Jesus that fills us with such ecstatic joys, such unspeakable glory. A thousand deaths would be preferable to separation from Christ. The martyr at the stake freely gives up life; he will not part with Christ. Christ is more than life. The martyr's whole soul is aflame with the love of God and the flame is burning with such intensity and the waters of rest are flowing so deeply through his soul that he hardly feels the flames that are devouring his physical being. The glory of God filling the soul counteracts pain and makes death bearable. I am persuaded that Stephen, who saw the heavens open, felt but little of the pains of death by stoning. One bitter cold night your humble servant had fifteen miles to go after preaching. The glory of God so filled his soul that he felt not the cold; otherwise he would have suffered greatly. This was a precious lesson and gave valuable knowledge of God.

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He who has tasted of salvation and those graces that flow out from God looks over all earth, heaven, and hell and says: "These contain nothing that can separate me from the object of my heart's fond love. The world has its trials and tribulations and may pour them out with a vengeance upon my head; they shall not separate me from God. The distresses, the persecutions, the famines, the nakedness, the perils, the sword—though these be brought upon me to the limit of their power, they cannot move me. Hell, with all its threatening horrors, cannot alarm me. Evil spirits cannot seduce nor discourage my soul. I am lost in the love of God. Should the love of angels be turned to jealousy, I will cling to Jesus. Nothing in life, nothing in death, the height of heaven, nor the depth of hell, with all the creatures they contain, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." Thus sings the soul that is drinking at the fountain of heaven's eternal love.

The fervent in spirit are fully satisfied with their close walk with God today, but they want a closer walk with Him tomorrow. As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pant their soul after God. This is not the experience of one seeking after salvation. It is the experience of the saint all along his Christian way. I find two classes of religious people that are satisfied, or seem to be. Those who are rich in the grace of God and full of spiritual life are satisfied. They desire more of God; their souls have appetite for God and for His word, but they are never dissatisfied. It is not hungering for bread that makes man dissatisfied. It is blessed to become hungry, because it makes the eating enjoyable. The man that has no appetite is the one who does the complaining. He is not satisfied with the most delicious foods. The hungry man eats with a relish and thanks God for a good appetite. Do you not often feel your soul thirsting after God? Do you not feel heart-hunger for prayer and the Word? Do you not feel an eagerness to meet with the saints of God? Do you not

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hunger and thirst after righteousness? This good appetite is indicative of good spiritual health. No appetite for these things is unmistakable evidence of spiritual disease. Another class of religious people who are seemingly satisfied are those who are poor and naked and blind but who think they are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. They are like the small boy that danced for joy because he imagined himself taking sweetmeats from his empty pocket and eating them. Some people imagine themselves rich in the grace of God and are happy in their imagination.

The true Christian's life is one of constant growth in grace. True followers of Christ are ever becoming more spiritual. They are drawing nearer to God. The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto that perfect day. The Spirit of God in the heart of man is represented by a fruit-bearing tree. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, longsuffering, goodness, meekness, temperance, faith, etc. Can these fruits be increased in our hearts and life? There is but one answer—They can. All along our Christian journey we are to abound more and more in love; we are to grow stronger in faith; our joy is to increase; we are to become more meek and humble and to have more patience and be more gentle. The horticulturist increases the fruit of the trees of his orchard by cultivating and developing the tree. He cultivates, not the fruit, but the tree. The tree in our hearts is the Spirit of God. To increase the fruits of the Spirit, we must develop the tree. The true and successful Christian life is one of constant progress.

Some people seem to experience some alarm when we begin to talk about growth in grace or gaining a closer walk with God. They fear we will become fanatical. No one is more opposed to fanaticism than the ardent advocates of Christian development, for nothing is a greater hindrance to such development. But facts are facts. We

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cannot but acknowledge that the true and proper Christian life is one of constant growth.

Causes produce effects. To become more spiritual is the effect of a cause. There is a law of growth and development in all life. There is also a law governing the law of growth and development, or in other words, growth is but the effect, or the result, of complying with certain causes. This is true in both the physical and the spiritual life. In order for the child to develop its physical life and powers, it must eat, drink, exercise, sleep, breathe, etc. It is not enough for the child to know and say, "I must eat and drink, that I may live and grow"; but it must put in actual practice what it knows. It is true—and how good God is to have made us so!—that the child is given an instinct that inclines it to eat and to exercise.

We meet the law of growth naturally and without taking thought because God has given us appetites and desires that lead us to the performance of the things requisite to growth. I said we naturally and without taking thought meet the requirements for growth because God has given us appetites that incline us to these things; but God has given us intelligence and will power by which He expects us to control the appetite to the best good of the physical development. Small children do not have this intelligence, but the intelligence of the parents should answer for the child. The very thing God has given us for our development may prove the most disastrous to it if it is not kept in proper bounds. He who sits down to his table and eats for the mere purpose of satisfying his appetite acts brutishly.

The laws respecting the physical life find an analogy in the spiritual life. There is a law of growth and development in the spiritual world. There is also a law which governs the law of growth, or in other words, our growth in grace is but the result of our

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complying with certain requisites. Cause produces effect. It is folly to expect developments in animal life if the law governing that development is not observed. It is as great folly to expect growth in grace if the law governing the growth in grace is not observed.

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” 1 Pet. 2:2. The Greek adds “unto salvation.” Growth unto eternal salvation is the consequence of living upon the sincere milk of the word. Here is cause and effect. Do not expect the effect without the cause. It is at this point that some experience alarm. They fear an over-exertion. No amount of worry, anxiety, or trying will promote growth. The child does not grow by trying. It does not worry about its growing. But it does eat. I am saying nothing more than this here. If you grow in grace you must eat. An established law declares you must. Some teach that we have nothing to do with our spiritual development. To prove their assertion they refer us to the beautiful lesson of the growing of the lily, which neither toils nor spins. In the lesson of the lily Christ is teaching us, not about our spiritual development, but about the care God has for our temporal life and its needs. There is something to do. You must eat.

“But if we are saved, do we not naturally desire the sincere milk of the word?” I have said nothing to the contrary. I have only said that we must desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. “But is it not true that we sometimes may have a keener appetite for the sincere word than at others and a greater relish for prayer?” Encourage your appetite by eating. Select some delicious foods, such as these: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “Cast thy care upon him, for he careth for thee.” “He is able to keep you from falling.” “No man is able to pluck you out of my Father’s hands.” Such foods will revive you and whet up your appetite if you

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are not dead. If you have spiritual life, pray even though you may have no relish for prayer. During the warm months of one summer I was accustomed to arise at midnight for prayer. One night there was a dull, morbid feeling upon me. I wrestled with God for some time, but lay down without getting any apparent blessing. When I awakened in the morning, heaven's glory was streaming into my soul. I was then reaping the blessing of my midnight prayer. We may pray oftentimes and apparently receive very little benefit; but it benefits us more than we are aware. It is our life. If we cease praying, we shall die. Many a time I have gone to prayer without any inspiration for prayer, but soon the inspiration would be given. I have gone into the pulpit likewise.

Regard not the feeling. Keep up the faith and do your duty. Make it a business to serve God. If you would have a closer walk with God, keep aloof from the world; abstain from fleshly lusts (they war against the soul); avoid the company of the foolish talker; stay your thoughts on God; meditate on His law; pray much and live on the word; "refuse profane and old wives' fables; give no heed to the signs, the superstitions, and the foolish saying of the worldly minded; have no mind for such things; take no interest and have no part in the neighborhood gossip, but "exercise thyself rather unto godliness;" attend to the things that will make you more godly; have a conversation and have meditations that are edifying; think upon the life of Christ; search therein for the excellencies and the beautiful; see the purity of His love and the tenderness of His care for you until the affections of your soul, like the magnetized needles, trouble with life and turn toward their object. The words of a learned writer are appropriate here:

"It is an admitted principle that protracted and close attention always fixes the fact attended to, deeply in the memory; and the

longer and more intensely the mind attends to any subject, other subjects proportionally lose their power to interest. The same is true in relation to the affections. The longer and more intensely we contemplate an object in that relation which is adapted to draw out the affections, the more deeply will the impression be made upon the heart as well as the memory. The most favorable circumstances possible to fix an impression deeply upon the heart and memory are—first, that there should be protracted and earnest attention; and second, that at the same time the impression is made, the emotions of the soul should be alive with excitement. Without these, an impression made upon the heart and the memory would be slight and easily effaced; while on the contrary, an impression made during intense attention and excited feeling will be engraved, as with pen of steel upon the tablets of the soul.”

On this I give a brief comment. The more attention we give to heavenly things and the more intently and eagerly we seek those things above, the more our affections are drawn out to them, and the things of earth proportionally lose their power to attract us. The longer and more deeply we meditate upon God’s law and the beauty of His holiness, the more deeply the impression will be made upon us and the more we shall be like Him. The more earnest attention we give in contemplating the love of God to us in adopting us as sons; the more our heart is touched by the scenes on Calvary; the more vivid and real this is made to us—the deeper will be the impression made upon the tablets of our soul. O beloved, stand before the cross of Calvary and behold the love of Jesus for you—dying, dying for you; hear the groans of His agony; see the deliverance from hell He has wrought for you through His death and unfathomable love. Stand and behold until all the emotions of your soul are alive with excitement. Stand and behold until the fleshly tables of your heart are made so soft and tender that God by His Spirit can imprint His

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love and image there. A worldly conversation and worldly thoughts and the minding of earthly things harden the heart and cast a morbid feeling over the soul, making it incapable of receiving any imprint from heavenly things.

Fellow pilgrim to a heavenly home, if you desire the faith once delivered to the saints, you must “earnestly contend” for it. If you desire a crown of life, you must “lay hold” upon it. If you desire to run the Christian race successfully, you must “lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset you.” If you desire to obtain an incorruptible crown, you must “so run that ye may obtain.” Do you desire a closer walk with God? then “draw near to Him.” Do you desire to gain heaven? then have a heart full of purpose and determination. The apostle said: “This one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, I reach forth unto those things which are before; I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Let us who are in the Christian race “be thus minded.”

Make it a business to serve God. In Him live and move and have your being. Make Him the center. Everything in life should center in God. Whatever you do, do to His glory. Live in His presence. Pray without ceasing; guard against all attacks of the world; keep a tender conscience toward God; walk in the light of His countenance; drink of the fountain of life daily; cultivate feelings of reverence, devotion, and thanksgiving; give no place to anything that will dull the finer sensibilities of your soul—do these things, and you will be rewarded with a closer walk with God.

Looking at Unseen Things

To say that we can look at unseen things may sound strange to some. I need not to say it. It has been said long ago, and all I need to do is to repeat the words— “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” 2 Cor. 4:18. Oh, how prone man is to look on temporal things and fail to see the eternal! A woman came to Jesus as he sat at meat and poured upon His head a very precious ointment. On account of this the disciples said with indignation, “To what purpose is this waste? this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor.” They saw only temporal things.

The Apostle Paul was troubled on every side; he was perplexed, persecuted, cast down, and bore about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus; but he did not look upon those afflictions which were to be seen; he looked upon the eternal gain which these afflictions worked for him, but which could not be seen. He saw a mansion in glory, and these afflictions only served to separate him farther from earthly pleasures and gratifications; crucified him, as it were, to earthly things and gave him more of the Christ-life and a dear vision of heavenly things. Beloved, your capability to enjoy heaven depends upon the stretch your soul is making here. Seeing temporal things dims the eye so that we cannot see eternal things. Oh, how prone is man to look upon his trials and persecutions! The apostle

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did not see his troubles and persecutions; he saw only the eternal glory these things were gaining for him.

Trials, persecutions, temptations, and such things are needful. “If need be,” says Peter, “ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation.” Why are those things needful? Because they are the trying of your faith, and your faith is increased by being tried.

I will ask the reader to open his Bible to 1 Pet. 1: 6-8 and read, and I pray God to help your soul to see and to help me to describe to you the wondrous beauty my soul sees in these texts. In verse 6 we learn that “heaviness through many temptations” is a necessity in the Christian life. There is an established law between cause and effect. Certain causes produce certain effects. These effects may become causes to produce other effects. Now, trials and persecutions produce an increase of faith in our heart. This we learn from verse 7. This increase is more precious than gold. Ofttimes it is very difficult for Christians to see the worth of a trial. They can see the value of gold, but they cannot see the value of a trial. They look on things temporal, and not on things eternal. Trials increase your faith, and the result of having your faith increased is told us in verse 8. Jesus you have not seen, but now by faith you look upon that which is not seen, and you love Him; and by believing in Him whom you see not, or by an eye of faith making Him real unto you, “ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

To enable you to comprehend more fully the real worth of trials, I will give you an illustration. I do not wish you to become visionary, but allow me to ask you to imagine yourself, for a moment, to be in heaven. Before you stands a large pair of balances. In one end of the balances is a saint, who has come up from the earth and is now crowned in heaven. In the other end is a bright object, which we will call glory. Now, the heavier the glory in the one end,

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the higher will the saint in the other rise in joy, blessedness, and happiness. Every trial, persecution, and affliction that the saint had on earth added more weight to that object of “eternal glory,” and he rises correspondingly higher in the felicity of his Savior.

This is the true effect of trials. But alas for the poor man who lives by sight, and not by faith; who looks upon things seen, and not upon things unseen. Get your eyes away from your trials, and looking above, see them working for you an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Oh, how light a thing is a trial compared with the “weight of glory” that the trial effects for us! Never was there such an effect produced by so light a thing. To what can we compare it? All comparisons fall infinitely short of conveying to our mind the wonderful product of a “light affliction.” Think of a moment’s being expanded into an eternity, and you will have some conception of the true weight of the glory that is the result of a trial.

I must here tell you of a sister’s dream. This sister was in deep trial, and she was not bracing up under it as she should. She had almost cast away her confidence and was sinking into despair. One night she dreamed that a departed saint had returned from the glory-world and was talking with her. This heavenly visitor was telling the sister of the saints of their acquaintances who, having died, were in heaven. She named them one after one. Then she said she saw the crowns awaiting the saints that were yet on the earth. She noticed that whenever a saint on earth was in deep trial and he did not cast away his confidence, but passed through the trial triumphantly, a jewel was added to his crown, and it shone with a greater brightness, and the angels rejoiced. She noticed also that when a saint on earth did cast away his confidence and despaired in time of trial, a gem dropped out of his crown, the whole crown turned black, and the angels wept. This dream became a powerful

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stimulant to this sister in the hour of trial, and I trust, dear reader, it will be the same to you.

Look not upon temporal or temporary things, but upon things eternal. Look more upon your mansion in heaven than you do upon your home on earth. By faith make heaven real. If some loved one dies in Christ, do not see them in the grave, but see them in heaven, and sorrow not. Do not look upon death, but see the glory that lies beyond. It is far better to depart and be with Christ than to live in this world. Those who think it better to stay here than to depart and be with Christ do not see enough of heaven. Their eyes are too dim. Their souls are not full of love for Jesus. What would we think of a man that lived in a small, decaying, ill-convenient house, when just over the river he possessed a good, large, comfortable home, with all modern conveniences, where he would be far happier? If he would prefer to live in his old, rickety home, you would conclude that he did not comprehend what great comfort and happiness he would have in his new home. Those who would rather stay here merely for their own pleasure do not see eternal things as they should. Christ is too dim to them. He is not real enough.

The flesh and earthly things dim the eye to eternal things. Saints should not do penance as the Romanists do, but they should practice self-denial. They should “crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts.” They should keep their bodies under and bring them into subjection. After Moses had fasted forty days, his face shone with heaven’s glory. Fasting is practiced that we might get nearer God. Whatever God allows for the body can be indulged in to the spiritual development of the soul, but whatever is excessive is a lust of the flesh and clouds the windows of the soul.

The less we see of earth, the more we can see of heaven. Those who are too mindful of earthly things do not see the glory of

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heavenly things. Martha did not see Jesus as Mary saw Him. If you see your mansion in heaven as Paul saw his (see 2 Cor. 5 :2) and as you should see yours, you will labor far more zealously to lay up treasures there than you will to lay them up on earth. Your mind will be much more upon heavenly things than upon earthly things. Learn to look upon things not seen. Look at earthly things but little. The more you enjoy of heaven here, the more you will enjoy over there. Then let your soul out to embrace all you can of God. Look not on the pleasures of earth; look not on the trials of life; but turn the vision of your soul heavenward and contemplate its glories by day and night. Do these things and that upper, bright world will grow dearer to your heart as you draw nearer to it.

