

The Instruction of
YOUTH
In the Christian Life



Charles E. Orr

The Instruction of Youth in the Christian Life

By

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Preface

All book and booklets should have a preface. The intention of the preface is to inform the reader of the design of the author. Why did he write the book? Back of every design is that which occasions the design. The design or purpose of the author of this writing is expressed in the title. It has been written with intense purpose of heart to instruct young people in the Christian life. The writer has at no time sat down at his desk without first on his knees dedicating the faculties of his heart and mind to God for the instilling of light and understanding from heaven. To be capable to give instruction we must first be instructed. To teach people the way to heaven, we must be instructed from heaven in the way. Keep in mind as you read this book the design of the author. He prays that you might have the intensity of desire to be instructed that he has had to instruct.

Seeing the great need young people have of being instructed in the ways of righteousness, and God, laying the burden upon the author's heart, occasioned the designed or purpose of the author. He beseeches you, by the love Christ has for you, and for your own spiritual good, that you read this little book thoughtfully, carefully, and prayerfully, and that as far as these instructions are in harmony with the Bible and we trust that you will give them the respect that is their due. Respect them, not as the instructions of a man, but instructions given of God through an unworthy but willing servant of His. God bless you in the reading.

Instructions

Let me quote you a few sayings of a very wise man. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Prov. 1:7. Read also Prov. 15:5. “My son, hear the instruction of thy father.” Prov. 1:8. “Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life,” Prov. 4:13. You should read these texts over several times. Commit them to memory. Try to feel the weight of them. “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.” Prov. 9:9. The way we regard instruction is a proof of what we are. “He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction.” Prov. 10:17. The word “keepeth” in this text has a twofold meaning. It means to hold in memory, and also to put into practice. Be diligent in doing this. It is dangerous to trifle with instruction. If we do not practice what we learn, it were better that we never learn it. “Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge.” Instruction is the way to knowledge. If you would know the true way of life you must give heed to the instructions pertaining to the way. “He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul.” Prov. 15:32. Those who treat instruction in the Christian life with neglect have not a proper regard for their soul. “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.” Prov. 19:20. Now is the time, young man and woman, to lay the foundation for your later life. It is in vain that you hope to be wise in your old days if you neglect the instructions of youth. “Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the

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words of knowledge.” Prov. 23:12. This word “apply” is a strong word. It means to lay upon. We lay one object upon another that the one might absorb the virtue of the other. Lay instruction upon the heart that the heart might absorb the virtue of the instruction. We fail to receive instruction as we should except it becomes a principle fixed in the heart.

“Buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction and understanding,” Prov. 23:23. We often hear the first clause of this text quoted, but that is not all the text. Buy instruction. You are not at all likely to buy a thing for which you have no desire and you are not likely to have much desire for it if you have but little knowledge of its value. If you had a full knowledge of the worth of good, wholesome instruction you would buy it regardless of the cost price, and you would not barter it away under any conditions. Please read attentively the following words: “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee: so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” Prov. 2:1-5. Reader, do you want to find the knowledge of God? Here is the price to pay. First, *incline your ear*. You have seen an animal with his ears stuck forward in intent to catch every wave of sound. This is a picture of the intent you should have to hear the instruction of wisdom. Second, *cry after knowledge*. This expresses the eagerness of the soul, the labor, the diligence given to obtain knowledge. Third, *liftest up thy voice*. Just as a child will cry and lift up his voice for food necessary to the sustenance of his young life, so we are to cry after the knowledge of God. Fourth, *seekest her as silver*. Fifth, *searchest for her as for hid treasures*. Years ago men rushed, at the risk of their lives to the gold

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fields of California and Alaska searching for this hid treasure. Consider for a moment, with what eagerness men seek for silver and gold. How it ought to shame the Christian for his indifferent manner in seeking the knowledge of God. We should lay hold upon all instruction that leads to the knowledge of God with that hunger of soul, with that eagerness, that never-to-be-wearied effort that men lay hold upon that which leads them to the possession of gold. It is in the study of the Bible and the laying of its instructions up in the heart that will bring us to the knowledge of God and to the path that leads to heaven. Paul speaks of Timothy knowing the Scriptures from a child and says they are able to make wise unto salvation. If some parents read these lines we trust they will help them to be more diligent, if need be, (and the probability there needs be) in teaching the Holy Scriptures to their child. Take time, *take time*, **TAKE TIME** to teach your child the Word of God. Where oh, where are the parents that are as diligent in teaching the Scriptures to their children as was faithful old Abraham! Read Deut. 6:7, and 11:18-21. Parents that are teaching their children as diligently as these texts command are few and far between.

The Value of Life

What a wonderful thing life is! It is the gift of God. Oh, how we need to pray that God may give us some realization of its great value. One of old prayed, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." God has created us for His glory. He redeemed us that we might glorify Him in our bodies and spirits which are His. Every moment of our life should, therefore be spent in such a manner as will best glorify Him.

God hath given us a short time here upon earth, and upon this short time eternity depends. Young man, young woman, you are

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now making your eternity by the manner in which you are spending your moments of time. Your life today is fashioning you for life beyond. Your life for today does not end this evening at the setting of the sun. How you have spent its golden moments has left its stamp upon you which determines what your eternal destiny shall be. Our hearts are made to weep as we behold the shameful abuse that many make of time. Moments of far greater worth than gold are being flung away to the winds. How few there are that rightly appreciate and attach a proper estimate to time and improve the days according to their value.