Bright Pictures

The memory may oftentimes bear you back through the past days of your life and set pictures before your mind's eye. This may be for your good or it may not be. It is according to the nature of the scene you are viewing. Some things of the past you should forget. Some pictures you should tear down from memory's wall and cast them into the deep abyss of forgiveness.

One day I entered a sick-chamber and saw at once discouragement written upon the countenance of the afflicted sister. She began to tell me of the afflictions she had had for many years. One disease after another had laid its torturing hand upon her body. There was hardly a fiber of her physical being but had experienced severest pain. "And now," she said, "I see nothing but pain and suffering through all my future days." I talked with her and showed her that she had been looking upon the dark pictures of the past. "Here," I said, "you saw trials and here temptations and here pain and suffering. These dark pictures which you have allowed Satan to hang upon memory's wall have cast a dark, gloomy shadow down your future pathway, and you see nothing but suffering and pain and dark days." I then asked her if she remembered certain blessings she had enjoyed in the past—if she remembered when God healed her of consumption and what glory filled her soul; if she remembered how precious God was to her at such a time. "And don't you see," I

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continued, “that, although you are now suffering from an attack of la grippe, your general health is far better than it was in former years.” She saw that this was true; and as she began to look upon those bright pictures, behold, that cast a bright beam down her future walk, and her soul was filled with hope and cheer.

Remember this: The pictures you are viewing cast a shadow before them. Satan is in the picture business. So also is Jesus. Satan’s pictures, being dark and gloomy, will cast a shadow over your life if you look upon them. But bright are the pictures that Christ presents to view. They will cheer you, make sunny all your way. Be careful where you look.

I recently read in a child’s paper a beautiful story that is so appropriate here I must ask the privilege of relating it. It was as follows: Two little girls that lived in the city went to visit their aunt living in the country. The next day after their arrival, these little girls went for a walk in the garden. Soon one came back wearing a disappointed expression on her face. She said, “O Auntie, those rose bushes have ugly thorns on them!” The other, coming in a little later with joyous brightened countenance, exclaimed, “O Auntie, those thorn bushes have such beautiful roses on them.” We leave you to find and to be benefited by the moral.

Abounding Grace

Wide open is the way to heaven's throne of grace. Every needy soul on earth can have access to that throne by day or by night. The gate is never closed. Come boldly, therefore, to that throne. There you will find grace to strengthen and to help you in every needy hour. Grace will sweeten every affliction. O weary one, do you believe it? Is it really so to you? It may be so. It will lighten every burden of your life; it will cast a beautiful light along your pathway and tinge every shadow with a mellow radiance, as the golden sunset gilds the fleecy cloud.

Lay hold, O weary one, upon the throne of grace by faith and be transported into an atmosphere of light and love, of peace and hope. Rich particles of glory can be drawn down to your soul that will lighten up your pathway and enable you to be blessedly contented in every circumstance of life, patient in every affliction, and faithful to perform every duty; that will put a modesty and meekness into your every action, a cheerfulness into your countenance, a reverence and devotion into your spirit, a sweetness into every expression, and throw about you such an attractive luster, as will make you a blessing everywhere you go. Bow humbly and dependently before the throne of grace; there in earnest, fervent prayer bring down strength and blessings that will elevate your soul and make you more a creature of heaven than of earth. Grace ennobles the

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character and puts into the being a spiritual tone that allies you more to angels than to unregenerate men.

At the throne of grace you can wave the palm of victory; there you can sway over sin, sickness, Satan, and the world a conqueror's scepter; there you can sing the song of triumph in the sweetest melody; there you can trample every foe beneath your feet; there you can defeat every lust of the flesh that wars against the soul; there you can be crowned a prince and king; there you can turn your back upon every dark picture and see only the bright side of things; there you can look by faith down your journey of life and see green fields, shady nooks, rippling streams, blooming flowers, and bright sunny days; there by faith you can see Jesus at the right hand of God and your eternal mansion of glory. This is not the flight of imagination, nor the excitement of sentimentalism; it is blessedly real. Come boldly to the throne of grace.

What to Do in Case of Failure

You love Jesus, and your very heart longs to do something for Him. You see His great love to you, and it arouses your soul to spend every moment of your life for Him. Nothing is too hard for you to do. Any suffering that would bring glory to His name you would gladly undergo. Oh, how sweet to suffer for His sake! How blessed to sacrifice for Him! How joyous to toil in His service to His glory! But your heart is sometimes made sad by failures. You meant to do something for Jesus, but you failed. You are not sad for your sake, but for His sake. You think He cares and now what shall you do? Perhaps no life is wholly free from failures. Ofttimes we fail to accomplish what we had hoped to do.

When a child fails to accomplish something it has undertaken for a parent and then comes with its innocent tale of sorrow, the parent's heart is awakened to greater and more tender pity and love. You send your little child for an arm-load of wood, and it goes gladly and lovingly. As it is bearing the load back, you see it fall. Love and pity awaken in your heart, and you run quickly and gather up child, wood, and all. When you see the bruised flesh upon the little one, the tears start, and you say, "Poor little darling! you received this bruise in trying to serve me." Remember, dear child of God, that Jesus feels toward you, when you fail in your loving and

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willing service for Him, just as you feel toward your child. The bruises you receive in your service endears you to Him.

Some of Christ's little ones once attempted to do something for Him, but failed. A man had an afflicted son. This son the man took to some of Jesus' disciples that they might cure him. In Jesus' name they attempted to do this, but they failed. They went to Jesus and asked why they could not cast out the evil spirit. That was a wise thing to do. In your failures do not sit and weep and decide you will never attempt to do anything again. Go to Jesus and ask Him why you failed. He will explain the whole matter and encourage you to try again, and will tell you just how you can succeed the next time. It is good to take everything to Jesus and learn how before you attempt to do it. Failures would be far less common. But do the best we can, there will be some failures. But, through our failures, Jesus can teach us to do some things that we could not otherwise learn to do.

Humility

O mortal man, “what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.” Micah 6:8. “Humble thyself to walk with God,” is the marginal reading. O man, wouldst thou walk with that high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, who dwelleth in a high and holy place? Wouldst thou have him dwell with thee? He dwells with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit. See Isa. 57:15. We all want God to dwell with us; we want a closer walk with Him. He walks only with the humble. The more humble we are, the closer will be our walk with Him. Since this is true, we feel like learning all we can about this grace which God so much admires, so that we may possess more of its beauty and power in our hearts.

The pure and holy life of Jesus was one constant exhibition of humility. In the great plan of salvation by grace is purposed and provided that the divine character be implanted in the character of man. Jesus would have us to wear the grace of humility in our hearts; therefore He says, “Come, learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Come, dear reader, and let us sit down at the feet of Jesus while He teaches us a lesson in humility. Oh, how eager we are to learn! What joy fills our hearts as we gather at His feet and look up into His face with souls that are longing to receive more of His lowliness! Jesus has two ways of teaching us anything He would

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have us know—one is by telling us about it, and the other is by showing it to us in His own life. The Bible is the book that teaches us of the words and the life of Jesus, and to this blessed book we will go.

That we may be more humble, more perfectly imitate our gracious Redeemer in this holy temple of the soul, we shall in this lesson have three points of consideration; namely, 1. What is humility? 2. The blessedness of being humble. 3. How to be more humble.

1. To be more humble we must first learn what humility is. We have before said that the Bible is the book which teaches us of the divine graces and perfections; so to this book we go to learn more about this adorable grace. We soon learn that this holy quality is more frequently commended than any other and that we are more urgently enjoined to wear it on our hearts. Humility is not a grace distinct from the other graces, but it makes up a large portion of them and is inseparable from them. In the human character and in the Christian religion there is no virtue nor excellence but is highly imbued with this grace. It is the foundation and the crown of all moral excellence. No virtue can truly be virtue unless it bears the stamp of humility, and no temper of the soul is truly perfect till it is defecated by being immersed in this grace. Humility is the parent and nurse of all the holy qualities in the Christian character.

All can have this grace. It is not suited to the lowest condition of life only, but those who move in the loftiest circles can have it. It is not a grace that degrades, but a grace that exalts. Oh, what a sweet, pure grace it is! It is wholly free from self and from all that is impure, sensual, or devilish. It is heavenly in its nature. It is not a grace that lifts man up to be great in his own opinion, on the contrary, it enables him to be contented to be little.

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Humility is not opposed to high attainments in intellectuality, or cultivation of the mental powers, but it does overthrow the wisdom of the world. By this we mean that the unlearned can know God through this grace and that the learned can know God in no other way. This world does not know God by wisdom. Though man may have all the wisdom of this world, yet in order for him to know God, he must lay it aside (in the sense of its aiding him to comprehend God) and come as if he knew nothing. Education and high mental powers can be used by the spirit of humility, but they must be thoroughly purged from all self-dependence and be brought to see that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.

Humility is the opposite of pride. It is lowliness. It is that grace which enables us to have faith in God. How can they have faith who are lifted up with pride? It is that grace which keeps love burning in our hearts. We can never see how much God loves us and how great is His goodness unless we see how dependent we are upon Him; consequently we cannot love Him as we should unless we are truly humble. It is humility that helps us to be patient amid the trying scenes of life. Without humility there is no true rest of the soul, no true contentment of mind, no true happiness of heart.

Humility is the most beautiful of the beatitudes. The glittering diamonds of earth are not to be compared with the beauty of lowliness. Those who love the things of earth have a strong desire to be adorned with pearls and diamonds. Those who love God have a great desire to have their hearts adorned with a meek and quiet spirit. Oh, how their souls yearn after more of the meekness and lowliness of the Savior! The worldly-minded want the adornings rich and gay, that they may be admired by the world. The Christian desires the grace of humility to adorn his heart because that grace is precious in the sight of God. Let us pray earnestly for God to teach

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us more about humility and to help us to be more like Jesus in this sweet grace. He will hear and answer prayer in His own way, and His way is best.

But to have more of this grace, we must learn more about what true humility is in its nature. The spirit of humility will help us to form a just estimate of ourselves. Humility will make us more severe in judging ourselves than in judging others. We may learn something more of humility by contrasting it a little farther with its opposite. Pride is a most inconsistent principle. It often acts contrary to itself. Humility never does this. How many things the proud are doing which they have no delight in! They please others for the sake of being praised. With the humble this is not true. Here is a very good test of humility. Someone accomplishes what you have undertaken and failed in, or someone is praised for certain virtues and acquirements in which you think you are well advanced. To illustrate: Suppose you think you are a man of much prayer. You think that if you do excel others in anything, it is in being prayerful. So when others are referred to in your presence as being the more prayerful, it tries your humility. Pride will put a man into a ditch if he thinks he will there gain notice. Remember, the humble loves the lowliest place. Not only do they love the lowest place, but they even love to have this fact unknown.

Humility hides from view. It does not hide from the view of others so much as it does from one's own self. Others see the humility of the humble person more plainly than he sees it. Humility seeks to hide virtues in oneself rather than to make them known. The humble man, though he may be greatly gifted in many ways, yet he does not see his gifts. It seems to him that he is excelled by all others. Not only does humility hide the other Christian graces from the gaze of self, but it hides itself also. A humble man does not see

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his humility. He esteems others better than himself. He sees the good that is in others, but does not see their faults; but he sees his own faults rather than his good qualities. To make this plainer, we would say that a humble man who may have much faith but little patience sees his little patience rather than his greater faith; while in his brother who has great patience but little faith he sees the much patience, but does not see the weak faith; consequently he esteems others better than himself.

The word translated humility occurs only about seven times in the New Testament. In Eph. 4:2 it is rendered lowliness; in Phil. 2:3 it is rendered lowliness of mind; in 1 Pet. 5:5 it is translated humility. By this we learn that lowliness and humility are synonymous terms; and we shall use them as such in this chapter. Meekness is not perfectly synonymous with humility and lowliness; it is rather an immediate fruit of them, but many times it can be used to express lowliness. Meekness is to humility what the tree is to the root, and humility is to meekness what the root is to the tree. Each is dependent upon the other; especially is the tree dependent upon the root. Meekness is that grace which enables us not only to receive injuries without having any feeling of revenge, but to have a desire to do good to those who are responsible for the injuries. Humility is that grace which enables us, in our relationship to God, to see our nothingness and unworthiness to receive anything else than mistreatment; consequently when it comes, we receive it without any feeling of revenge, because we see, in the first place, that we are unworthy of any good.

God loves humility. A meek, lowly, quiet spirit is precious in His sight. He dwells with the lowly, and gives grace to the humble. Our Savior said: "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Humility is the

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only way to exaltation, but bear this ever in mind: humility does not seek to be humble for the sake of exaltation. Humility seeks to be humble for no other reason than to be humble. How beautiful! To be self-emptied is the fundamental preparation for the infilling of grace and glory.

Since we are learning from Jesus something of humility, let us hear what He may say relatively to this grace. “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 18:4. The disciples had come asking the shameful question, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus answered them in the above words. He who willingly is the least, the same is the greatest; but he who becomes the least for the purpose of being the greatest is hypocritical and proud. Jesus said to his disciples on another occasion, “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” Matt. 20:26; 27. Again, on beholding the pride and the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus said to His disciples: “Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Matt. 23:10, 12.

The humble man is the great man. Humility is a great thing. The smaller a man is in his own estimation, the greater he is. A man shows his greatness by showing his littleness; consequently he who shows himself to be the smallest shows himself to be the greatest. This is very simple, yet it is hard for many to learn. Oh, why will mortal man be proud? Why will this poor, fallen creature think himself to be something? God, in looking down upon him, says, “Thou worm”; but man in his self-esteem rises and says, “I am no worm; I am a man.”

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There are three prominent features in God's great kingdom of love and righteousness, and these are symbolized by three ordinances. The entrance into the kingdom of God is through death and resurrection, which is symbolized by baptism. Baptism is administered but once, because we are supposed to enter the kingdom but once. Spiritual life in the kingdom of God is maintained by living upon Christ; by eating of that bread which came down from heaven. This constant feeding upon Christ is symbolized by the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. This ordinance must be kept continuously, because we are constantly living upon Christ. In the kingdom of God we take the place of a servant toward each other. This place of humble servitude is symbolized by the ordinance of feet-washing. This ordinance is not to be observed just once, like baptism, but continuously, because we are ever the servants of one another. How blessed and beautiful! It thrills my soul with admiration. How wondrous is God's salvation! and how holy is He!

The writers of the epistles speak of humility in language similar to the language of Jesus. Paul said, "In honor preferring one another." Rom. 12:10. Do not seek to be the greatest; do not seek for highest honors; but seek the lowest place and prefer that your brother have the honor. This text Conybeare and Howson render thus: "In honor let each set his neighbor above himself." It reads as follows in Rotherham's translation: "In honor out doing one another." The word rendered prefer means "to take the lead" in being nothing. "Be ambitious to be unambitious." Outdo each other in being humble and show this by preferring that others have all the honor. Some have grace enough to be willing that honors be given to another if they themselves can have equal honors; but to the truly humble such grace is given as enables them to secretly desire all honor to be given to others. Is this your experience? Suppose that in

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company with three other brethren you went to pray for a man dying of consumption. The man was healed instantly and in a few days was a well and strong man. Someone, in telling of this wonderful healing, told who the other brethren were that prayed for the dying man, but failed to mention you. An account of the healing appeared in the paper, giving the names of the other brethren that were present and prayed, but omitting your name. Would you secretly rejoice? Would you be really and truly glad if it should never come to the ears or minds of anyone that you, too, were present and prayed for the man? O my brother, if you are humble, you will rejoice to be unknown and unnoticed.

At one time two brethren made a visit to some sisters. Several beautiful songs were sung by the sisters. Finally one of the brethren sang a very inspiring hymn. There was, however, but little comment upon the hymn. After the lapse of a few moments the brother asked whether any of the company had ever heard that hymn before. The reply was that they had not. He then told them that the Lord had given him that song down in the rural districts of one of the Southern States. The point for the brother to examine closely is, Did he desire to magnify the Lord, and the Lord alone? or, did he have a secret desire to let the company know that he was the composer? Self has a desire to be set forward, an itching to be noticed. The Apostle John would have said, "The Lord gave a disciple that song to His own glory." How beautiful a grace is humility! Self sometimes gets so cunning as to seek applause by seeming to shun it.

The Apostle Paul says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory." Phil. 2:3. Do not seek a reputation. Allow me to quote again from Conybeare and Howson: "Do nothing in a spirit of intrigue or vanity." I will take time and space to make explanation of this text, believing as I do that it will be to the reader's edification.

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In chapter 1:16 we learn that some preached Christ of contention (or “in a spirit of intrigue” say Conybeare and Howson), not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to Paul’s bonds. See verse 18. “Whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice and will rejoice.” These Judaizing teachers, since Paul had been imprisoned, began to teach Christ, supposing that he was like themselves—seeking his own glory—and that therefore if they would begin to preach Christ, he would grow envious and fear lest he himself should lose some glory. So they preached in a “spirit of intrigue.” But he was not seeking his own glory, and therefore so far as he was concerned, he could rejoice no matter who preached Christ. This is the true spirit of humility. “Let nothing be done to lift up self and to put another down, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.” I know of no text that teaches humility more forcibly and beautifully than this does. “But in lowliness of mind let each account others above himself.” “But in your lowliness of mind esteeming one another superior to yourselves.” Alas! how few are actuated fully and at all times by this spirit! It is advised that every reader look closely into his own heart as he slowly turns in the light of this truth.

How prone is man to see the faults and defects of others more readily than his own! How clearly he can see every little wrong his brother does! But he fails to see his own. He goes to visit a distant family. He hears the man speak a little unkindly to his wife. How quickly he notices it! He thinks it is bad indeed that a man should speak so unkindly to the one whom he has promised to love and cherish through life. But when he gets home, he fails to see the same fault in himself. Things look worse and can be seen more readily in others than in himself. With the humble man this is the opposite. He sees his own faults more readily than the faults of others. Defects look greater in him than they do in others; therefore he considers

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others superior to himself. In his lowliness of mind he regards others above himself. He meets many who can sing, pray, and preach much better than he can. When a man thinks he is more spiritual than anyone else, he is the least spiritual.

The Apostle Peter says, “All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourself therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” 1 Pet. 5:5, 6.

You will remember that we are learning something of humility from the teaching of Jesus and of the apostles. We have not referred to every text that hints at humility, but only to the principal ones. How worthless is everything that is not pervaded by deep humility! Only this is of any worth in God’s sight. For poor, weak man to think himself to be something, how shameful this is and how abominable in the sight of all heaven! The words of Peter, “Be clothed with humility,” are deep and far reaching. Rotherham renders them, “Lowliness of mind girding on.” Literally, they are, “Tie on with a fast knot.” We can often know a man by his clothes. Clothing is only an outward covering, but in this text it expresses the inward condition. “Gird on lowliness of mind.” Be clothed with humility”—over all the acts of life throw a covering of humility; as if to hide them from the gaze of men. It is that hideous monster Pride, that dark-visaged enemy of purity and peace, which seeks to set self forward and to call attention of others to one’s own good deeds. O God, deliver man from this artful foe.

Let humility run through your whole life and pervade every act and thought. Humble yourself, empty yourself of self before God, and let Him be all in all. Are you afraid you will suffer some loss if you cast the pure, white robe of humility over the whole of your conduct and hide your good qualities and gifts and good deeds from

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the gaze of others? It is only self that can by this suffer loss. Humility suffers no loss nor experiences any regret from being unnoticed and unknown. The humblest man is the happiest.

Humility is more than that sinking down into nothingness before God while in prayer. It is that which flows out from us in our everyday conduct as we mingle with others. That in your silent chamber before the awful and august presence of God you feel yourself sunken out of sight, is not full proof of humility. When you go out among men and are made a blessing to some and they begin to give you praise, then it is that the real tests come. If you would know the true state of your heart, watch its feelings and behavior along the common course of everyday life. Someone has used these weighty words:

“Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you. Under the banner of the truth give yourself up to the meek and humble spirit of the holy Jesus. Humility must sow the seed, or there can be no reaping in heaven. Look not at pride only as an unbecoming temper nor at humility only as a decent virtue; for the one is death and the other is life; the one is hell, the other is heaven. So much as you have of pride within you, you have of the evil one alive in you. So much as you have of true humility, so much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you see what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everyone you meet to tear the viper from you, though with the loss of a hand or an eye. Could you see what a sweet transforming power there is in humility, how it expels the poison and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wish to be the footstool of all the world than to want the smallest degree of it.”

Beloved fellow pilgrim, let us examine the true state of our hearts in the light of a few scriptural texts. “Mind not high things,

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but condescend to men of low estate.” Rom. 12:16. This text the Revised Version renders in these deep words: “Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly.” Have no aspirations for high positions in life. If your calling in life is a low one be content. Seek nothing higher from any self-interest. A humble man takes the lowest seat and is so contented that he is not looking for a higher one. He who takes a low seat with the hope of being invited up and daily looks for it is a miserable man.

“Be not wise in your own conceit.” Do not think yourself to be anything more than an ordinary man. It was the proud Pharisee that said, “I thank God I am not as other men.” Do not get such a cultivated nicety and such a lofty opinion of yourself that others seem to come a little short of yourself. A man of my acquaintance began to have a favorable opinion of himself as being cultured, meek, patient, and humble. A circumstance suddenly occurring one day affected him to such an extent as to show him that he was greatly deficient in patience and humility. Some conceit was taken out of him.

“Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” 1 Cor. 13:4. Love and humility go hand in hand. It is through love we are to be servants one of another. “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness.” Eph. 4:2. Plod along in your life’s vocation quietly and contentedly, envying no man. The little word all gives this great depth of meaning. “All lowliness” signifies perfect freedom from any wish that your lot in life be any other than that in which God has placed you. It means perfect contentment. “All meekness” means perfect freedom from any desire for revenge and from any spirit of retaliation—a perfect forbearance. It is a patience so deep that no trial nor vexing thing can get to the bottom of it. A humble man feels no envy. Others may

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rise higher and higher in social life, but he plods on sweetly contented with his lowly station.

Man cannot of himself be humble. Such is our helplessness. It is true we are commanded to humble ourselves. So are we commanded to repent and to have faith, but we are dependent upon the Spirit of God that we may keep these commands. It is only by the aid of the Holy Spirit that we can humble ourselves. We can have true inward feelings of humility only as they are given by the Spirit of God. Last evening while I was in secret devotion, there came into my heart such a sense of nothingness as to seem to blot me out of existence. As sometimes you have seen a vapor pass away until not the least trace of it could be seen, so I seemed to fade away and vanish out of sight. It was sweet as heaven to me. It was the Spirit of God that gave me such a vision of myself. I saw, too, how awfully vile, sinful, and corrupt I would be without the atonement of Christ.

Humility of heart will find expression in life. The Apostle John does not speak of himself. He says, "that other disciple." Matthew does not tell us that he was rich and that he made a great feast for Christ. It is one of the other evangelists that tell us that. Matthew simply tells us what was done as Jesus sat at meat, but does not hint at who it was that gave the entertainment. The acts of the humble are always such as will attract the least attention to self. I am not passing judgment upon the motive of a certain sister, but her conduct on a certain occasion will help me to illustrate to you more clearly how true humility behaves itself. We sat at her table. There were nine of us. She had prepared nine pieces of meat from some wild game. She took up the platter containing the delicious meat, and looking it over, remarked, "There is only a piece for each one, and I will take the most inferior piece." It would have been more consistent with

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the spirit of humility to have taken the most inferior piece without saying a word.

A certain brother had a nice apple, which he was preparing to eat. The apple was mellow upon one side, but harder upon the other. As he was about to begin eating the apple, a little child came up and begged a piece. The temptation came at first to cut off a portion from the hard side of the apple, but resisting the temptation, he gave the little girl a part from the mellow side. No one knew of this act but Him who knows all things. The truly humble choose the inferior things for themselves without calling attention to it. True humility will manifest itself daily in home life. Those who are humble will choose the poorest and leave the best for the others of the family.

By what has been said you understand something of what humility is in actual experience. Now we come to our second point of consideration.

2. The blessedness of being humble. God walks with the humble. What heart could crave a richer blessing? "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Thus to walk with God in humbleness is to have fullness of rest. If you would be happy and full of rest, you must be humble. Listen to these words of the Savior, and I trust they may fall upon your heart in their full weight and in all the strength of their beauty. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls." Rest is the result of being lowly. Alas! how few have found the precious secret! The more humble a man is, the sweeter, richer, and deeper is his rest; and the prouder he is, the more wretched is his state. Sweet, tranquil rest fills the heart and life of the truly humble. The world may scoff at you, but your rest of soul is not disturbed. All around you may be praised and honored and you neglected, but your soul rests on. Blessed experience indeed!

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God gives grace to the humble. Therefore the more lowly a man is, the more grace he has. Grace, like water, fills up the lowest places. Suppose you have two cups each ten inches deep. These cups are connected by a small tube. The tube enters one cup two inches from the top and the other two inches from the bottom. To have the pipe running level, you understand it would make one cup six inches higher than the other. Now, if there is an opening in this tube midway between the cups and you begin to pour water in this opening, the water will run both ways. But soon the water in one cup rises to the tube, and then all the water you pour in will flow into the other cup. Christian hearts are all bound together by the golden pipe of salvation. This pipe enters the heart at the surface of the humility. If you have but one inch of humility in the bottom of your heart and your brethren have ten, then as God pours grace and glory into the golden pipe, your heart is filled; then it all flows into other hearts that are more lowly. If you desire more grace and glory, you must humble yourself; because God gives grace to the humble.

“Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.” The earth is the Lord’s and its fullness. The meek and lowly have God for their Father; consequently they are heirs to this world—to all they daily need of it. This is one blessing belonging to the humble. They inherit the earth. By this is meant that God who owns the earth and all in it will supply every need, or give to the truly humble every temporal blessing needed. Those who become a little anxious and somewhat disturbed because every temporal blessing is not in sight are not as humble as they should be; consequently faith in God is hindered. I desire to make every point comprehensive; and the best manner in which to do this by illustration. Suppose I was to go to a place to hold a meeting. Now, if the congregation at that place did not give me of their means to meet my present necessities and I should become anxious and restless, it would be because I was not

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as humble before God as I should be. To humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God includes not only a consciousness of our dependence upon God but also the rest of faith and trust in Him. God's humble child shall never want. "They shall eat in plenty and be satisfied." When the grace of humility adorns the heart, God is well pleased, and he keeps that heart full of rest. "The Lord lifteth up the meek."

Let us read Psa. 147:4-6: "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite. The Lord lifteth up the meek." This is wonderful. The same thought is expressed here as in Isa. 40:26-29. The very greatness of God's power that is called into operation in creating and sustaining the material universe is called into operation in lifting up and sustaining the meek. The heavens may fall and the worlds melt away, but God will never suffer His humble child to stumble and fall. It is blessed to be humble. My heart daily seeks for more of this satisfying grace. My soul has tasted of it and prays and longs for more. As the hart pants after the water brooks so my soul pants after more humility. It is not a restless, anxious, dissatisfied craving, but a sweet, satisfied longing. The meek are exhorted to seek meekness. See Zeph. 2:3. The very meekest can yet attain to greater meekness, and consequently our joy and blessedness can ever be increasing.

We will make a few quotations from the Holy Bible. These we ask you to meditate upon until your soul tastes of the sweetness they contain. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied." Psa. 22:26. Is it not blessed to be fully satisfied; to want nothing; to have full and perfect rest of soul? Such is the happy state of the truly humble. Not only shall they have food for the body and be satisfied therewith, but they shall have food for the soul until it delights itself in fatness.

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“The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.” Psa. 25:9. If this declaration does not waken in your soul an intense desire to become more meek, it must be sleeping the sleep of death. The ways of God are peaceful, pleasant, happy ways. There is no sorrow there, no darkness. All is hopeful and bright. The humble shall walk there and shall hear the voice of their God. His ways are higher, much higher, than man’s ways; but those who will humble themselves, he will exalt to walk in his ways. Alas! how few in these days of iniquity and cold formality know the right ways of the Lord! Thank God! there are a few who know—and blessed is that people!

“The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” Psa. 37:11. When you have meditated on this text a full hour, you will then begin to comprehend only a little of its depth of meaning. Have you an abundance of peace? Many who thought they had an abundance of peace found, when the tests and trials came, that their peace was very shallow. One who testified of being so full of peace lost all his peace when the trial came. Some day (for such days do come) when everything seems to go wrong, then do you delight yourself in the abundance of peace? If you do not, you need more meekness; for the promise is that the meek shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

“The Lord lifteth up the meek.” “The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord.” Isa. 29:19. Oh, how these words thrill our inner being! No harm can ever come to one of God’s humble ones, for he lifts them above every evil. We set sail upon the ocean of life in sweet assurance of safety. We do not know what storms may rise along the way. We do not know how high the billows may dash, nor what may interpose; but this we know; if we keep humble, God will lift us high over all, and our joy shall be increased. Since it is so

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blessed to be humble, all our hearts are longing for more humility; therefore we will now consider our third point.

3. How to become more humble. To the obtaining of more humility, there are at least four requisites; namely, 1. Being conscious of one's need of more. 2. A comprehension of the true worth of this grace. 3. Having a strong desire to obtain more. 4. Earnestly seeking after it.

1. The first thing necessary for the obtaining of more humility is to be conscious of your need of more. You cannot attain to more if you do not feel your need of more. You must feel your need so deeply that your soul will cry unto God for more; then God will give it; no soul was ever denied its holy desires when pleaded for in earnestness. Examine your experiences in the light of God's word. Examine your meekness beside the meekness of Jesus until you deeply feel the need of more. If one fails to be conscious of any need of more, it would be folly to seek for more. No one can seek with sufficient earnestness to find unless deeply conscious of the need. In order for us to receive anything from God, our souls must plead from a full consciousness of need. Remember this, my dear Christian reader; I am not writing on this subject merely to entertain you; I desire to benefit you in your own soul's experience. Lay this book down now and look into your heart and life to see how much need you have of being more humble; and may the Spirit of God aid in the research. Take plenty of time. Many people fail to get full help from God because they do not take time enough.

2. A comprehension of the true worth of this grace. After you have discovered that you are not as humble as you need to be, then you should see something of the beauty and the true worth of humility. If a man should see that he needed more, but should not see the great benefit and blessing it would be to him, he would not

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strive for it. Let this sweet grace therefore become a pearl of great price to your soul.

I must repeat something I have said before. Take time to see the excellence of humility. Nothing else is hindering Christians today from making spiritual advancement as is their not taking enough time to do so. The artist stands before the scene to be painted till his whole soul is aflame with admiration of its beauty. If he is going to paint a sunset, he must see its beauties and its glories. These glories he must view with such admiration that they get into his own soul; and then he can pour them from his own soul into his painting. Let me say, too, that the skilled artist sees glories in the sunset that are hidden from the unpracticed eye. If you would see the beauty and the excellence of humility, you must tarry before him who shines forth his grace in its light and strength, until your soul is filled with admiration of its beauty. It is only then that you can get humility into your own heart and show it forth in your life. Those who tarry long at the feet of Jesus see beauties of His sweet life and excellencies in His character that unpracticed eyes never see.

3. Having a strong desire to obtain more. You must feel your need of humility and see the beauty of it until your soul longs for more of it. There must be a longing. As your physical being thirsts for water, so your soul must thirst for God. Someone wrote these beautiful lines:

“God loves to be longed for, loves to be sought,
For He sought us Himself with such longing and love.
He died for desire of us—marvelous thought!
And He yearns for us now to be with Him above.”

Some have considered desire as something unimportant. They seem to think it bespeaks a state of discontent, of uneasiness, or of unrest. Not so. There is a blessedness in having strong desire for more of God.

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“Of all the myriad moods of mind
That through the soul come thronging
Which one was e’er so dear, so kind,
So beautiful as longing?”

The student that has no thirst for knowledge finds no joy in seeking knowledge; but the student that desires knowledge seeks for it with joy. Ah! with what delight he bends to his task! As long as he has mind-hunger, so long will he continue in search of knowledge and ever will be gaining and happy and contented in such knowledge. Should this mind-hunger cease, then this mental growth is at an end. The same is true in spiritual things. If there is no hunger of soul for more meekness, then more meekness will never be gained. When soul-hunger ceases, spiritual development is at an end. Longing is not unrest. It is not anxiety. The sinner’s soul is in unrest, and he longs for rest. The Christian’s soul is full of rest, but he longs for calmer rest; his soul is full of peace, but he desires sweeter peace; his heart is full of contentment, but he desires deeper contentment. It is not a bitter cry of anguish nor of disappointment; but it is the tender, passionate yearning of a loving heart for a sweeter, fuller, richer, deeper experience in the meekness and lowliness of Jesus. But it is not enough to have strong desire.