Your life here upon earth is probationary in its nature. You are forming a character as the days are going by. Let me repeat with the strongest possible emphasis, *that character determines what your eternity shall be*. We feel like we can confer no greater benefit upon you, young people, than to impress upon your hearts the vast importance of time. If we had the ability to give you either a million dollars or to help you to a proper estimate of the value of time we would not hesitate to confer the latter upon you. Millions of gold are not to be compared in value to a moment of time.

Perhaps an illustration or a parable will help us to more fully realize the value of a moment.

A man of great wealth has many industries under his management. He wants many young men and women for certain positions in these industries. He announces that in one year's time these positions will be open for those qualified for them. The salaries range according to the positions. \$200.00 per month is the salary of those occupying the lowest positions and \$2,000.00 per month to those who are qualified for the highest positions. How they spend their moments of time determines what their qualifications shall be. Every moment rightly spent qualifies them for higher

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positions. Every moment misspent has a disqualifying effect. With this opportunity before you, you would feel something of the worth of each moment, and of the importance of spending it rightly.

Heaven gives out the announcement that as you spend your moments of life, so shall your eternity be. If you rightly improve the moments, you will be qualified for higher enjoyments and greater riches in eternity. All moments wasted have a woeful disqualifying effect. You shall give an account for every idle word and every wasted moment. The account you will have to render is that these idle words and wasted moments are disqualifying you for heavenly enjoyments. Every moment rightly improved is making you capable of higher felicity in heaven.

We see a mother coming with her boys, asking Jesus for a higher position for them in His heavenly kingdom. His reply to her is, "Such positions are not mine to give, but it shall be given to those for whom it is prepared of my Father." And for whom has the Father prepared such positions? They are prepared for all those who prepare for the position. There is a place close up at the right hand of Jesus for all those who will qualify for the place. How you spend life's moments determines what positions you will occupy in glory. You will fit into the place for which you are fitted. Young people, you have this matter in your own hands. How you spend the moments of this day goes to determine what your position in that eternal world shall be. Just one life lies before you, young man, young woman. You will pass over life's pathway but once; yes, but once. And every step you take never can be taken over. You do not have the privilege of trying it over again. If you make a misstep the best it can do, and it should do this, is to help you to not make another one like it. It is true that Jesus can and will forgive us all our missteps, but the effect they leave upon our character will stand

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through all eternity. By the way you spend the moments of time today you are adding to or diminishing your treasures in heaven. Your mansion in glory will be this evening according to how you spend the moments of the day. There is great responsibility in life. It means much to live. Thank God it is blessed when we hide our life with Christ in God, and live in Him.

Reading the Bible

Dear young Christians, you have entered into a true relationship to Christ. His presence is to you a reality. His peace is your consolation, and His joy is your strength. There is a gracious inflow of the life of Christ into your soul that makes you feel like you belong to heaven more than to earth. You have a taste of the love of God and such a consciousness in your heart of His dwelling that you feel like no power can ever separate you from Him. This is a blessed experience but let me tell you in all seriousness that your keeping this experience is all in your hands. God will help you keep it. He wants to help you keep it, but there is something for you to do. You must work out your salvation. You need have no tormenting fear about your losing this precious relationship with Jesus; you can keep it, but there is something for you to do that you might keep it. God has a part in the keeping and His part is done right along every moment you do your part. He is never behind in doing His part. You strike and He strikes with you. You act and He acts with you. You put forth effort and he will put His effort in your effort and your relationship with heaven is kept inviolate. You want to know the secret of being kept, let me whisper it to your inmost soul, "Daily hide the Word of God in your heart."

Every Christian knows that the maintenance of his spiritual life depends upon his daily feeding upon the Word of God, yet in the

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face of this, how very few feed upon it as they should. Not very many people in these days are taking time to feed their souls. God has the food prepared and set before them, but they must eat or starve. It does seem that a great many have gotten past the hunger point.

Our inner peace, our consciousness of Christ's presence, our power with God, our fellowship with Him is in exact proportion to our meditation on His Word. This is a fixed, established law in the kingdom of heaven. It is just as certain as that cause produces effect. Are you conscious of a lack of spiritual strength, of abiding peace? You can set it down as a fact you have not been face to face with God in His Word as often as you should.

Are you conscious that Christ is not as real to you as He has been or as He should be, or that you have not that joyous fellowship with Jesus that your soul craves? It is because you have not been as intimate with Christ in His Word as you should have been. I write unto you, young people, to tell you that you can have a life's walk with God, but it must be in His Word. God will meet you always in His Word. He will meet you there in prayer; He will meet you there to guide you; He will meet you there to comfort you; He will meet you there to walk and talk with you; He will meet you there face to face. We want to speak briefly to you of eight secrets of hiding God's Word in the heart.

First: *It is the secret of abiding in Him.* If we fail to feed upon the sincere milk of the Word ere we are aware we are cut loose from Christ. The branch, that it may not be detached from the vine, must feed upon the vine. The soul, to abide in Jesus, must feast upon His Word. Dear young man, if you value your soul's spiritual welfare, and the highest enjoyment in the world to come, come feed daily upon the living Word. Do not read it and believe it only as a matter

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of history, but hold it before your heart in meditation until the Spirit imprints it there.