4. Earnestly seeking after it. The student may have a thirst for knowledge; but if he does not seek for it, he will never gain it. “Seek ye the Lord; all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgments; seek righteousness; seek meekness.” Zeph. 2:3. Here is where many fail. They long for more of God, to be more kind, to be more meek and patient; but they do not make the effort to obtain more. In order to obtain the pearl of great price, the man sold all he had and bought the field containing the pearl. You desire to become more meek, but you are not willing to take time that you might

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obtain it. The temporal duties of life are demanding all your time. As you go about your daily duties, you sigh for more of God. Longing is not sighing.

“I will not waste one breath of life in sighing.
For other ends has life been given to me—
Duties and pure devotion daily rising
Into a higher, better life with thee,
My God, with thee.”

Gazing into heaven will not make you more like Jesus. Sitting down and longing will never gain the goal. The man at the base of the cliff may wish he were at the top, but mere wishing will not take him there. We must have desire, but our desire must lead to service. Deny self for the good of others. Pray for others more than for yourself. Be patient under every provocation and affliction. Look not on your “light afflictions,” but keep God’s glory in view. Keep seeing more of God in everything and less of self. Do not have regard for self. Beloved, it is possible for you to become so humble and heavenly minded that you hardly seem to dwell in the body. Going out from your presence will be a peculiar influence that others will feel and look on you with wonder. They will not understand you. To them you will seem to live more and to dwell rather in the spiritual than in the natural world.

“Oh, to be emptier, lowlier
Mean, unnoticed, and unknown,
And to God a vessel holier,
Filled with Christ, and Christ alone!”

The Rest of Faith

Rest signifies quietness, tranquillity, happiness! not to be agitated by fear; not to be anxious; but to be full of peace and repose. There is a rest for God's people. There is a freedom from all fear, from all anxiety, from every care: there is a tranquillity, a quietness, a fullness of rest, for the follower of Jesus. Man knew no fear in the days of his primitive purity. Anxiety, fear, care, trouble, discontent, disquietude, unrest, etc., found no place in his nature. These words and all synonymous ones were coined since man fell from his primeval purity. After he fell into sin, then unrest, discontent, uneasiness, trouble, etc., took possession of his being, and he was most wretched. He was said to be "full of trouble" and to be like the troubled sea that casts up mire and dirt. He sought rest, but found none.

After man's disgraceful fall a prophecy was spoken— "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of that people be." Gen. 49:10. Shiloh signifies Peacemaker, the Procurer of our happiness, the Rest-giver. It has reference to Jesus. On the night when this Rest-giver was born a multitude of the angelic host shouted, "Peace on earth, good will to man." Jesus speaks to the troubled, sin-laden heart of man, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke

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upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Thus speaks the Rest-giver of prophecy. No one ever before offered rest to the heavy-hearted soul of man; but Christ came to give him rest. “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” Christ is this rest. As He is the way, the truth, and the life; so he is the rest. But how shall we enter into His rest? “We which have believed **do** enter into rest.” Heb. 4:3. It is not that they shall in some future day or age enter into rest, but they do enter into rest. Praise God! This rest is the rest of faith. In Jesus we enjoy the holy Sabbath of which the Jewish Sabbath was a type. Oh, glorious rest of the soul! The blood-washed throng take up the angels’ glad refrain and shout over land and sea, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward man.”

There is full and perfect rest in Jesus for every soul. This rest is a holy quietness in Him. It is freedom from all petulance, murmuring, or agitation. Christ erases sin (the seat of unrest) from the soul and establishes there His own righteousness, the work of which shall be peace, and the effect . . . quietness and assurance forever.”

Water may be disturbed by something working in its depths, or it may be agitated by some exterior force. The water will not reflect your image if it is troubled, neither does an agitated soul reflect the image of Jesus. Doubts are destructive of rest. Faith in the promises of God brings rest. The world may frown upon you; may speak ill of you; riches may flee away and poverty stare you in the face like an angry wolf; friends may forsake you; saints may misunderstand you; but faith in the promise, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,” will keep the soul sweetly at rest. If it were man that gave rest, then man could destroy rest. If it were riches that gave rest, then poverty would bring unrest. If it were circumstances that gave rest,

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then circumstances could destroy rest. If it were this world that gave rest in any sense, it could in some sense disturb rest. But it is Jesus who gives rest to the Christian heart; and there is naught on earth that can destroy that rest. How sweet to trust fully in God and be at rest! Oh, the completeness of perfect rest in God!

Blessed is the man who has entered into rest. Truly the Christian life is the most tranquil, peaceful, and restful that mortal can find. The human family is traveling across a sea which is called the Sea of Life. Some are sailing one way and some another. The only successful and happy way is the Christian way. The way is full of rest; it is quietness in every storm; amid every turmoil it is sweet, calm repose.

Talkativeness

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything [word, margin] before God: for God is in heaven and thou upon the earth: therefore let thy words be few.” Eccl. 5:2. Too much talking is very destructive to spirituality. Many people wonder why they do not have a closer walk with God. With some it is because they talk too much. It is surprising to note how much worthless talk there is in the world today.

How many think they must keep constantly talking to be entertaining! They do not know the power and the beauty of silence. Hearts communing in silence exert a power and influence over each other. Our musings are transmitted to other hearts. Ofttimes when my wife and I have been driving along some quiet country road or have been sitting in the quiet of our home, she has spoken of the very thing on which I was meditating. Often the thoughts of our hearts exert more powerful influence over the hearts and the minds of our companions than would our words.

It is true that words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver; but unless fitly spoken, they become most unsightly, degrading, and ruinous. The most beautiful thing in its place often becomes the most unsightly thing when out of place. Let your words be few and well chosen. “In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin.” In that ceaseless prattle there is an awful waste of

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real soul energy. The odor of a rose confined in a room is very perceptible and delightful but in open air it would soon be spent. Words that are gathered in hours of silence, burst forth in strength and beauty; but where there is a constant flow of speech, the words run down into weakness. Alas! how much shallowness there is in much of the present day conversation! I do not mean among the unregenerate only, but among Christians as well. One word seasoned with grace is worth far more than a thousand graceless ones. Make your words palatable by putting in much seasoning.

There is much to do in these days, by way of visiting and talking to others, so much writing to be done, and so much preaching needed, that, to some, hours spent in silence may seem to be a great waste. It is not if the heart's musing is on proper themes. The ministry of Jesus was a short and busy one, yet He found much time to be alone. He would go apart into the desert and the mountain and there in deep communings in the Spirit He would compress within His inner being a holy unction that would burst forth upon the ears and hearts of His hearers in such weight that they would say, "Never man spake like this man." Elijah was left alone by the brook Kidron. We may think this was a waste of time. Paul was shut up in prison, but there he gathered force of words that speak to this day. If you would bring flowers to others, you must go into the valley to gather them. To converse with others without first having gathered in your closet vital force into your own inner being, is like trying to feed hungry mouths from an empty basket. To give out in excessive talk more than the soul has gathered in its silent communings, is a waste of vital force and will bring a decline in spirituality, just as the muscle is weakened by being too severely exercised.

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Let your speech be always seasoned with grace. Talk not seasoned with grace is as insipid as food without salt. Our words should be so seasoned with grace that they would assist others into a more heavenly frame of spirit. It is in the closet that we take on a store of seasoning grace. More time is required to do the seasoning than to do the serving. In other words, more time should be spent in secret prayer, in deep meditation and thoughtful reading, than in mingling and conversing. A useful man of God one time said he had learned that about an hour was as long as he could spend in conversation to profit. If you talk more than you pray, your words will run beyond the point of seasoning and be graceless.

Satan, in all probability, will tell you that time spent in reading the Bible, in silent meditation, or in secret prayer is time misspent. He will endeavor to persuade you that you have no time for these. He would send you out in great haste to feed others from an empty basket. Be careful of your words. See that everyone is seasoned with grace. Unless they are, they are wasted words. The unction of the Spirit upon your soul is obtained and retained by reading or in prayer and meditation. You should linger in the closet until this unction is compressed to the utmost capacity of your soul. It will impart force to your words. The preacher that does but little praying may use great, swelling words; but he is only a sounding brass. Let your words be few. Man shall give account for every idle word. Be careful how you spend the silent hours. If you spend them in idle dreaming or lazily, you will not be fit to go out among men. You will only go empty handed. Improve the silent moments and gather to your soul a bountiful store of grace; then go out and pour it upon the hearts of others.

O ye saints, avoid multiplicity of words. Some may count you dull and stupid, but it is better that the world should call us stupid

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than that God should count us graceless. Speak only such words as are good “to the use of edifying, that it [they] may minister grace unto the hearer.” In relating past experiences, be careful that it is done to edification, and not just to please. Be willing to listen rather than to speak. If a man does not bridle his tongue, his religion is in vain. Someone has said, “Speech is silver; silence is golden.” Let your words and your thoughts be such as will invite and encourage the Spirit of God to rest upon you and as will keep in your soul an uninterrupted sense of the divine presence. This was said of a man who enjoyed a walk and communion with God attained by but few:

“It was a constant care to keep a deep sense of God’s presence. In order to do this he was slow of speech, and had the exact government of his words. To this he was so inwardly attentive, as sometimes to appear stupid to those who knew him not; though few conversed in a more lively manner when he judged it would be for the glory of God. It was his continual endeavor to draw up his own and every other spirit to an immediate intercourse with God; and all his intercourse with me was so mingled with prayer and praise that every employment and every meal was as it were perfumed therewith. He often said: ‘It is a very little thing so to hang upon God by faith as to feel no departure from Him. But I want to be filled with the fullness of His Spirit. I feel,’ said he, ‘sometimes such gleams of light, as it were wafts of heavenly air, as seems ready to take my soul with them to glory.’ ”

Another said of the same devoted man: “I was intimately acquainted with him for above thirty years. I conversed with him morning, noon, and evening without the least reserve during a journey of many hundred miles, and in all that time I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. Many exemplary men have I known holy in heart and life, but one

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equal to him I have not known—one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God. So unblameable a character in every respect, I have not found either in Europe or in America; nor do I expect to find another such this side of eternity.”

It is our privilege to live as near God as did this man or any other, but in order to do so we must have the same constant care, guard our words, and live in an atmosphere that is wafted fresh from the perfumed fields of heaven.

The Christian's Triumph

Man originally belonged to God. He was created that he might serve and glorify his Creator. But he shamefully sold himself and became the wretched slave of sin and Satan. Oh, deplorable state of man! Oh, such abject, wretched slavery! ground down beneath the tyrant's iron heel; led captive by lust and forced to do many things that the better part of their nature told them was degrading and shameful. The diabolical spirits in the black land of torture and torment were in a glee. They fed in a gluttonous manner upon the pains and sufferings of man. They bound their captives with chains of iron and tortured them upon every side. In their pain men cried unto God, and He in His love and tender mercy promised to send them a Savior, a strong One to deliver them.

Of all the creatures in the entire universe of God, none was able to deliver man from the iron grasp of sin but God's only Son. He is man's only hope. If He fails, there remains nothing but weeping and wailing, anguish and torture, in the blackness of darkness forever. Is He able, O lost and ruined race—is that Christ able to deliver us? We hear a voice come ringing down through the dim vista of years, saying, "He is mighty to save and strong to deliver." Glory to His name!

O Son of God, our only hope,
All rest, O Christ, on thee

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Thou canst break the fettering bars
And set us captives free.

Christ has come to “bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to open the prisons to them that are bound.” And “now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.” 2 Cor. 2:14. This text is more correctly and consequently much more beautifully rendered by Conybeare and Howson: “But thanks be to God, who leads me on from place to place in the train of his triumph, to celebrate his victory over the enemies of Christ, and by me sends forth the knowledge of him, a stream of fragrant incense throughout the world.”

The meaning of the foregoing scripture is not so much that we triumph by Christ, but that Christ triumphs in us. He came to judge and to make war. He came to do battle with sin, death, and hell. I was a captive to these powers; but Christ made war with them and delivered me, and now I stand forth as a trophy of Christ's. Glory to His name now and forever! The American Indians, when victorious in battle, would scalp the slain of the enemy and would bear those scalps as a trophy about the streets of their village to celebrate their victory. As a Christian, Christ has rescued me from the hands of the enemy, and He bears me aloft in His triumphal march. The Christian is raised up to a heavenly place and is led on through life as a trophy of Christ's.

Look what a picture! All the saints of God robed in fine linen, clean and white, having the harps of God and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, forming one grand and mighty procession to celebrate the victory of Christ over sin, Satan, and the grave. Thank God! I am in the procession “with my shining garments on.” Every one rescued from sin is a trophy which Christ bears to the bosom of

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the Father. They were Satan's captivity, but Christ leads "captivity captive." The Christian is the spoil gathered by Christ in the conflict with Satan. Not only does the Christian triumph over the world and over sin, but he is a signal of Christ's victory over the same. It is a twofold triumph.

Picture to yourself a victorious general with his army and captives. They march in one magnificent, triumphal procession through the city, bearing aloft the captives as a signal of their victory. Such is the mighty host of Christians Christ leads on through life in one grand, triumphal procession. The victorious general, as He marches with His rescued host through the city, burns incense and sends forth a sweet fragrance everywhere. The sweet, verdant graces from the fields of heaven are implanted in the Christian's heart, where they bud and blossom and send forth a mighty stream of fragrance throughout the world.

In the natural world, however, we do not find anything that forms a perfect analogy for things in the spiritual world. The victorious general with his captives represents only in part Christ's triumphal march through this world with His captives. They become His willing servants. They engage in the battle against the enemy from whom they were delivered. Christ is with His saints, strengthening them in battle. He gives them power over the enemy. When they triumph, Christ triumphs; and when they cease to triumph, Christ ceases to triumph. It is no small thing for a Christian to ground his arms and surrender to the enemy. It does not end with himself. I pray God to stamp this deeply upon the heart of every Christian's heart. Every time you suffer defeat, Christ suffers defeat. You are to show to this world that Christ does reign and triumph over sin. Christ makes a display of you; He bears you aloft to show to this world His victory over the enemy. Oh! how does Jesus feel

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when you suffer defeat either by getting into sin or by letting down the shield of faith?

Beloved, Christ can cause us always to triumph. I pray God to help every saint to fully understand this. Someone asked, "Is it expected that man always have up the shield of faith and always have the victory?" Yes; I know men and women that have held up the shield of faith and kept the victory continuously for years. It is no small thing to lay down the shield of faith and give the battle over. The angels rejoice when a soul is saved, but they weep when a soul is defeated. You who are unstable and so often cast away your confidence, if you could but fully know the effect of such upon Christ and the angels, you surely would put forth a greater effort, you would contend more earnestly. Remember that when you cast away your confidence in God and His word, you are dishonoring Him. Do you not love Jesus? Has He not died for you? Does it not grieve you to dishonor Him? Beloved, keep the victory, not so much for your own sake as for Jesus' sake.

Thy Will Be Done

The life that is fully abandoned to the will of God is the sweetest, purest, and most heaven-admired life on earth. Oh, how blessed to be able to speak out of the heart and say “thy will be done!” God can fold us to Himself only as we yield to Him. Sometimes you sing, “Fold me closer, Lord, to thee.” God replies, “Yield more fully, child, to me.” Some follow Jesus until the way grows rough and full of dangers. Peter said he would follow the Lord; but when the crucifixion stared him in the face, he drew back. There may be many others like him today. They often reason in this manner. “If God loves me, He would not have me suffer; therefore this way of danger and hardship and suffering is not God’s way, consequently I will not take it.” Many today would be enjoying a sweeter nearness to God if they had been more willing to endure the hardness and had not drawn back from the toil and suffering. Oh, how sweet to suffer for Jesus! I know God loves you. He loved His only begotten Son, but what did He call him to suffer, and that for your sake? And now is it too much that He should call you to suffer for the sake of others?

Look upon the sufferings of Jesus. In the midst of His deepest sufferings He never charged the Father with a lack of love, but meekly bowed and said, “Thy will, not mine, be done.” To step out of self and look toils, hunger, perils, darkness, trials, and

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persecutions in the face and say, “Thy will be done,” binds God’s loving heart to you. Oh, to have such intense love to God enables us to count the deepest sufferings for Him a blessing, is a sweet experience. To be wholly abandoned to the will of God is indeed heaven here. When such intense desire fills our soul for God’s will to be done in us and with us that any suffering which would glorify Him would be a relief, then we can begin to say from the heart, “Thy will be done in us as it is in heaven.” How blessed! How heavenly to launch out upon the stream of time and say in our hearts: “Lord, direct my bark of life whithersoever thou wilt. All is in thy hands. I am fully thine. Cause my little bark to turn at the slightest pressure of Thy will. O God Thy will is all I care to know and do. It is my life; my only pleasure is in doing Thy will.”