Second: *It is the secret of prayer.* Not many realize this. They are having difficulty to pray free and joyously as they would like, and they wonder what is the cause. Very probably they have not been feeding on the Word of Christ. The bringing of the Word into the heart kindles the spirit of prayer. A soul well fed on the living words of Jesus will pray of itself. It walks, breathes, lives in a spirit of prayer. As you open your Bible in the stillness of the early morning and some gracious promise meets your eye, it awakens a prayer in your heart. Or it may be a word of command and immediately your soul will rise to God imploring His grace. Or it may be a word of warning that is brought to your heart which will stir the soul to seek a greater refuge in Christ. Or it may be a word bringing hope of a blessed immortality with Jesus, which will gladden the heart with the prayer of thanksgiving. The young man or woman who knows God as revealed in His Word is mighty in prayer.

Third: *It is the secret of peace.* The Word of God is a word of peace. Those who love His law have great peace. To harken to the commands of the Lord is to have peace like a river. If your heart is troubled, turn in faith to some promise and sweet peace will come stealing in quieting every wave. When there is a raging storm on the sea of life, turn to the blessed Bible and you will hear a voice saying, "Peace be still."

Fourth: *It is the secret of purity.* "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Psa. 12:6. To keep the fountain of your life pure, keep it filled with the pure Word of Christ. The life that flows from a heart in which the Word of Christ is dwelling richly is a pure life. The

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mind that is well stored with the Word of God is not troubled with vain and impure thoughts.

Fifth: *It is the secret of strength.* Would you be strong, young man or young woman, to resist temptation and keep your soul a conqueror over sin, the world, Satan, and self? Then feed your heart daily on the Word of God. Jesus met the tempter with the Word. There is power in the gospel of Christ. There is power to make you an overcomer in all the battles of life. Oh, how our heart has been made to weep at beholding the weakness of many of God's children. Some are too weak to testify in public, or to pray, or teach a Sunday school class. A few good feedings upon the Word of God will put strength in them. Your power to do the work of God is in proportion to your feeding on the words of Christ.

Sixth: *It is the secret of perception.* If you would have a clear view of the true path of life, read the Bible very much. It will be a light to guide your feet. In these days we need to keep a keen spiritual perception. Keep Christ in view. Keep heaven in view. Keep your title to a mansion in the skies where you can read it clearly. We are exhorted to have spiritual understanding. The way to have it is to hide God's Word in the heart. If you will give yourself to daily thought and prayerful meditation on the Word of Christ, you will have better understanding of spiritual things than many theologians. Never can man with all his intellect capacity have spiritual understanding by judging from things natural.

Seventh: *It is the secret of guidance.* There are many bypaths and pitfalls lying close along the path of life. We need the guidance of the blessed Bible. A certain pastor said to a young sister that there was no harm in going to see a certain show in a theatre. The young sister replied. "There is something in my heart that reads differently." What was it that read differently? It was the law of

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God. Have you made a study of the picture in the heading of the little paper, "The Path of Life?" The young girl is walking the true pathway. The celestial city is at the ending of the way. She has the Bible in her hand and she is reading it. There are mountains of difficulties on the left hand and deep pitfalls on the right hand, but her pathway lies straight between. By her following the Bible, she

will keep clear from both. Read and meditate much in the law of the Lord and you will be kept from the by-paths of worldliness and sin.

Eight: *It is the secret of spiritual growth.* "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." There is no need of backsliding. There is no necessity of spiritual declension. By the daily hiding of God's Word in the heart, you will grow stronger and stronger in the spiritual life. You see a young man or woman who is a real stalwart saint, and thank God there are some, and he will tell you that the secret of his strength is the spending of much time in reading and meditating on the law of God.

In conclusion, let me say a word about how to read the Bible. Upon taking up the Book to read, lift your heart to God for a moment imploring the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Yield the whole heart to God; open the door wide that the truth might enter in.

Meditate on each text. Is it a warning? If so, do I heed it? Is it a command? If so, do I obey it? Is it a promise? If so, do I believe it and fully rely upon it? Does it teach some heart experience? If so, do I enjoy the experience?

As you close your Bible, again breathe an earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit will enable you to reproduce the truth you have read in your life today. It is the careful practicing of the Word that fixes it deep in the heart.

Reading Good Books

The Bible is the Book of books, but there are other good books that will whet the appetite for the Bible. Too few, we fear, realize how important for our spiritual advancement is the reading of good spiritual books. Those who do not have a taste for such reading labor at a disadvantage. They need not be discouraged, however, a taste can be cultivated. The most spiritual men of all ages have been those who had an ardent love for reading spiritual books.

The reading of a good spiritual book invigorates the intellect; warms the affections; begets in us a desire for more of God's fullness; and for greater heavenliness of life. It is especially helpful to prayer. When the mind is dull and the spirits low and we have no inspiration for prayer, the reading of a good spiritual poem will often so stimulate the mind, raise the spirits, and animate the soul, as to make it easy to pray. Too many young people waste moments in day-dreaming. It is better to be reading some good book that stirs the heart to seek more earnestly the things that are real and true.

Following Jesus

Young man and young woman, the words of Christ to you are, "Follow me." Is this the aim and purpose of your life? Is it your highest ambition? Will you make this the dominant purpose of your efforts? It is the only road to success. Christ is the perfect model of human nature. The teaching of Jesus and the example of Jesus are perfectly adapted to human nature. By this, we mean that man need not be anything but man to follow the teaching and example of Christ. He does not need to be an angel. Jesus took human nature upon himself, and his whole life is what human nature calls for and

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can be. The nature of man finds all its demands met in the life of Christ.

Now man's nature is such that he cannot attain to perfection of that nature through teaching alone. This is a truth worthy of fullest consideration. A child will never learn how to build a toy house from oral instructions alone. You must do the thing yourself before him. Precept alone is not sufficient instruction; there needs be example. Jesus knew this. He not only gave a code of moral laws, but He also lived out these laws in His human life. Then, young people, you have before you, not only the teachings of Jesus, but you have His example of life also. Now to follow him is to obey His teaching and live His life.