I one day was in deep trial,
Satan heavy blows did wield,
Fiery darts were thickly flying,
I had almost dropped my shield.

Still more desperate grew the struggle,
Darkness reigned instead of day;
Then I heard my Savior whisper,
“Will you let Me have My way?

“All the dross I would discover
And the gold I would refine.”
Then I humbly bowed and whispered,
“Lord, Thy will be done, not mine.”

Now my heart is full of gladness;
Nothing can disturb my rest,

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Since I've learned that Jesus loves
And for me does always best.

Though the winds blow wild and dreary
And dark storm clouds o'er me spread,
They will burst when God commands them,
Drop rich blessings on my head.

Though the gloom and mists may gather
And dark feelings o'er me stray,
When I come into God's presence,
All the darkness flees away.

When the way of life grows weary
And it seems I have no friend,
It is then my Saviour whispers,
"I'll be with thee to the end."

Tis not only of Christ's blessings
I would willingly partake,
But I'll drink the cup of suff'ring
For my blessed Saviour's sake.

When in pain and loss and sorrow,
Tis so plainly now I see,
Since I know my Saviour better,
That these things work good to me.

I will doubt Him never, never;
In the billows rough and wild,
In the deepest, sorest trial,
I will be His trusting child.

When the shadows deepen round me,
Shutting out the light of day,

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In my heart I'll softly whisper,
"Jesus, have thy own sweet way."

Till I reach the golden sunset,
This shall be my constant plea:
As Thy will is done in heaven,
Let it, Lord, be done in me."

Wanting Nothing

The little bird that wings the air
Is wholly free from every care;
And so am I.

The Lord unto my pray'r gives heed,
My ev'ry want and ev'ry need
He does supply.

The Lord my shepherd is today,
He guards and guides me all the way
I'm fully blest.

Upon His arm I trusting lean,
Naught in this world my soul can wean
From this sweet rest.

We are living in a world of sin, sorrow, and care. Such is the condition of poor, fallen, sinful man. But Jesus has come to save us from sin and consequently from sorrow. The angels said on the night when Jesus was born, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Many hearts are heavy laden. Jesus says, "Come and I will give you rest." Many a one is finding the path of life rough and weary. Christ will make it easy. He will make all the rough places smooth. Many in their sins are wishing they had

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never been born. The saint is praising God because he has been “born again.” He is happy in redeeming grace; he craves nothing of this world; he rejoices always; he is ever contented; he lives above want.

One of old time said, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” This is the Christian’s song. He can sing it with the understanding. Those who are in want, those who are not satisfied, are not availing themselves of all their privileges in Christ Jesus. God is not unto them all He longs to be. Christ is the Good Shepherd; He cares for the precious lambs of His fold; He carries the weak ones in His bosom; He leads them beside the still waters and into quiet resting places. Blessed be His name! Jesus is the burden-bearer. He says, “Cast all your care on me; I will bear them all for thee.” We should be wholly free from care. To be free from care is to have no anxieties; to take no thought for the morrow; to be careful for nothing; to have no fear that has any torment; to have no fret nor worry. It is to lean wholly upon the Lord; to trust Him for everything for all time; to have complete and satisfactory rest. “Oh, fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him.” Psa. 34:9. The fear of God dispels all anxieties and brings confidence and rest.

If you value your Christian prosperity and a close walk with God, see to it that you keep free from the cares of this world. Just as the weeds hinder the growth of the plants in your garden, so the cares of this life hinder the growth of the word and grace of God in your heart. I will tell you a beautiful story and one full of meaning. A great many years ago there lived in a pleasant and quiet village two sisters and a brother. They had the pleasure at one time of entertaining in their humble home a very distinguished person. The sisters were very unlike in general disposition. One of them seemed

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to be much burdened with the cares of the world and was cumbered about much serving. She was very desirous that their guest should be bountifully provided for in a temporal way. She came to Him one day with a complaint against her sister. She said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." Jesus (for He was that guest) said to her, "Martha! Martha! thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." The beautiful lesson taught is to be not troubled and anxious about what to eat or wear. If we have a few things, they will suffice. There is something better. If we choose that good part, we shall find we need but few of the temporal things.

Those who cumber themselves with the cares of this life and give themselves much concern about the temporal things have certainly neglected that good part. To have much concern about the temporal things is very destructive to spirituality. Saints need to be watchful, or they will have too much concern about the temporal things. It might be for your good if you would make a test to see where your mind is most. Tomorrow begin to set down in one column all the thoughts and all the words you have about the temporal things of life. In another column set down all the words and all the thoughts you have about spiritual things. In the evening foot up both columns and see how they balance. You may be somewhat surprised. When your crop or your business is failing, do you lean restfully on the arm of Jesus, or have you anxieties?

Living above want is to have no anxieties, but to trust God and be at rest. "The Lord tends me as a shepherd; and I shall want nothing. In a place of green pasture there he has made me to dwell: he has nourished me by the water of rest."

—Septuagint.

The Secret Things of God

“Secret things belong unto the Lord our God.” Deut. 29:29. A secret is something known only to one or to very few. Many things are known to God which are kept secret from man, but all man’s secrets are known to God. It pleases God, however, to reveal some of His sweet secrets to man. Those who love God and serve Him faithfully have the blessed privilege of knowing many things of God and heaven that others do not know. God “revealeth his secrets to his servants.” Amos 3:7. Jesus said that He would make Himself known to us as He would not unto the world. Oh, how blessed to come near to Christ and have Him tell us some of the precious secrets contained in those mysteries hidden for ages! The angels knew that the mystery of salvation contained many precious things, for they desired to look into it. The revelations of Jesus are heaven to the soul. How the heart that has heard the voice of the Lord longs to know more of the secret things hidden in Him! Such a heart will seek after Him; it will cleave to Him; it will rest only when in His presence and learning more of Him, seeing more of His love, and tasting more of the sweetness of His life.

God usually speaks in a “still, small voice,” and hence to hear Him one must necessarily come very near to Him. God has a secret place in which He tells His secrets. It is only those that “dwell in the secret place of the most high” that can know the secrets of the Lord.

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If you would know much of the secret things of God, you must live near Him. The Lord has a secret tabernacle, and it is down in that secret place with all the world shut out that He tells His secrets. It is a narrow passage that leads to this secret pavilion. Houses and lands must be left behind. Those hearts to whom houses and lands can talk cannot hear the still, sweet voice of Jesus. The voice of the Lord might be saying, "Come to me in a quiet hour of prayer;" but houses and lands would be saying, "You will not have time; we must have your service." If you would hear God speak, you must leave this world so far behind that you cannot hear it when it speaks.

The way into the Lord's secret pavilion is so narrow that father and mother, brothers and sisters and friends, must be left behind. Jesus may speak; but if you are not deaf to the voice of father or mother, you may not hear Him. Children also must be left behind. God may be calling you to a secret place where He can tell you secret things. It may be far from home; it may be over the stormy seas; but father, mother, brother, sister, or children may talk so loudly to your heart that you cannot hear God's voice. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." To fear God is to keep His commandments.

To enter into the secret chamber of God, your own life must be left behind. Self must be crucified. Oh, how many dear children of God have failed to hear the secrets of the Lord because of the clamorous voice of self! Jesus is talking to your heart, saying, "Here is one of my poor, needy ones to whom you can now give aid, and I will bless you and make you happy;" but that monster self sets up such a din and confusion that you cannot hear the voice of Jesus. So self must be crucified.

There are secret things of God to be learned all along the Christian way. We are to know not only in the grace but also in the

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knowledge of our Lord Jesus. It is not in the greatest affairs and concerns of life only that we need to know more of God; but many, I am persuaded, also need to know Him better in the little happenings and circumstances of everyday life. Early in my Christian experience I was taught a precious lesson from the Lord. I had two beautiful young cherry trees growing in my garden. One springtime my little boy climbed into one and to all appearance ruined it; but a voice seemed to say to my soul, "All things are of God; look unto Him and know that all things are for good, and you will see some of His secret things." I cut off the broken branches and committed the tree into the hands of the Lord. I knew that if He was able to curse a fig tree and cause it to die, He was able to bless a cherry tree and cause it to grow. That tree grew as I never saw a tree grow. In a short time it was more beautiful than the other tree.

When Peter called the Master's attention to the withered fig tree, he answered, "Have faith in God," and then farther said, "What things soever ye desire when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." God will bless the affairs of your everyday life. Do not think anything too hard nor too small for God to do. If you want a mountain removed, ask Him and doubt not, and you shall have what you asked; or if it is only a grain of sand you want removed, ask the Lord and doubt not, and He will remove it. It is more difficult for some to have faith for the small things than for the great things. If you have but two pieces of meat, do not hesitate to give one piece to the needy. God can, and will if you ask, make the remaining piece go farther than the two would have gone without His blessing. This is a secret not known by everyone.

A poor Christian brother awoke early one morning and, calling to his wife, said, "If we should dust the flour barrel well, do you not think we could get enough flour to make bread for breakfast?" "No,"

the wife replied, "I scraped it out clean last evening and barely had enough to make bread for supper." The poor preacher lay there for awhile thinking how to get bread for his children. It came into his mind again that if they would dust the flour barrel they could get flour enough for breakfast. He arose and made a fire and then went—no doubt with deep feeling in his heart—to dust the flour barrel. After some dusting and scraping and shaking, he succeeded, to his wife's astonishment, in getting enough flour to make bread for breakfast. She went to preparing the breakfast, and he sat down to meditate upon the things of God.

Just as she was ready to call her husband and the children to breakfast, she heard a rap on the door. She went to the door, and there stood a poorly-dressed man, who said, "Madam, can you give me something to eat?" She went and informed her husband of a man's being at their door begging for food. He said to his wife, "Divide out my portion of the bread and give it to the man." "No," she said, "I cannot do that. If you do not eat, I cannot." "Do, wife," the poor preacher said, "as I have told you; give him my portion of the bread, and you and the children eat your breakfast." She did as requested. She and the children ate heartily. When they had finished their breakfast, she called to her husband, "Come, eat your breakfast; there is some bread left." He went to the table, gave thanks to God, and ate all he desired; and yet there was bread left. Such gracious doings of our blessed Lord are some of His secrets.

The Lord Jesus told a secret thing to Peter one day. He would not have told it to everyone, for some would have scoffed at Him. He told Peter to go to the sea and cast in a hook and to take the first fish that should rise. This fish, the Saviour said, would have a coin in its mouth. "Take that," he continued, "and pay tribute for thee and me." Peter had sufficient faith to do as He commanded. What his

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feelings were as he went on his way to the brook, I will leave you to imagine. No doubt his heart was all expectation and wonder as he waited for a bite at his hook. But it was even as the Lord had told him. I do not know how came the coin in the mouth of the fish, but such doings are among the secrets of the Lord.

I will relate what to me was a most remarkable instance of God's answering prayer and manifesting Himself to His own as He does not to the world. In the autumn of 1906 the Gospel Trumpet Company, publishers, purchased a large printing press. The cost of this press was something more than fourteen thousand dollars. I spoke of the matter to our home congregation and asked if they did not wish to do what they could in helping to pay for the machine. A poor sister, who is rich in grace, desired to have a part in the matter. She began to ask the Lord to give to her that she might be able to give something to His good work. It was one dollar she was praying for. The Lord gave her in a marvelous way little by little until she had ninety-five cents. She then earnestly sought the Lord for the remaining five cents. After prayer she sent her two little boys away to their work, which was splitting wood. One boy struck his axe into a block, cracking it partly open. In that crack he saw a shiny object. He called to his aid a larger boy, and they succeeded in getting the block of wood open; whereupon they found a silver dime. This had no doubt been placed in the tree many years before; for it had all grown over, leaving no scar. The Lord prepared this coin to answer this woman's prayer, as He did the coin in the mouth of the fish that Peter caught.

God does not manifest Himself thus to the world, and I sometimes fear that many of His own dear children are not learning as many secrets as they might. How many glorious secret things lie deeper in God than I have gone, I do not know; only, I know there

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are many. My heart is reaching for them with avidity. Down, down into God; down into His secret pavilion; down where I can see more of His love to me; down where I can feel more of His Spirit's power; down where His breathings are felt more sensibly upon the soul; down where that still, small voice rhythms more sweetly and can be more distinctly heard—this is the pleading of my soul.

God's child has nothing to fear. The love of a gracious heavenly parent is over it. Have faith in God, and He will reveal himself in many wondrous secret ways. Christ fed the multitude from a few loaves. He is the same today, and He will do the same for you literally. Draw near to Him, and he will teach you secret things.

Joy

Joy is a pleasurable feeling very similar to happiness, delight, peace, etc. Most people love to be joyous. Some people do not have as much joy as they would like to have. It is your privilege to be full of joy. “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” “These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.” John 15:11. It is your privilege to “have all joy” and to be “full of joy.” The apostle says, “Rejoice always.” It is your privilege to rejoice constantly.

Some people say that they had great joy when they were first saved ten years ago, but that they have had so many trials since and met with so many disappointments that they have lost their joy. It is true that when people are newly born again and are baptized by the Holy Spirit, they are full of joy. The prophet, in describing this says: “The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Isa. 35:10. We can illustrate this by taking two cups and calling one the cup of sorrow and the other the cup of joy. The sinner has no joy in his cup (“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked”), while his cup of sorrow is full. When he comes to Christ, he finds rest; his cup of sorrow is taken away and his cup of joy is full to the brim and oft times to overflowing. Now, if all along the Christian way he does

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what the Bible says, he will always keep the cup of sorrow empty and the cup of joy full. None need to expect to prosper in the divine life if they are hearers of the word and not doers. If you will be a doer of God's word, you can keep your cup of joy full. Listen to the word: "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Jas. 1:2. Please notice the little word "all." It is all joy. If you will count your trials all joy, and nothing but joy, the cup of sorrow will always remain empty and your cup of joy will be full. Praise the Lord!

Some people are not sensitive enough to experience any great joy. They are too dull in their souls. Blessings are falling all around them and upon them, and yet they experience no joy. Alas! too dull. Such a soul needs to be quickened and made sensitive by the Holy Spirit. Astronomers, I am told, have a sensitive plate arranged at the focused end of their huge telescope. To this plate is attached a small bell. The rays of light from a passing star focused upon this sensitive plate set the bell to ringing. So our hearts can be made so sensitive by the Spirit of God that a ray of light from His word or a beam from His countenance will set the joy bells ringing in our souls.

Pleasing Products

Last evening the setting sun shone through the misty gray cloud and lit up the field and forest before me with a mellow radiance that filled my heart with the highest degree of admiration. My soul was called out in contemplation of the work of God. The glowing sun, the gilded cloud, the golden grain, and forest green bathed in the mellow light, presented a picture of indescribable beauty to me and turned my thoughts to wondering what must be the beauty of a landscape in heaven. They have no sunsets there, but they have a light, and that light is the light of the Lamb. What can the light of a sunset here be, compared with the light of the Lamb over there? What can the beauty of a field here be when compared to the beauty of the fields of heaven? We call a common wild flower beautiful; but when it is compared with some of the florist's best productions, its beauty fades away. The scene before me is beautiful; but its beauty would fade away, I know, if compared with a scene in the eternal glory-world.

The beauty of the scene drew my soul out in tender, yearning love to God, the Creator of all. A sweet, heavenly solemnity filled my inner being. God's presence was round about me, hushing all to a deep silence. The love of God was as a swelling tide in my soul. There is none on earth I desire so much as He and none in heaven but Him. My soul followeth hard after Him. I adore His name. I

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want His will done in me perfectly. Oh, that He will season every word and be in every thought! and may every act be but the moving of His life and will in me! I was conscious of His presence. The room where I sat was filled with His glory. It was good to be there.

This text of scripture was brought with much power to my mind: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Heb. 13:20, 21. Especially did these words rest upon my mind with a peculiar sweetness: “Working in you that which is well pleasing in thy sight.” Oh, what an intense desire filled my heart for God to work in me that which was most pleasing unto Him! My soul leaped toward Him and pleaded to be more like Him. I would have more of His meekness and lowliness, and how I longed that the Lord would work these in me until He was fully pleased! I found upon examination that Wilson’s translation rendered this text in these words: “Producing in you that which is well pleasing in his presence.” Again such intense, burning desire came into my heart to be all God wanted me to be that I threw my heart’s door open and cried, “O Lord, produce in me such things as please Thee; such things as will satisfy Thy love toward me.”