When we become true followers of Christ, then we become patterns for others to follow. The apostle said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." We should be able to teach the teaching of Jesus and also live His life. This is life in its highest attainment. This is the perfection of human nature. When man is able to teach the teachings of Jesus and to practice those teachings, then he has risen to the true standard of human life. The nature of man calls for this, pants after it, thirst for it, and if left unhindered, will rise to it. The life in the heart of an acorn groans after the fullness of the oak. Under proper conditions, it will rise to that fullness. To follow Jesus is to rise to the fullness of His life. There is something in man's true life that demands this.

"Shall Not Want"

Blessed experience! Wanting nothing. Having everything we want. Some of our younger saints may not have arrived at this experience. Older Christians are supposed to have. David said, "The

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Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” This seems to have been his experience. We are told in Heb. 13:5 to be content with such things as we have. To be wishing for something we do not have is proof that we are not content with what we have. Does not the Bible say that there is no want to those that fear Him? Yes, it says those very words. See Psa. 34:9. If you are wanting something, is it not proof that you do not fear God? The Bible says, “They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Psa. 34:10. If you are wishing and wanting some good thing, is it not proof that you are not seeking the Lord? Again the Bible says, “No good thing will He (God) withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Psa. 84: 11. If you are wanting and wishing, is it not proof that you are not walking uprightly? The fact is, we all have what we want. You say that you want more patience, you want more love, you want more power, you want to be more spiritual. We think you are mistaken. We think you have about what you want. Does God want you to be more spiritual? “Yes,” you say, “I think He does.” If He wants you to be more spiritual and you want to be more spiritual, why are you not more spiritual? There is a reason. Let us see if we can find it. Suppose you go to the shoe store to get a pair of shoes. You look at a pair that you like very much. You ask the price. The merchant says, “\$7.50.” You look at them a while longer, then you look at others. None of them suit. You come back to the \$7.50 pair; you say, “That is the pair I want.” The merchant says, “That is the pair I want you to have.” Now why don’t you get what you want? The fact is, you don’t really want them. You don’t want them as you should want them that you might get them. You want something more than you want the shoes. You want the \$7.50 more than you want the shoes or you would get them. You really don’t want more patience, more love, or to be more spiritual. There is something you want more than these or you would have them just as certain as you would have the shoes if you did not want

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the \$7.50 more. You say, “I do not know what I want more than to be more spiritual.” We can tell you. It is the price it takes to get it. You are not willing to pay the price. Perhaps you do not want to consecrate all to God, or deny yourself, or to wrestle in prayer, or to take the time to read, meditate, and pray that you might be more spiritual. You do not want to give up all those little things that hinder spiritually. People get what they want, as a rule, if they want it hard enough.

Christian Perfection

We are taking for granted that you believe in Christian perfection. It is our privilege to be perfect Christians. The Bible unmistakably teaches this. But we may not know in just what Christian perfection consists. At this time we shall speak of only one thing, of perfection in one virtue. It is:

Perfect Patience

The apostle prays that we might “be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience.” Notice the small word *all*. Then James says, “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” It does appear from these words that we are not perfect except patience has her perfect work, and neither are we entire. If a wheel in a watch is bent out of its proper shape, the watch is not perfect. If patience does not have her perfect work in us, we are not perfect. If all the wheels in the watch are perfect but one small wheel is missing, then the watch is not entire. If patience does not have her perfect work in us, we are not entire—neither perfect nor entire. Now we are to give to every text their proper meaning. This text does not say that we are not to have our patience tried, but it does say that when it is tried, to let it

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have its perfect work. If we will do this, it will work the beauty of perfect holiness in our lives.

There are two forms or acts of patience. These are very closely associated and spring from the same source, yet they do not affect us just the same. One of the works of patience is to wait for some desired thing without discouragement. Now this means everything. We believe that many people do not get answers to their prayers because they do not wait long enough. They get discouraged and cease to expect or hope. Another form or work of patience is to suffer without murmuring. To wait for something we greatly desire without becoming discouraged and to endure suffering of any kind without complaining requires a Christian fortitude and strength that is not possessed by everyone, but it is the privilege of all. Young Christians should develop in this virtue.

You will find at least three special ways for the exercise of patience and you will frequently be called upon for this exercise. The first is the exercise of patience toward others. Very few people, if thrown into close contact with each other, do not become more or less a trial to each other. Seldom do we find two people, who if thrown into close contact with each other, do not become more or less a trial to each other. Very few brothers and sisters, husbands and wives but what are some trial to each other betimes. This is no sin, but is an opportunity for the development of patience.

Another exercise for patience is toward yourself. You may become impatient with yourself because you are not becoming more patient. You should not grow impatient with yourself because you do not arrive at perfect patience in a week or month or year. Let me tell you now, dear young folks, that perfection of character is not formed in a day. If your progress is slow, be patient with yourself. Real true spiritual progress, as a rule, does not make much showing

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in a week or month. May be at the end of the year you can see you have made some gains. Rapid progress is not usually the firmer, nobler, finer quality.

The third exercise of patience is toward God. Be patient with God. You say you never get impatient with God. Do not be too sure of this. Do you sometimes get tried because you do not see results? Don't you sometimes become tempted to hurry the Lord up a little? Are you not sometimes tempted to think your special work is moving too slowly? Be careful in this that you do not get a little impatient with God. Wait on Him with patience.