In my meditation I saw a dreary, barren waste of land—barren, I say, except here and there a thorn bush, a wild cactus, a thistle, or a briar. A man came, and with a sharp instrument he cut these all to the ground and cleared them all away. The field now looked clean and ready for the planting. The man then came and after well fertilizing the field, he sowed seed over the whole. Then he came and took the roots of the thorn and the thistle, of the cactus and the

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briar, out of the ground, lest shoots, springing up, would hinder the growth of the plants. Then began the careful husbandry. The plants were watered as they had need. The soil was kept moist and warm. One thing I noticed particularly was that the man was careful not to allow the ground to become hard, or compact. Where it hardened, it would turn the water off instead of drinking it in, that the roots of the plants might be nourished. Wherever it began to harden, he would break it up with a sharp instrument he had for that purpose. I understood that the plants would not grow well if the ground hardened around them. I saw the plants grow and bud and blossom and produce that fruit which was well pleasing in the gardener's sight.

Then I saw my own heart. It was once a parched land, a dreary, barren waste with here and there a thorn, a thistle, a cactus, or a briar. But a sharp two-edged sword was laid to them and all was cut down, and they were washed away. These were my sins, and it was the blood of Jesus that washed them all away. Then the precious seeds of truth were planted in my heart. Again the quick and powerful sword was applied. This time it took all the roots and remains of sin out of my heart. Then all was clean. There was nothing to hinder the growing of the plants that my heavenly Father had planted. Then began the husbandry. Oh, how beautiful! God "working in me to will and to do of his own good pleasure." That once-barren waste began to blossom as the rose; waters broke out and streams, and the thirsty land became springs of water. Glory to my Savior's name! Wherever my heart has begun to harden, the Spirit of God has been active to break it up; for the heavenly plants will not grow in a hard heart. Oh, how very tender and soft the heart must be kept! This world has a very hardening influence upon the heart; therefore it must be kept far away and the heart guarded with all diligence.

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I am conscious today that the plants are growing and that they are budding and producing some fruit, and oh! I hope the Master is well pleased. This is a serious thought: "Is my heart producing that which is well pleasing unto the Lord?" I want God to get the best yield possible. If it needs more breaking up, I pray that it may be broken, no matter what the cost. God's grace will help me to bear the pain. Oh, what worlds of glory fill my soul! I have the sweet consciousness that my heart is as the soft, pliable clay in the potter's hands. No part is resisting the will of God.

Two days ago I received a letter from a brother who is soon going to India. It read in part, "If the Lord is laying it upon your heart to go to India, I should be pleased to have you join me." I thought, "It is not possible that God wants me to go to India." Then I thought, "Lord, thou hast died for me, and what should I not be willing to do for thee?" I came face to face with this matter. Then I thought, "If the burning stake were before me and the Lord should give me my choice, to go to the stake or to go to India, I should hardly know which to choose, but before either I could say, 'Thy will, O God, be done.' "

In my meditation I well understood that the working of the Spirit in our hearts is to go on and that they are to bear more fruit throughout our life, and it may be, and I believe will, through all eternity. A good, thrifty, strong tree taken from the nursery and transplanted in our garden will grow more rapidly and bear fruit earlier than a dwarfed one.

In the nature of things, if the same careful husbandry is given, the graces in our hearts will grow more rapidly each succeeding year of our life. A falling body will fall faster the second minute than it did the first. A plant will grow more the second week than it did the first, and more each succeeding week until it reaches maturity. The

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graces in our souls, if well watered, will grow more rapidly each year of our life and it does not yet appear what we shall grow to be; but we know that when the Vine-dresser comes, we shall be like Him.

Another scene is before me. This scene has for its origin the words of Phil. 2:13—"For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." The scene is the ground work for a painting. All is prepared and ready for the work of the artist. He now appears and begins his work. It progresses slowly, but stroke by stroke it is finished. We look and find that he has painted an exact likeness of himself. Answering to this scene, is the Spirit of God working in me "to will and to do of his good pleasure". My heart is prepared to become the ground-work of an impression. Christ is the artist. He is working in me. He is giving a stroke here and there. The progress is slow, but I am conscious that some work is being done. It does not yet appear what it shall be; only I know that when it is finished, it will be like Jesus. Christ is working in me His own life and holiness, and some day I shall be like Him in the sense of a full redemption of soul and body.

The Twenty-Third Psalm

No sweeter language, perhaps, was ever penned than this Psalm. What wonderful words, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want!” What beauty! What sublimity! and what incomprehensibleness. The soul in contemplating these words is lost in admiration. Oh, that my pen could tell the feelings of my soul as I stand with unveiled heart before these words! They come up from the dim regions of the past like the soft, sweet strains of some far-away choir, and they point us forward to the glorious Lord who so tenderly shepherds all His creatures. How blessed to have Jesus for our shepherd! How sweet to know that this is really true! Will you not lay this book down and go out into some place of solitude and think for an hour about this? Think of the time when you were almost in despair and about ready to murmur; think of the time when you were discouraged and ready to faint by the way; and let your head drop for shame.

Can we ever be anything else than happy and hopeful when we know Jesus is our shepherd? Ah! we will never, never fear again. We will never begin to tremble and draw back because the way is growing dark. No; we feel like trusting Jesus no matter how thick is the darkness. How safe we feel! Let the waves dash, our Shepherd can still them at His will; let the winds blow, our Shepherd can temper them; let the storm-clouds gather, He can make them pour

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down blessings; let the darkness fall, the light of His countenance can dispel the heaviest gloom. We will never be discouraged again. We will never be anything else than happy again. O Christian heart, look up and be hopeful; look up and let these sweet words of light shine into your heart in all their glory.

The Septuagint version of this Psalm is so beautiful I cannot refrain from transcribing a portion of it. "The Lord tends me as a shepherd, and I shall want nothing. In a place of green pasture, there he has made me dwell: he has nourished me by the water of rest. He has restored my soul: he has guided me into the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, even if I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will not be afraid of evil, For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, these have comforted me. Thou hast prepared a table before me in the presence of them that afflict me: Thou hast thoroughly anointed my head with oil; and thy cup cheers me like the best wine. Thy mercy also shall follow me all the days of my life: and my dwelling shall be in the house of the Lord forever." This was so full of touching, thrilling, beautiful sentiment I could not stay my pen until the whole Psalm was written.

It will not take you long to commit these words to memory. I wish you would do it. And some day when in a deserted place and lonely feelings come creeping over you, let these words return upon your heart and melt away the despondency as the bright rays of autumn's sun melt the early frost. Sometime, when the tear of sorrow is about to fall from the eye, let the sweet strain of this Psalm soothe the heart and wipe away the tear. Some day, when it seems as if the world has forsaken you and you are but a poor, friendless wanderer in an unfriendly world, go and sit down in some quiet place and sing these words. As you sing, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," listen, and you will hear the angels catching up the

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sweet refrain and shouting, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men.”

Talk no more of fears and tears; talk no more of dark and stormy days, of sorrow of heart and thirsting of soul for peace and rest. This song sings to you of Jesus, who gives rest, whose love dispels every fear, whose sweet life quenches all the thirstings of the soul, and whose salvation opens up a deliverance from every evil. Glory to His name! How can the Christian’s soul be disquieted and cast down, when he can see Jesus as his tender shepherd? How slow oftentimes is man to see what Jesus is to him!

Only a few days ago while viewing the well-cared-for grounds which surround our Nation’s presidential mansion, I saw in the midst of these verdant shrubby grounds a high, misty, spraying fountain. From where I stood I saw nothing but the colorless water in misty spray; but walking to a certain spot, I saw in this water all the bright colors of the rainbow. Mark this: When I stepped aside from that spot, I could see no colors. These rainbow colors were produced by the falling of the rays of the sun upon the drops of water in the cloudy spray; and when I was in a proper position under the sun, these colors were visible to me. Many times I have read the twenty-third Psalm and have seen nothing but the colorless fountain. It was only when I came into a proper position under God that I saw the colors of the rainbow. It was when the light of heaven shone upon the words of this Psalm, that it reflected the glories of grace upon my soul.

It is possible that many of my readers have not heard the sweet music that comes pealing forth from this gospel in song and their eyes have not been open to see the rich beauties of color as they come welling up from its wonderful depth. A man was one day traveling along a highway reading. These were the words he read:

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“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.” In these words was meaning far hidden from his understanding. The Scriptures have a voice, but alas! how many ears are dull of hearing! They contain many secret things; but these secrets are spoken in such a still, small voice that we need to draw very near to hear them. Many in reading the Bible fail to hear its voice. Who has heard all this twenty-third Psalm has to say? O my soul, awake and lend thine ears to catch the faintest whisper of this poetic strain: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

The words of the Bible are not only true in the book, but true in heaven. When we read the Bible in the Spirit, we do not hear the words of the book only; but we hear them in a still, small voice from heaven. When the Spirit of God takes the word of God and talks to our hearts, it is spoken from the world above. But, oh, how hushed and still must be our soul to hear in the words of the Bible that accompaniment from heaven! When I open my Bible and read, “The Lord is my shepherd,” there comes ringing down in sweet, soft stillness from heaven, “The Lord is my shepherd.” Then I read, “I shall not want,” and like the faintest echo, I hear from the gates of glory, “I shall not want.”

Recently I stood in one of the spacious rooms of our nation’s capitol. On every side were marble columns and statues. The floor was of white and slate-blue marble blocks. In that vast area of marble floor was a white block upon which if a person would stand and bow his head and speak, the words would be echoed back to him. The dome was so shaped that one could hear the echo only when one was standing on that particular stone. Those standing by

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one's side could not hear the echo. This beautifully illustrates the echo of the Bible from heaven. If you will stand in a proper position and say, "The Lord is my shepherd," the echo will come back, "The Lord is my shepherd." No one but your own heart can hear the echo, and you can hear it only when you are standing in the proper place.

When you read the twenty-third Psalm and fail to see the rainbow of heavenly glories and to hear the echo from above, you are not standing in the proper attitude.

As we read this pastoral song, two pictures are presented to our view. In one is a peaceful, flowing river. By the side of this stream is a green pasture in which are lying contentedly a flock of sheep. This is typical of the Christian's rest of his satisfaction. He dwells in rich pasture lands; he eats in plenty, and is satisfied. He has no want. He is not seeking for food; his want is fully supplied. In the presence of his enemies (literal or spiritual) a table is spread, of which he eats and wants nothing. Satan may rage and roar; our spiritual enemies may threaten; but in their face we can sit down and eat in quietness.

We shall never want for food either literal or spiritual; for Jesus tends us as a shepherd and leads us into green pastures. Another text reads, "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Then, there is one which says, "There is no want to them that fear him." Still another reads, "The Lord God is a sun and shield: he will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Never to know a want is the assurance these blessed words give to our hearts. Oh! why will you be discontented? Why will you fear? Step out in a sweet feeling of safety, no matter how the wolf of want may assail you. We shall not want rest. "Come unto me," says Jesus, "and I will give you rest." Christ is our Rest-giver. This rest is full and complete. Anxiety has taken wing, and sweet, tranquil rest is

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reigning in the soul. We shall not go astray for want of guidance. Jesus, our shepherd, will lead us where there is the best food for our souls. All is safe in our Savior's control. He ever leads us in the path of righteousness. He is our keeper, and nothing can harm us.

Another picture is that of a shepherd leading a flock of sheep down a dark and rugged ravine. There are wild beasts upon every hand, dangerous rocks are hanging overhead, and an awful precipice is near. His sheep are following very close to the shepherd, but seem to fear no evil. The green pasture land and the quiet, flowing stream are beyond.

Jesus sometimes leads His trusting children through dark valleys, but they fear no evil. Death may threaten upon every hand; they cling the closer to their kind Shepherd. Even in those dark and dangerous places they fear no evil. They dwell in safety. The pasture land and the gently-flowing brooks lie beyond the dark valley. If we would reach the green pasture fields and the waters of rest, we must pass through the dangerous valley.

Beloved pilgrim on your homeward journey, will you remember that the clouds gather thick over your head and the waves dash around your feet and darkness reigns all around—will you remember then that the pleasant fields lie just beyond? Fear no evil in these trying times. Draw a little nearer to your shepherd and go trustingly on. He will guide you safely, be assured. He has a table prepared at the other end of the dark pass; but to be prepared to sit at this table and partake of the things He has prepared you must go with Him through the shadowy valley.

To walk with God we must sometimes walk through the valley of the shadow of death; but oh, how sweet! A young mother sat down to weep over the lifeless body of her darling infant; but heaven seemed so much dearer because her baby had gone that she

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could only look up to Jesus and thank Him for the stroke He had given.

Good Works

We are not saved and given a home in heaven because of our good works, and yet we must work as though our getting into heaven did depend upon our works. Man may do a great many good deeds and yet be far away from God; it is true that those who are near to God are active in good works. One of the surest evidences that we are gaining a closer walk with Jesus is that our lives are becoming fuller of good deeds; that we are more eager to do something to His glory. God wants a people to walk with Him; therefore He saves us from evil works, makes us new creatures in Christ, and prepares us for good works. Is that not wonderful and glorious? God has ordained that man should walk in good works. See Ephesians 2:10. He provides the works and prepares man for the work. God has provided plenty of work; and if those whom He has prepared become neglectful and fail to do what He has provided, He will cast them out.

Be not weary in well doing, but as you have opportunity, do good unto all men. You desire a closer walk with God, but you are not willing to share your abundance with the poor widow in want. You sit down to your table bountifully spread, while some of God's dear children somewhere are crying for bread. To have a closer walk with God is to have ears that can hear more distinctly the pleadings of the poor. If you are not willing to let all your earthly possessions

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work for Jesus, you cannot walk with Him. You want to be nearer to God, but you are not willing to get up early in the morning or spend half a night praying for the souls He died to save. God has some children in dark heathen lands calling for the gospel, but you are not willing to lose a few hours sleep to pray God to send them someone with the words of life. You long to feel yourself growing in grace; but you spend Sunday afternoon asleep in your easy chair or visit some neighbor and talk with them of unprofitable things instead of taking your Bible or some good book and going to read something helpful to the needy. You are praying to be more like Jesus, but in your carelessness let many opportunities of doing good pass by you daily unimproved. It is not my purpose now to read you everything the Bible says about good works; but if you will take that blessed book and your concordance and in some quiet evening read all the texts relative to the subject, you will no doubt be benefited.

Let me say, however, that there is something for you to do. There is much for you to do, and much you must do if you would walk with the Lord. Oh, that all beloved saints could only realize the great responsibility resting upon them! God makes you greatly responsible for the salvation of souls. What has God chosen you for? What has He sanctified you for? To prepare you unto every good work and to make you meet for His use. God wants to use you; He wants to use you in saving other souls, which are of more value to Him than the world. Will it not be an awful thing in the day of judgment to know that there is a soul in hell that would have been in heaven if we had only let God have His own way and will in us? It seems that heaven could scarcely be heaven to us should we have such knowledge. Some may think that God will not permit a soul to be lost that would be saved; that if He does not save by one means, He will by another. This is not correct. God wants to use you, and no one can do your work and do his own, for each one has all he can do.

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God could gain nothing by taking someone else to do your work; for if someone is used to do your work, then some of that person's work must go undone. If you fail to do your work, it will never be done. The good that you can do will never be done unless you do it.

Will you listen closely and prayerfully while I read you a few words from God's Holy Book? "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. God has done all that you might be furnished throughout unto all good works. He has given you the Scriptures; he has given ministers and tells them to put saints in mind to be ready to every good work. See Titus 3:1. We have before said that our good works do not take us to heaven. This is true; but it is equally true that if we are not zealous of good works we shall never gain heaven.

In Titus 3:8 are these words: "This is the faithful saying." What does the apostle mean to say is a faithful saying? It is the words in verse 7—"Being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." This fact of being heirs according to the hope of eternal life is a faithful saying; and he would have ministers to affirm this faithful saying constantly, "that they which believe in God might be careful to maintain good works." See verse 8. This clearly implies that to be heirs according to the hope of eternal life we must be careful to maintain good works. Work to be done is at your hand constantly. You need never be idle because of a lack of anything to do. There is a kind word to be spoken, a child to be instructed, a cup of water to be given; there are the hungry to be fed, the sick to be cared for, and all men to be prayed for.