Beautifying the Gospel

It is true that we cannot make the gospel any more beautiful than it is, but we can live in such a way that we can reveal its beauty to others. This is true saintly living. The apostle exhorts us to "let our lives become the gospel of Christ." See Phil. 1:27. Let us look, for a moment, at a life that becomes the gospel. In such a life we see the beautiful character of Jesus. Open your New Testament to 1 Tim. 1:11 and you will read, "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God." If you will read this in the Revised Version, you will get a somewhat different thought. There it reads, "The gospel of the glory of the blessed God." This no doubt, is the meaning of the original text. The gospel is a glorious gospel, but it is glorious only because it declares, or reveals, or sets before us a living picture, clear and unmistakable, the glory of the blessed God.

This is the mission of the gospel. It is to unveil and show forth the beauty and glory of God's character. It is to make all of Him known to us that we should know. God wants to set a picture of Himself before us, and to do this He photographs Himself in the

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gospel and commits it to us. This is God's chiefest gift to man. We prize the photograph of those we love. How very frequently we take it up and behold it. As we look into the countenance, our heart warms afresh with love. The gospel is a picture of Christ. How frequently we should take it up and behold the face of our Savior in its undefiled beauty, and our heart quivers with a sweet rapture, and our soul swells with the emotion of adoring love.

Now the gospel as we have it in the New Testament is scarcely sufficient to meet all the purpose and will of God. It seems to come short of satisfying the heart of God. Sometimes a photograph of yourself does not wholly meet your approval. It scarcely does you justice. It appears to be too dim. While the gospel does justice to the character of God, gives no dim picture of Him, yet there is a dimness in the eyes of the people and they cannot behold the face of God in the written Word as they can in the life of a Christian. Therefore, young man or woman, God has made a choice of you to mirror His gospel. He has put His gospel in your heart and as you each day live becoming that gospel, you are giving a picture of God to the world. The dear unseen face of Christ is made visible in your daily life. Young Christian, you are God's choicest gift to the world. He is pointing the world to a photograph of Himself as seen in you. Oh, how much depends upon this. God is greatly concerned about your life. He has grace to help you to live in the beauty of holiness. He wants your life to do Him justice. He wants your life to make Him known in the widest and fullest sense. He wants your life to give correct views of Himself. A light you are to be, revealing the character of God.

Your daily life a mirror is:

Oh, keep it filled with grace,

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That those who walk a while with you
May see God's smiling face.

Let deeds be done in tender love,
As down life's way you trod,
That those may see who walk with you
A photograph of God.

Reaching For Light

In the material world, all plants reach toward the light. House plants grow toward the window. There is something in the heart of man that reaches up for something more than he can find in the world. It is Christ, the light of the world, which the soul's true life is thirsting for.

A bulb of a water-lily lies in the mud at the bottom of the pond. There is a hidden life in the heart of that bulb that cries for something higher. In its groans and struggles, it begins to rise. A young life springs out and begins rising, nor ceases to rise until it flowers in all the beauty of a water lily at the surface of the water. It then has met all that its life was craving. So there is in the heart of man that something that craves for a certain flowering. There is a life of beauty to which it longs to rise. If you will but give heed to the cry of this life in the soul and give it freedom, it will climb upward until it blooms in the full beauty of the life of Jesus. God has given a certain kind of life to every creature which we call its source or its standard, or type. All life struggles to rise to its own source. The life in the apple seed struggles to rise to a mature apple tree. There is in the heart of every one a cry for the life of Christ. Christ is the true source of the soul's life and that life can never be satisfied until it rises and blooms in the fullness and beauty of that life.

The Blessed God

In the apostle's words as recorded in 1 Tim. 1:11, which we have quoted before, God is spoken of as "the blessed God." As we read these words, we feel to meditate upon them. In what does the blessedness of God consist? We conclude that whatever would make God a blessed God, that same would make man a blessed man. Blessedness has a somewhat similar meaning as happiness only it is a deeper and richer word. It means the fullest joy, the deepest and highest felicity, the purest ecstasy, the richest and fullest contentment that can be experienced. Such is the blessedness of God, but in what way does God find such blessedness? God is not made happy in the way most men seek for happiness. Dear young people, this a lesson you need to learn. We feel so incapable of telling to you, as we would like, how you can be the most and truest blessed and happy. Oh, how our heart sickens as we see how men are trying to find happiness. This world is seeking after pleasure. The highest pleasure they know is gratification of some physical sense. They are seeking for physical thrills. These are mean in comparison to the pleasures of God. Dear young people, go not into the ways of the world to find true pleasure. True happiness is not to be found in those things that please the palate, that delight the eyes, which charm the ears that play upon the feelings, which gratify the physical passions. Alas how many are bartering away their highest happiness, truest joy for some sensual enjoyment! O God, save our young people from the allurements of fleshly pleasures. The whole life of many a young man and woman has been wrecked and ruined by a momentary gratification of the flesh.