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You would be very industrious in waiting on Jesus if He were here. Well, He is here. That poor woman who called on you for aid, that was Jesus. That old man who wants a few pennies, that is Jesus. The sick child who wanted a flower, that was Jesus. And those around your own fireside that need your help so often, they are Jesus. I will tell you a story I read years ago. One cold winter night as a man was returning to his home from his place of labor, he passed near a soldier at his post of duty keeping sentinel. The laboring man saw that the soldier was very thinly clad. Going up to the soldier, the man said, "You may have my heavy coat to protect you from the cold of this wintry night." While speaking, he took off his coat. Handing it to the soldier, he went on to his fireside, to his supper, to his bed, and to his dreams. That night he dreamed that he saw the Savior coming in the distance. As he came nearer, the man saw that the Savior had his (the man's) coat on. When Jesus came near enough, the man said, "I let the thinly-clad soldier have my coat last night, and how has it come about that you have it on?" Jesus answered, "As oft as ye do it unto one of my little ones, ye do it unto me." Whenever you do a good deed to anyone with a pure motive, you do it to Jesus. Be zealous therefore of good works.

Kindness

“Be ye kind one to another.” Eph. 4:32. The nature and the extent of the kindness we are to have to one another are plainly suggested by the remainder of the text. As God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us, so we for His sake should forgive one another. This implies that in tender-heartedness and kindness we should be Christlike. As He is kind and tender to us, so we should be kind and tender to others. Kindness is not something to be put on outwardly but is to adorn the inward man; it is a disposition of the heart. He whose hidden man of the heart is adorned with the sweet grace of kindness finds great delight in making others happy. Kindness is exercised toward others by cheerfully doing what we can to lighten their burdens, to alleviate their suffering, to supply their needs, to encourage and cheer them.

Kindness is a fruit of love. “Love suffereth long and is kind.” We are kind to those whom we love. It is only when love fills our hearts that we can be “kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.”

I will ask you, my dear reader, a question, not to condemn you, but to awaken you to a thoughtful consideration of your life. Are you a husband? If so, are you as kind to your wife as you should be? Do you cheerfully and delightfully do what you can to lighten her burdens and to sweeten her life? Have you a deep concern for her

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happiness? Do you sympathize with her as you should when she is suffering? Are your words always as soft, as mild, and as full of tenderness and love as they should be? Is there ever a tinge of bitterness in your words? Do they have the least sharpness or hastiness? Are you a wife? read over the above questions and apply them to yourself. Are you a father or a mother? Are you as kind to those tender olive plants that God has given you as you should be? Does there sometimes a little crossness or sharpness get into your words? Oh! be careful, be prayerful, dearly beloved, lest there come over you a fretful, careless feeling very similar to impatience or anger, and cause you to speak too hastily and too harshly. Be careful to keep mild and sweet under the most trying circumstances. Be a conqueror in every hour of temptation.

I think I can almost hear someone saying, “I am not as kind to my family as I should be.” Are you endeavoring to improve? There is hope for the man who realizes that he is not as patient and kind as he should be, but who is putting forth every effort and earnestly pleading with God that he may be more kind. Cultivate the disposition of kindness. It is a sweet and beautiful grace. It is full of perfume. It will cheer and gladden the hearts of others. It will brighten your home and make it an Eden. Put on, O beloved saint, put on kindness. Do not allow ugly feelings to creep over you and cause you to act hastily or to speak harshly. Give such no place in your life. Impatient feelings mar the image of Jesus in the soul, and they will rob your life of its sweet fragrance. Always be cheerful, never gloomy; always wear a smile, never a frown; always be kind, and never ill or impatient—if you would have a close walk with God and be like Him.

The Word of Righteousness

The inspired apostle in writing his Hebrew letter said, “Everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness.” Chap. 5:13. Milk is the proper food for infants, but adults need more solid and stronger food. This is true in the spiritual sense as well as in the natural sense. The more simple truths of the gospel, or the first principles of the oracles of God, such as repentance, saving faith, baptism, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, the eternal judgment (Heb. 6:1, 2), belong to babes in Christ; but those of full age are supposed to need stronger food.

In verse eleven of chapter five we learn that this apostle would have been glad to feed the Hebrews upon some of the strong meat found in the economy of grace, but that he could not, as they were dull of hearing. Allow me to quote this text from Conybeare and Howson: “Of whom I have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, since ye have grown dull in understanding.” This church had been more spiritual and could feed upon stronger food than at the time of the apostle’s writing. “They had become such as had need of milk.” Let this be a warning to every reader. If you neglect to watch and pray, you will very soon become dull of understanding. You may hear some talk about having faith to remove mountains, but you will not understand; or you may hear

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some talk of having faith that the meal in the barrel will not fail, but you will not understand. These Hebrew Christians had once been enlightened; they had had a zeal and had been earnest; they had keenly relished the strong meat; but they had become dull of hearing, or as the Greek implies, “difficult to move.” To be once enlightened and then to grow dull of hearing makes it very difficult to get the sluggishness removed and the understanding enlightened again.

In the sixth chapter the apostle continues the thought, saying, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” One translation reads difficult instead of impossible. Another brings out the thought that it is impossible for those who have become so dull and sluggish and seared over as to fall entirely away, to shake off the dead, stupifying power, and that only God can do it. Whatever may have been in the mind of the apostle, I feel like warning everyone that is enlightened, against becoming dull of hearing; and if some of my readers are already stupid, may God help you to arouse and shake off the spell before you fall away.

Those who can feed only upon milk “are unskillful in the word of righteousness.” Milk is a good food for strong men when used in connection with the more solid foods, but milk alone is not sufficient for them. So the simplest truths of the gospel are always food to the Christian, but they must be mixed with the strong meat of the word if we desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. By the word of righteousness is meant the gospel.

This same writer says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that

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believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.” Rom. 1:16, 17. In the gospel of Christ, God’s righteousness is revealed by faith. The gospel is, therefore, the word of righteousness. It reveals the righteous character of God. He notes the sparrow’s fall; He numbers the hairs of our head; He constantly cares for us; He pities us; He loves His enemies and sends the rain on the just and the unjust; when He is reviled, He reviles not again; He grants our requests and supplies all our needs. Is He not righteous? This righteousness is revealed to our understandings by faith; and as we increase in faith, God’s righteousness will be more and more revealed to our hearts.

In every promise we see God’s righteousness. He says He will never leave nor forsake us. Those who are dull of hearing and are unskillful in the word of righteousness do not see God’s righteousness in this promise; but the enlightened see it clearly, and the stronger their faith, the clearer they can see. God is ever with them; at no time does He leave them alone. By faith they see this so they are ever at rest; nothing disturbs them or makes them afraid.

One time when my wife and I were several miles from home, a wheel of our carriage caught under a small piece of timber protruding above the road surface. Some spokes were broken and the rim seriously damaged. Wife, being in delicate health, was unable to walk such a distance. The question was, how are we to reach home? We remembered many of God’s promises—“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “I will supply all your need.” “Whatsoever things ye desire when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” “If ye have faith, . . . ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.” Now, we know that naturally the wheel would not bear us up one mile of our way, and we knew of no way out but to

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ask God to uphold that wheel and take us safely home. Faith came into our hearts, and we drove on praising God with a feeling of safety, just as if every wheel had been sound. God was true to His promises, and we could see His goodness and righteousness as we had not before.

To be unskillful in the word of righteousness is to be unable to see or comprehend what God's promises contain. We become righteous in our own character to the extent that we see His righteousness. His promise or the commandment is the mirror; and if we look into it by faith and see the righteousness of God, we shall be changed into the same image.

Jesus teaches us to “seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” We are to seek to know more of God’s righteousness and to become more like Him in righteousness. To seek the kingdom of God is to live for the advancement of God’s cause; to have the heart intensely interested in the work of God; to live for heaven, and not for earth; to show by your manner of life that your home is (in heaven, and not on the earth, and that your affections are not upon the things of earth, but upon heavenly things, and that your heart and treasures are above. To seek God’s righteousness is to look into the depths of every promise and commandment and see the goodness of God therein revealed. As you see deeper truths in God’s word, by faith the moral power of those truths will lift your soul into a more perfect image of God. Every time you obey a commandment or believe a promise, you become a little more like God. Suppose you are in very great need and you come humbly to God in prayer. You plead the promise, “My God shall supply all your need.” Your prayer of faith reaches the throne of God, and He in a marvelous way answers. As a result, your soul is brought nearer to God. And God is brought nearer to

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your soul, and you are made more like Him. As a rule, it is the poor and needy and those who have great tests of faith and are driven to God in earnest prayer that bear the brightest image of God in their souls. Seek God's righteousness, and be not unskillful or ignorant of that word through which the righteousness of God is revealed.

We are exhorted to "follow after righteousness" and to "fight the good fight of faith." By searching the word of God, which is the word of righteousness, we by faith and obedience become more righteous, and more skillful in the word of righteousness. To follow after righteousness is to live upon the righteous word and by faith bring the righteousness of the word into your own heart, and thus daily become more in the righteous image of God and his word. Do not think you have gained all. He who thinks he has gained all will gain no more. I am sure you can yet have a closer walk with God and be yet more like Him.

Fervency

“Whoever keeps God’s commandments,” says the apostle John, “In him is the love of God perfected.” This implies most clearly that those who do not keep God’s commandments are not perfected in love. There is such a thing as loving in word and tongue, and not in deed and in truth. We are commanded to be “fervent in spirit.” Apollos, “being fervent in the spirit, spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord.” See Acts 18:25. The word fervent is translated from the Greek term *zeo* and means to boil, to be hot. In Latin it is *fervens* and *fervo* to be hot and to swell with heat; to swarm as bees whose motion resembles the boiling of water.

In the religious world today there is much deadness, coldness, etc. The love of many is waxing cold. To serve God acceptably is to be fervent in spirit. The Apostle Paul was charged with being mad, but he was only fervent in spirit. We are commanded to love one another with a pure heart fervently. We are to love with a love that is warm; a love that makes it felt by its ardor.

John Bunyan tells of the threats Satan made to rob him of the warmth of love.

“You are very hot now,” Satan said, “but I will cool you; this flame shall not last always. Many have been as hot as you for a spurt [short time], but I have quenched their zeal.”

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“But I will watch,” replied Bunyan, “and take care not to lose my love.”

“Though you do,” Satan answered, “I will be too hard for you; I will cool you insensibly, by degrees, by little and little. What care I though I be seven years in chilling your heart if I can but do it at last? A continual rocking of the cradle will lull the baby to sleep. I will ply it close. I will have my end accomplished. Though you be burning hot at present, I can pull you from this fire. I shall have you cold before it be long.”

Satan is making greater effort today to lull souls to sleep than ever before, and it is alarming to see how well he is succeeding. Under his opiates of worldliness, the love of many is growing cold. Many are losing their first love. May God awaken slumbering souls! You can abound more and more in love; you can become more and more spiritual; your soul can glow and quiver in the intense heat of God’s love. Someone has asked, “How can I keep myself in the fervor of love?” The Bible answers the question. “By praying in the Holy Spirit.” See Jude 20, 21. It is in the spiritual prayers that the soul is fed and made to glow with heaven’s love. Recently I was thrown for a time among a number of cold-hearted professors of religion. My soul cried for the Lord, “Fill me, O God, more and more with the fullness of thy love, that my example may beget love in others.”

It is only the fervent in spirit who can walk with God. Those whose hearts are aflame with love and devotion can go hand in hand with Him. The lukewarm cannot walk with Him. He would rather not have you in His company at all if you cannot be fervent in spirit and love.

Grace Sufficient

Man is a perfectly helpless creature; he can do nothing. He is as helpless to do anything as is an Ethiopian to change his skin or a leopard his spots. He is a mere weak worm. Unless help comes from some other source, he is lost and forever ruined. He cannot save himself; he is at the mercy of the Creator. Fortunately for helpless man, his Creator is merciful; He is a God of tender compassion and love. Glory to His name! He set His love upon poor, weak, fallen man and saves him by grace. Man can obtain help and favor from God through Jesus Christ. It is only by grace that man is anything. The apostle understood this, therefore said, “By grace I am what I am.”

While man is weak, yet he can do all things by the strengthening grace of God. Heaven’s throne of grace is open to man. He can come boldly to that throne and find grace to help and strengthen in every needy hour. He can triumph over sin. Though sin did once sway its scepter over man’s heart and he bowed to this tyrannical master a subjected slave, thank God, through grace man is made free. He can shout the victory over sin. He can look down into the hole from which grace has dugged him and praise Him who has set him in a heavenly place and who causes him always to triumph. Man at one time was in bondage to the dreaded monster Death; but grace has removed Death’s cruel sting, and now man

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fears not that icy hand. He can look at sin, death, and hell, and through grace thank God for victory.

Grace will sweeten the life of man; it will banish every fear; it will lighten every burden and be a comfort in every trying hour. Oh, the blessedness of grace! What sweet comfort and consolation follow in her train. As the sunset gilds the cloud; so grace will emboss every sorrow with a mellow radiance that takes away the pain. Lay hold, O despairing soul, upon the throne of grace by faith and be transported into an atmosphere of light and love, of peace and hope. Rich particles of glory can be drawn down to your soul that will light up your pathway and enable you to be blessedly contented in every circumstance in life, patient in every affliction, faithful to perform every duty; and that will put a modesty and a meekness in your every action, a cheerfulness in your countenance, a reverence and devotion in your spirit, a sweetness in every expression, and throw about you such an attractive luster, as will make you a blessing everywhere you go.

Bow humbly and dependently before the throne of grace; there in earnest, fervent prayer bring down strength and blessings that will elevate your soul and make you more a creature of heaven than of earth. Grace elevates the character and puts a spiritual tone into your being that allies you more to angels than to unregenerate men. At the throne of grace you can wave the palm of victory; there you can sway scepter; there you can sing the song of triumph in the sweetest melody; there you can trample every foe beneath your feet; there you can defeat every lust of the flesh that wars against your soul; there you can be crowned a prince and a king; there you can turn your back upon every dark picture and see the bright side of things; there you can look back by faith down your journey of life and see green fields, shady groves, rippling stream and blooming flowers;

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there you can see Jesus at the right hand of God and a mansion of glory where your eternal rest shall be. Come boldly to the throne of grace and be at rest.

Giving Encouragement

There is much along life's way to discourage. Some shadows fall upon the pathways of every person. One of Satan's strongest devices to overthrow a soul is to discourage it. Indefatigable is he in his efforts to make the way seem hard. He will try to make it seem that no one in all the world cares for you. Knowing this, how ready we should be to give encouragement to the despairing one! We are going through this world but once, and it is far better to be a sunbeam than a cloud. This world has need of your smiles, but not of your frowns. Enough shadows are falling upon those around you.

This is a busy world, indeed; but God pity the man that is so busy that he cannot scatter a little sunshine as he goes along! The light of a smile will never die out. The fragrance of a kind word will never lose its sweetness. They will beautify your own soul and cheer the life of others. They will make earth a heaven for you and disperse the gloom from other hearts. This sweet story I was one time told: A lady who was very sick sent for a certain gentleman. When he came to the bedside of the sick woman, she said, "Sir, I have long had a desire to thank you for the encouragement you gave me one day."

"Madam" the man replied, "you must be mistaken; I have no recollection of ever meeting you before."

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“I am a stranger to you, I know,” said the lady; “but one day I was walking along the street and my heart was heavy and all the world seemed to be frowning. I met you, and you had such an encouraging look on your face that it cheered my heart; and I desire to thank you for that encouraging countenance.”

A cheerful disposition will bring cheer to many hearts unknown. Living much in the presence of God will radiate your soul with a beauteous light that will make you a blessing among men. In the secret closet is where the soul becomes filled with a sweet fragrance that will be borne into the lives of others. In the secret closet the soul will be lighted up with a heavenly radiance that will make the countenance beam like the outshining of an altar-fire. Those who live much in converse with God have more than even the tender words of human sympathy and love; they have the words fresh with power and beauty from the heart of God. They are the light of the world, and their light casts its bright beams far into the gloom of sorrow. A letter recently received contained these words: “Oh! speak some encouraging word to my despairing soul!”

Someone is trudging, weary and worn,
Along life's rugged way;
Strength is fast failing, hope almost gone,
Feet are going astray.

Speak a kind word, his lone heart to cheer
Wipe from his eye the sorrowing tear;
Drive from his life the gloom and despair;
Lend him a hand today.

The winds are blowing wildly and chill,
Filling some heart with fear;
Someone is toiling long up the steep hill
Under a load of care.

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Someone's tossing on life's ocean wave,
No one to pity, no one to care;
Rush, my brother, with heart true and brave,
Help his burdens to bear.

Be up and doing while it is day,
Soon the long night will come;
Your life is fleeing swiftly away,
Soon 'twill be past and gone.

Do what you can to help those in need,
Be a blessing by word and by deed;
Let "Living for Others" be ever your creed.
Heaven will give you a crown.

Correct Counting

Much loss has been sustained because of mistakes in counting. Some men have failed in business because of being careless in their counting. A man adding several columns of figures had reached the sum of one hundred thousand. At this juncture someone spoke to him, and he turned to have a few words of conversation. When he resumed his work, he wrote ten thousand. His few words of conversation cost him ninety thousand dollars.

With relation to spiritual things be careful in your counting. Count according to the rule. In mathematics we have rules to guide us in our counting. If those rules are followed, we never make a mistake, but get the answer. Thus, it is said that 2 plus 3 plus 5 are 10. If we count according to this rule of science, we shall always get 10 for an answer. If we should count thus: 2 plus 3 plus 5 are 8, we should not get the correct answer, for we should not have done what the science of mathematics says. Now, suppose that same day you have two trials, the next day three trials, and the next day five trials—what will they amount to? If you count according to the rule, they will amount to “all joy.” You can set down in a column all your trials and temptations; and when you add them up, they amount to “all joy.” If in counting them up you get any other result than “all joy,” you have not counted in accordance with the rule.

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A sister went with her eggs to the market. The grocer was engaged in counting the eggs brought in by another woman. The sister asked him the price of the eggs. He gave no heed to her, but kept on counting the eggs. She again asked, “Mr., what are you paying for eggs this morning?” He gave her no heed, but kept on at his work. Now, had he stopped to talk with the woman, he would have forgotten his count and would have become confused.

Many times amid the cares and trials of life Satan will come to you and suggest that the way is too hard and your trials are too severe. Give no heed to him, but go on counting it all joy. But he will persist and say, “You can never stand.” Count God as being able to make you stand. But Satan will say, “This is indeed working bad.” Give no heed to what he says, but count everything as working for your good. He may say that God does not love you, or you would not have such trials. Count the love of God as everlasting. Satan may whisper, “You are not saved.” Give no heed to him, but count the blood of Jesus as cleansing you from all sin.

Count everything according to the Bible rule, and you will have no failures or losses. Count God faithful; count everything a blessing; count all joy.

If you value your peace of soul, hold no conversation with Satan. If you stop to talk with him you will forget to count all things joy and will become confused. The Devil is your enemy; he seeks to do you harm; he strives to get you to miss your count. Do not for a moment listen to the words of one who seeks to harm you. Count according to God’s rule, and the answer will be—victory.

God Is Real

Those who please God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. It is not everyone that implicitly believes at all times that God is. In the midst of sore trial some forget that He is. One precious secret of happiness in the Christian life is always to know that God is and that He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him.

God is with His people in every little affair of everyday life. In Him we live and move and have our being. These words have great depth. They imply a close walk with God. Let me ask you to turn to this text and read it. It is Acts 17:28. Oh, how highly significant are the words, “For we are also his offspring!” God will care for His children. Then, let us trust Him; live upon Him and in Him by faith.

We need not have a care nor a fear. We need not be troubled about what we shall wear or what we shall eat. Jesus himself tells us that we should take no thought about what we shall eat. To have us comprehend something of His care in feeding us and of how free we can be from any anxious thought about such things, He tells us to take a lesson from the birds of the air. “Behold,” he says, “the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” Matt. 6:26. He does not say “their heavenly Father,” but it is “your heavenly Father” that feeds the little birds.

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He is simply their Creator, but he is your Father. A man may create a machine; but there is a vast difference between the relationship of the man to the machine and that of the man to the child of whom he is the father. A man owns a flock of hens and goes out to feed them, but will he not much more feed that child of his standing by his side? Oh! how can you ever become anxious about what you are going to eat and look unto man for help? Look to God, and to Him alone. He hears the young ravens when they cry, and will He not hear your cry?

Jesus at another time in His endeavors to teach His disciples that the Father constantly cared for them and that they should not therefore ever have a fear, said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." Matt. 10:29. You will notice that He again says, "your Father," not "their Father." It is your Father that cares for the tiny sparrows so that not one falls, except as He in His loving providence sees best.

Sometimes you can purchase two apples for a penny, but if you take two pennies worth you can get five. Thus, the fifth one costs really nothing. Luke, in recording what Jesus said to His disciples about God's care of them, says, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God." Luke 12:6. By taking two farthings' worth they could get five sparrows. This fifth one, which was "thrown in," was not forgotten before God. If such is His care of His creatures of time, what must be His care of His child of eternity? Why, "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." The mother has great care for her child, but where is the mother that daily counts the hairs on her baby's head to learn when one has fallen? God in His care for His children numbers the hairs on their heads. "Fear not therefore." Our Father keeps us as the

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apple of His eye. He is ever guiding, guarding, and leading those who put their trust in Him. His leadings may sometimes be over stony places, but in His love He does that which is best. I know not the author of the following lines, but they are so beautiful I beg to be allowed to give them here.

“Not always into quiet ways
He leadeth thee;
Not always in the peaceful days
Shall thy lot be;
But whether he send toil or rest,
Know that his way is always best
Eternally.

“Trust thou the Lord with simple heart,
Nor wish to know
More than His Spirit would impart
Or His word show,
Plain the commandments He has given,
Narrow the path which leads to heaven;
Then onward go.

“Firm be thy footstep all the way,
Turn not aside;
His precious word keep and obey,
Rightly divide;
Fear not to tread a darksome road,
For He will share thy heaviest load
And safely guide.

“Until at last He bringeth thee
All sorrows past,
Where thou shalt never sorrow see—
Home, home at last.

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Then shalt thou, entering into rest,
Own that His way was always best
From first to last.”

A sister in my home congregation recently had this experience: She, with her three small children, had gone to a distant state to visit her friends. On her return journey she came into a large city soon after nightfall. She could not get a train out of the city to her home before the next morning. She had written ahead to a friend of hers to meet her at the station and to take her to his home to spend the night. But he failed to come, and she was left alone in this large city. At first she was much perplexed, but remembering her God, she said: “Now, Lord, I know thou art real. I am thy child, and I am in need of help. I look to thee; be thou my helper.” At this moment a lady, approaching her said, “You appear to be a stranger here.” —“I am alone with my children and know no one,” the sister replied. The lady then asked her to tarry there for a moment and said she would soon return. In a short time she came back with two other ladies. After inquiring more about the sister's circumstances they invited her to go with them. She was a little suspicious at first, but believing it was God answering prayer, she went confidently on. They took her to a hotel, ordered a room, supper, and breakfast for her and her children, and paying the bill, went on their way. This was an instance of God's caring for those who trust in Him.

I could fill a large volume with instances of God's proving himself to be a real and living God, but I will relate only one more. It occurred only three weeks ago. A brother was in need, and he prayed God to supply the need. One day he received a letter. Upon opening it, he found that it contained a gold dollar, and a letter which read thus: “I have owed you seventy-five cents for four years. The other night as I lay awake, I remembered my debt. I had a great

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desire to send the money to you at once, but I was not the possessor of five cents. Early the next morning, as I was walking across my field, I saw something shining. On picking it up, I found it to be a gold dollar, which I now send to you.”

To have a closer walk with God is to be ever conscious that God is always really with you, just as if you could see Him and hear His voice. Suppose some dark night a number of wicked men should gather about your home to do you harm and Jesus should appear in your room so that you could see Him and should speak so that you could hear Him saying, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” You would in a feeling of security lie back upon your pillow and say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” Now, He is in your room and does say those words to you as really as if you saw Him and heard Him. Make God real to you in everything in life, and your walk with Him will be sweet.

Growing in Grace

“But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2 Pet 3:18. To grow in grace we must necessarily grow also in the knowledge of Jesus. We should get no stronger in the grace of God if we did not get to know Him better. This is a command, or an expression of God’s will to us. Think of it! God wills you to grow in grace; and if you are not growing in grace, you are not accomplishing God’s will. This is a weighty matter. Growing in grace includes more than the pleasure and the benefit of your own improvement; God is grieved if you are not growing. A parent is grieved if His child does not grow. On this subject there are a few points we wish to consider. They are—1. What is grace? 2. What are not evidences of growing in grace? 3. How to grow in grace. 4. Some evidences of growth in grace.

1. What is grace? The common brief definition of grace is favor, but this is too brief to be comprehensive. Grace is the favor of God to us. It is His good will. It is an impartation of strength from God. We are saved by grace. This is the favor, or good-will, of God and also the influence of the Spirit renewing the heart and imparting life to the soul. The apostle says, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me.” By the strengthening grace of Christ he could do all things. His grace is sufficient to help bear trials and afflictions. God gives us grace to resist temptation, to endure

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afflictions, and to be conquerors over sin and Satan. We are commanded to be strong in the grace which was in Christ Jesus. It is God's grace that enables us to do, and it is His grace that makes us what we are.

2. What are not evidences of growth in grace? Growing in knowledge is not a sure proof that we are growing in grace. You cannot grow in grace without having a greater knowledge of God, but you can gain a knowledge of God and not grow in grace. Some have concluded they were better Christians, were stronger in grace, and were more highly pleasing to God because they had learned more about the Bible and about what constitutes true Christian living. I am acquainted with people that know much about God, the Bible, and the plan of salvation, and yet have no grace at all. Be not deceived. That you know better how Christians should live is no sure evidence that you are growing in grace. That you can pray longer and testify or preach better, or be more eloquent and forward and active in these duties and have less embarrassment in their performance, is not sure evidence of your growing in grace. By mere practice and human effort one can make improvement in all these ways.

3. How to grow in grace. This is of greatest interest to the Christian. The farmer wants to know all he can about how to grow the largest crop of grain; and the more valuable the crop, the more studious he is to know how to grow it. The stockman desires to know how to promote the growth of his animals. To that end he studies books and experiments. The more valuable an animal is, the more careful he is that it should make good growth. The Christian desires to know how to grow in grace. Someone may say, "I do know how." I have met farmers who knew much about farming, but I have never met one such farmer that was not eager to know more.

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A farmer that thinks he knows all about farming and needs not to know any more does not know anything as he ought to know it. All true, wide-awake Christians are eager to know how to grow in grace.

To grow in grace, the conditions for growth must be complied with. The sincere milk of the word must be desired. There can be no growth without this. The word of God produces growth in grace as naturally as food promotes physical development. You must eat God's word. This is the only food that contains all the elements necessary for symmetrical Christian growth. In Acts 20: 32 we read, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up." It is the word of grace that will build you up into a strong pillar in the kingdom of God. You must feed on the word of His grace, upon the sincere milk of His word. The Christian can no more grow in grace; he can no more get to be like Jesus or have a closer walk with Him, without feeding frequently and bountifully upon God's word, than the child can grow as he should without eating the foods so necessary to growth.

But it seems I hear someone saying, "I have not time." Then you cannot grow. Oh! why will people make such an excuse to themselves? Is growth in grace worth nothing to your soul? Do you not regard God's will or pleasure? I pray God to awaken you out of your indifference and fire your heart with desire to be built up in the grace of God.

Read the Bible daily, thoughtfully, prayerfully, devouringly. Read it believingly. If you believe it fully, then it becomes a truth in your heart. Suppose we open the Bible to the forty-sixth Psalm and read, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Believing this fully, makes you strong; you can face any danger; you can conquer any foe. When we implicitly believe the

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first verse, then the second one becomes our own experience—"Therefore will not we fear." Though all things around us are crumbling, we sweetly rest in God. Remember, you must daily feast upon the word of God if you would grow in grace. This will require time. You cannot get food for your soul from the word of God by hurriedly reading a chapter. You must meditate upon it and get it down into your heart by believing it fully. It seems I am so unable to say what I feel is needful to be said that many of my dear readers might be made to understand the need of taking plenty of time to feast upon the Scriptures. In the early morning take time to be alone with God, and in the twilight hour, oh! do take time to commune with Him who loves you and is all to you.

Another condition of growth in grace is perfect obedience to all the word and will of God. Be careful not to grieve or quench the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the medium through which life from God flows into and through the soul. Close up those little channels in the young oak through which flows the life-giving sap, and what will be the result? You will meet with the same result in your spiritual being if you grieve the Spirit of God. If you refuse to do what the Holy Spirit is calling on you to do, you lose grace. If the Spirit of God is speaking to your heart and mind to visit that poor sick man, to give of your means for the cause of Christ, or to fast for the needy and the work of God, you will degenerate if you do not obey.

If you have a desire to grow in grace, see to it that you are active in every Christian duty. But you are not to be active in Christian duty for the mere purpose of growth. The child is not active in its play for the mere purpose of growing, but is simply following out the law of life, and growth is the result. In being active in Christian duties, you are merely obeying the law of Spiritual life in your inner

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being, and the result is growth. We do not, as I have said in a previous chapter, gain heaven merely by good works, and yet we must work as if we did thereby gain heaven. Many today are deceived. They think they are Christians and growing in grace because they are active in church work, etc. It is not our works that makes us Christians; we must have life in the soul—the life of God. As well take up the dead body of a child and walk it about to bring it into life as to think of becoming a Christian by good works. All the performances of a jumping-jack will not bring it into life, for it is a dead body. All the activity in church-work of a dead sinner will never bring him into life. But when a child is born into life, then in obedience to a law of that life it exercises, and the result is growth. The dead professor or the sinner must be born of the Spirit into spiritual life; then in obedience to a law of that life he is active in every Christian duty, and growth is the result.

Let us open your Bible to Gal. 6:9, 10 and read—“And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” To refuse to do good to all men or to any man as we have opportunity is to grieve the Holy Spirit and to lose grace out of the soul.

Another requisite for growth is intense earnestness. The only effectual way to increase in the grace of God is to be deeply interested in the things of God. It is folly to expect to grow in grace if you are unconcerned about the cause of God. If you are not intently interested in the salvation of souls and are not doing all you can to save them, you can make no progress in spiritual life. There is a great lack of interest in the salvation of souls. I have been in homes where were many ornamental and expensive things which told me of an awful blindness to God's will. Oh! how can men love souls

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and be interested in them as Jesus was and spend money for unnecessary things?

Of how to grow in grace this is the sum. 1. Read the word of God daily, prayerfully, devouringly. 2. Be deeply interested in the cause of God and the salvation of souls. 3. Be prompt to obey the commandments of the Bible and the leading of the Holy Spirit. 4. Be active in every possible Christian duty. 5. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Eph. 6:18.

4. Some evidences of growth in grace. Experiencing greater joy in acts of self-denial for the good and benefit of others is an evidence of growing in the grace of God. Look closely for a moment into your own heart. As sure as you are growing in grace, so sure do you find greater joy in denying self for the welfare and the happiness of others and for the cause of God. You cannot have this fact too thoroughly impressed upon your mind and heart. Some are so full of grace that it is a joy to them to give to the poor or to the cause of God the last cent they have. They deprive themselves of luxuries and sometimes even of the necessities of life, that they may do something for Jesus and perishing souls.

Another evidence of growing in grace is getting farther from the world. To comprehend what is meant by being dead to the world is very difficult for many. It may sound hard and harsh to some, but nevertheless I am sure that many do not know what a complete death to the world implies. They have too much mind and thought about the world and too much communing with it. Only God can help people to see.

Another evidence of growing in grace is having more implicit faith in God and a stepping out on His promises with a feeling of security. You have less fear of any earthly evil. You do not fear the

terror by day nor the arrow that flieth by night, nor the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.

Each person has an individual self-life though he be sanctified wholly. In this self-life lies a sensibility. By this sensibility I meant affections, desires, feelings, emotions, etc. These desires and feelings, it may be, overcome the will, and the purpose of God is not accomplished. For instance, your good judgment may decide that you should give a certain sum of money to the poor, but your feelings rebel. Your feelings, or emotions, may cause you to do some things sometimes to attract attention or to appear a little better than you may really be, but you do not will it so. Now, growing in grace is for the will to gain more power and these feelings to be lessened in power. Some persons, though sanctified, yet because of a peculiarity of their constitution easily give way to lightness, some to impatience. Some are much hurt when spoken ill of, and others have feelings of pleasure when they are well spoken of. To grow in grace is to gain power in the soul and to overcome and still the voice of these feelings.

Still another evidence of growth in grace is becoming more consciously impressed with the mercies of God. You have a deeper sense of gratitude in your heart to God for his goodness. If you are growing in grace and are flourishing as the palm-tree, you will become more deeply affected in your heart by the goodness and the mercy of God, and are gaining a closer walk with God.

—C. E. Orr