Jesus has taught us that the deepest and purest joys come through sacrifice and suffering. The joy of giving is purer, higher than the joy of receiving. How few have tasted this. The love of God

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is of such a nature that it finds its highest happiness in suffering for the object loved. Oh, the blessedness of pouring out our life for those we love! Those who are the most capable of suffering find holiest delights. Multitudes of what many religious professors call innocent amusements serve only to dull the sensibilities of the soul to higher and finer joys. Have a care of those things the world is calling innocent and educational. Beware lest they rob your soul of its sensitiveness to the touch of pity and sympathy for souls in the guilt of sin. Beware lest these sensual pleasures relieve your heart of its capability of being burdened for lost, wrecked and ruined men. It is not in the feast, but in the fast that we come in touch with the pure joy of the Lord. It is in the agony of prayer that we experience the blessedness of God. It is in travail of soul that we taste of the joy of pain. It is in bearing the cross that we approach nearest to the felicity of heaven. It is in suffering love and sympathetic sorrow that the soul tastes of highest and holiest rapture. The blessedness of God does not consist in forgetting the sorrows of men, but in feeling them. Christ is not blessed in saving Himself, but in saving others. There are some sufferings of Christ yet left behind for you and me to fill up. We fill them up by laboring, sacrificing, sympathizing, agonizing in prayer that we might bring souls lost in sin to the light and love of Jesus. Those who have the spirit of the cross, who are workers with Christ in the great mystery of suffering, have found the secret of the blessedness of God. Jesus said, "These words have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you." The joy of Christ in the life is the highest happiness of man. Dear reader, we implore you to seek for the highest joys and seek them in the way they are to be found.

How To View Life's Circumstances

We want you to fully comprehend the fact that the events of life are not left to blind chance, but all come to us under the government and direction of a good and gracious God. To see the hand of God in every circumstance of life is the only correct view of life for the follower of the Lord. Open your Book to John 12:24-29. You will there read where God spoke in audible voice to Jesus. Some of those who heard it said that it thundered and others said it was an angel's voice. There is a vast difference between thunder and the voice of an angel. There is also a vast difference in the way people accept the circumstances of life. Some hear nothing but thunder, while others hear an angel's voice. A mother had two bright, lovely little girls which were very dear to her. One afternoon both of these girls were brought home from the river where they were drowned. As the mother looked calmly into the faces of her silent dead, she said, "I see God wants all my heart and He shall have it." Even in such circumstances as this she heard an angel's voice. There is an angel's voice in every circumstance of life. Dear Lord Jesus, help us all to listen for it.

"Keep Thyself Pure"

This is our earnest word of exhortation to you, young man, young woman. We can make no higher appeal than this. Purity is the highest attainment in life. Who can know the worth of purity? We can know something of its worth by what it cost. It cost the life-blood of the Son of God. That blood is the Fount of purity. The pure soul knows more of the real worth of things than any philosopher can through his philosophy. The pure sees the true worth where true worth belongs. It is only when the eye is single that the body is full of light. It is only when the soul is pure that

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vision is clear to see things as they are. Moral purity is the sole condition of clear spiritual vision. True beauty is hidden from the sensual. Sensuality blurs and befogs the glass through which the soul should look at the worth-while things. What transparency is in the crystal, which is what purity is in character. The man of science scans the face of the sky and sees the distant star. The pure in heart look into the face of Jesus and behold the bright and morning star. Man through his own wisdom may know much about the works of God, but it is only the pure that know God. Things reveal themselves only to things of like nature. God, being pure, can reveal Himself only to the pure.

Man may invent machines whereby he can hear his fellows speaking across the continent, or hear the song of the growing grass; he may gather pearls from the bottom of the sea; he may be able to explain the moon's control of the tides; he may be able to analyze the various stratus of the earth; he may count the stars; he may weigh the sun; he may be able to tell you the distance to Arcturus, but if he does not have a pure heart, he cannot know God.

Not philosophic minds, but pure lives are the world's best teachers. The poor widow in her mountain cabin who has God in her soul can tell you more about the best things of life than the president of a theological seminary who does not have God. The pure life is the guiding-star that leads the way to the worthwhile things of life. Men may teach you much about the mysteries of light, of sound, of electricity, or radio, but it is only the pure that can unfold the mysteries of God's wonderful economy of grace. Give me the man whose life is pure, though he be one of earth's most ignorant, that I may follow him instead of the man who can exhaust the dictionary in the use of words in lecturing upon the ape theory of the origin of man, or the man who surpasses the oratory of Cicero in denying the

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virgin birth of Christ. There was an old colored wood sawer who knew no grammar; never saw inside a school room; who could not write his name; could not write a word, but when he prayed you felt that if you had put out your hand you would touch God. Give me such a man for a teacher. An hour in his presence is worth days in the presence of the worldly wise. It is only those who are like God that can see and know Him. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Young man and young woman, we exhort you to associate with the pure. Shun the association of the impure. Just a little time spent in the presence of the vile and you will lose the clear vision of the delicacy of purity. A few moments contact with the ungodly will haze the mind until it will find it difficult to think the thoughts of God. A good man said, “I would give ten years of my life if I could forget the pictures which one year of my youthful days spent in impure doing has hung in my memory.”

Keep thyself pure. Keep your thoughts pure. The indulgence of impure thoughts foul the very spring of life. A few impure imaginations dim the mind to that which is pure and beautiful. You cannot have a high standard of thought and nobleness of life if you indulge in vain imaginations. If evil images are tolerated in the silent halls of your imaginations, you will not see the realities and the beauties of worthy things.

Saintly Living

Saintliness of life lies in doing the will of God. If you desire to live the noblest, purest, and most useful life possible, seek to know the will of God and cheerfully do it when known. If you would live a consistent and acceptable life, do not follow impulses and emotions. The great question of life, dear young Christian, is not, how do you feel but how is your will? Is it set to do the will of God? Do not

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watch impressions so much as the path of duty. When an opportunity is open to you to do some good, do not wait for inward impressions to know if you should do the good.

We wish we could make clear and simple to you, and also to help you to know the importance of keeping your affections, emotions, and feelings all intertwined with your good common sense and under the control of your will, which is to be in perfect harmony with the will of God. Here lies the secret of success in the Christian life. Do not think that your affections, and impressions are indicative of the will of God. Many a life has been wrecked at this point. Real true affections and impressions arise out of the will. To allow the will to be guided by the affections and by impulses is like going out to sea without chart or compass.

Some years ago we were called, by a young man, to take a walk with him. Seated under the spreading branches of a maple, he told me what was on his heart. A few years before he had met a young lady at a social gathering. On shaking hands with her, she slightly pressed his hand. A peculiar sensation passed over him. He thought it was love. They married. His life was ruined. His affections and what he thought was love ran away with his will and good judgment. Wait to know the will of God. But how to know the will of God is the question. The will of God does not come to guide you by emotions, sensations, impulses so much as by giving you good judgment, sound reason, and clear understanding. A young lady said to us, "I have a strong feeling that I should do such a thing but my better judgment tells me that I had better not do it. What," she asked, "shall I do?" We told her that ninety-nine times out of each hundred, if not always, the will of God intertwined with our better judgment instead of with our strong feelings. The will of God is not to be

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discerned by inward impressions only or mainly, but by reason, providence, sense of duty, and by the Scriptures.

“But shall we not love?” This question was asked by a young lady. It is expected that we love. God made us to love, but what is love? It is not that peculiar sensation that goes all through you and seems to center at the heart. Not that passion that runs away with your will and good common sense, but that pure calm, sober sensible passion that arises out of the will, and is kept under its control. Here is a statement we want you to write down in your note book and refer to it frequently. *The love of God intertwined and intermingled with your love will never act contrary to, nor seek to control the will of God intermingled and intertwined with your will.* Listen, if you have an impression or a notion or idea, not only in sexual matters, but also in spiritual or religious matters, that is not consistent with good judgment and reason, do not think that such leading is of the Lord. To follow it will mar the beauty of saintly living.

Fleeing Youthful Lusts

Timothy was a young man. Paul knew the danger of young men being overcome by youthful lusts, therefore exhorts Timothy to “flee also youthful lusts.” 2 Tim. 2:22. We, in much earnestness of heart, likewise exhort you, young reader, flee away from youthful lusts. Keep away from those things that have any power to allure away from God and spiritual exercise. We could tell you of scores of boys and girls, who were once blessedly saved, who have gone back into the ways of sin, all because they did not keep aloof from those things that tempt to mind fleshly things. We shall speak of a few of the many alluring things that are calculated to lead the feet of the young Christian away from the true path of life.

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Evil Companions. Many a young Christian has gone down to defeat because of too much association with sinful young people. This does not mean that we cannot go among them at all, but it does mean that we are to be guarded and never to come down out of our sacred spiritual realm and strike a line of fellowship or affiliation with them. You should go among them as God leads, which you might win them to Christ, but you will need to keep yourself surrounded by a heavenly atmosphere that no spirit of worldliness can penetrate. You are to lift them up. Beware, lest they drag you down.

Reading Good Books. There is much soul-destroying literature in the world today. That is one reason why we need wholesome literature. Do not read fiction. The cheap, trashy novel is deadly poison to mind and soul. Be sparing even of the reading of the everyday newspaper. It is proper that we know something of what is transpiring in this world in which we live, but there is very much in the newspapers that you should not read. It dwarfs the mind and degenerates the soul. Be very sparing, therefore of newspaper reading. Too much is a waste of time. Beyond that which is worthy and honorable, present day history is profitless.

Amusements. Perhaps more souls have been allured away from right paths by present-day amusements than in any other. There is such a thing as getting such love for God, His Word, and communion with Him that we care but little for any other way in which to spend our time. We willingly admit that there are some recreations and amusements that are harmless and innocent in themselves, but we should have a care lest there be an over-indulgence in, and fondness for them. A young lady, speaking of a certain amusement, said, "I am passionately fond of it." Such is too great a fondness. We should be passionately fond of nothing but

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God and matters that pertain to His worship and service. No one can have a passionate fondness for any amusement and keep the passion of Christ in his soul. We cannot name to you just what amusements are innocent and what are not. Circumstances and conditions have much to do with it. I would advise, however, never to attend anything where the rabble of the world are gathered. You are to learn some things from God yourself. Live much in prayer, whenever you find that any amusement in which you may have some participation betimes is lessening your relish for secret prayer and reading of the Bible, then cease to have any part in such recreation.

The Association of Christians. God has made us social creatures and we should associate together. Our constitution calls for it. But young and old should be careful of the spirit of your associations. Christians can associate together and lose spirituality by the manner or spirit in which they have been associated. They can associate together in such a manner as to be greatly benefitted in a spiritual way by the association. It is very easy for young people to gain a greater love for the association of each other than they have for communion with God. The religious meetings of young people can very easily become a mere social gathering rather than a religious spiritual service. If they are a little watchful they can determine which they enjoy most, the chatting together after the religious service is dismissed, or the service itself.

Covered Sins. We are told in the Book that they that cover their sins shall not prosper. There are some sins of youth that are done in secret. These secret sins have great power over the youth of today. Flee, young man and woman, in horror, from the first suggestion of the tempter. Keep clean. The Psalm writer in old age prayed, "Lord remember not the sins of my youth." He referred to these secret sins

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of his life. He looked back, in his declining years, with regret upon those sins of his youth. Save yourselves, young people, of those regrets that will mar the peace of those days when your sun of life is sinking low. Keep your thoughts pure, your acts holy in the days of your youth. Follow after temperance, faith, meekness, purity, and righteousness. Walk close with God that you may have power over the flesh. We beseech you to heed this advice.

Courtship and Marriage

We realize something of the delicacy of our subject. There is nothing relating to the earthly life of man of greater importance. The first act of God after creating man and putting him in the garden was to make a life companion for him. The Creator had put in the constitution of man a desire for companionship. When woman was created, the Lord brought her and presented her to the man. This was the first marriage. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." This is marriage. There is no closer contact among mankind. This stands as the highest and most perfect analogy of Christ and the Church. In the spiritual life, Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church is the Bride. They are one. The Church is a member of His flesh and of His bones. The union of man and woman in marriage is the most perfect illustration of this union that nature affords. Marriage is pure, honorable, and heaven-ordained. God ordained the union of man and woman in accordance with their constitutional demands.

That which is the purest when corrupted becomes the most corrupt. That which is the highest can fall the farthest. All that is pure in the life of man has been corrupted and perverted by sin. That man and woman might live together agreeable and happy, God put in their nature a quality called, in our English language, love. Now

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man in his entire nature has more than one love or one kind of love. Man has at least four loves. These are different in their nature. Man loves his wife or a young man loves his maiden. This is love of the sexes. The Greek has a special word for this kind of love. A mother loves her child. This is different love to that of man for his wife. We in our English language use the same word, but the Greek does not. Then there is the love of society. This love has a nature of its own. Then man is to love his enemies. This again is different from any other sort of love in the nature of man. When a Greek speaks of a man loving his friend, he uses a different word than that which he uses when speaking of a man loving his enemies. This same is true when speaking of a young man loving his sister and a young man loving his maiden.

We are now to talk about the love of the sexes. This, as given of God, is pure. But this, like other God-given passions, can be corrupted, and perhaps no pure virtue ever given to man has been so shamefully corrupted as this love of man and woman. This love of the sexes corrupted has occasioned more crime than any other perverted quality in the nature of man. It over-powers all other love oftentimes. Just a few days ago in a nearby town a young mother killed her own child through the influence of this abused love of the sexes. This love corrupted has led multiplied thousands into marriage. Wrecked and ruined lives occasioned by this perverted love are all around us. It is not love, but lust. Thousands have been led into the married life through lust instead of love. Dear young saints, beware. You need to live very close to God and keep your affections pure. An amorous feeling may be very deceptive. It may become a clever counterfeit of love.

A young man asks, "Does God have a part in the matter of marriage? Will He select a companion for me?" Just as truly as He

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made Eve for Adam, or selected a wife for Isaac. Young saints, wait on God. That mad thing called lust, and that is its name, has rushed many a one ahead of God. God will get a companion for you if you will but await His time. When two are in what they call love, it is difficult for them to wait. School boys and girls are getting married. How many times did you ever know such to result in the greatest happiness and usefulness to such young people? Not once in ten. This should be a warning to you. When two are in love, it is difficult to determine the will of God. There needs be a perfect yielding to the will of God. It is one of the most difficult periods in the history of man for him to yield his will to God. Many have thought they had, but were mistaken. A young man says, "I thought I had my will entirely surrendered to God, but when I prayed and my lips said, 'Lord Thy will be done,' my heart said, 'But give me Betty.'" Watch your heart, young Christian. Do not give too much heed to what the lips say. Listen to the heart beats. Does it beat in perfect unison with the will of God?

God wants you to be guided, not by your feelings, but by His providences, by the counsels of true friends, and by the good sound mind He is willing to give you. Do not think, young man, because you have a peculiar feeling and a fluttering of the heart when you come into the presence of a young woman that God wills you to marry her. How very much you need to be guarded. A young lady can be so possessed with an amorous feeling or sexual fondness that she will cause you to have a peculiar feeling when you come into her presence. There will be a drawing power. Down in your heart of hearts you feel a drawing back, but there is a power that draws you on. Awful danger here. Many have been overcome by this drawing power to their ruin. Many a young man has been overcome by that strong feeling of sexual fondness gushing out of the life of a woman to him. It strikes like a dart to his heart. Her words, her eyes, her

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caresses are filled with an alluring power. Young man, “let not your heart decline to her ways, nor go astray in her paths. She has cast down many wounded, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.” And many more young women have been led away by designing men. Also the innocent have mistaken a sexual fondness for true love and have become sadly mismatched.

The question is often asked, “At what age should young people marry?” We would answer, “Whenever God wills and no earlier.” We cannot set an age for all. Some arrive at a proper age earlier than others. A few never arrive at the proper age. We have now a letter before us from a precious young brother which reads, “Now concerning the matter of which I wrote you, I will say that I have simply placed it in His hands and He will take care of it perfectly. I am waiting on Him.” How sensible. If you wait on God, you will not marry too early. Young school boys and girls sometimes, perhaps we had better say, often times, get a fondness for each other and think they should marry. Instead of entering into a courtship, they better keep out of each other’s company as much as possible until they find out if that attachment was occasioned by pure love or was a silly sexual fondness. We do not mean that sexual fondness is silly. That of itself is pure, but it makes some young people silly, and some older ones too, for that matter.

Boys and girls arrive at an age when they develop a fondness for each other. This is not only the age for marriage, but neither is it the age for courtship. For a young fourteen-year-old boy and a thirteen-year-old girl to enter into a courtship because they have a fondness for each other is very unwise. Many a life has been ruined because of giving place to this fondness. If they will keep out of company of each other for a short time, that thing they thought was

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love will pass away like a morning vapor. Our young people need the prayers of older Christians. They need sensible Christian counsel. And they need, most of all, firm, loving parental authority.

