

*A Practical Treatise on How to Find God,
What Salvation Is and Does, and
How to Live a Happy and Successful Christian Life*



WINNING A CROWN

C. W. NAYLOR

Winning a Crown

**A Practical Treatise on How to Find God,
What Salvation Is and Does, and
How to Live a Happy and
Successful Christian Life**

**By
C. W. Naylor**

*There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the
Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. —2 Tim. 4:8*

So run that ye may obtain. —1 Cor. 9:24

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As we travel the road of life it is imperative that we chart our course in the right direction. We must often draw upon God for Divine help and renewed strength to overcome Satan's devices. As you read this book, I am confident that you will find it both a chart and a source of strength for your soul.

We have received several requests for this book to be reprinted and although it was written pertinent to the society of 65 years ago, we feel that this long out-of-print volume describes many of the issues that are relevant to all ages.

In February, 1982, we reprinted the book, *Heart Talks*, by C. W. Naylor. This book sold very well and is now in many homes. *Winning a Crown* could be considered a sequel to *Heart Talks*. The author begins with the purpose of man, unfolds the plan of salvation, and branches off into how to triumph over the ordinary problems we meet with in our daily service to God.

This book has been reprinted word for word from an original copy except for a very few minor changes.

We submit it to you with the prayer that God will enlighten your understanding as you read its pages.

—Wayne Murphey
Faith Publishing House Publishers

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Preface

Life is a series of problems. None of these problems are of more importance than those which relate to the spiritual life. Upon their proper solution rests both our present and future happiness. It has been the author's purpose throughout this book to set forth in as practical a way as possible some of the things that he has learned in his twenty-five years of Christian life, the greater part of which has been spent in preaching and writing of the things of the kingdom of God. For the past nine years he has been a shut-in as the result of a serious injury, but these years upon his bed, with Pain for his constant companion, have taught him many things that might have escaped him in the busy days of a more active life.

The subject-matter of this treatise falls naturally into three parts. The first is intended to show men how to find God and enter into the enjoyment of true sonship with its attendant blessings. The second deals with some of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith from the standpoint of their practical bearing on human life. The third deals with problems that sooner or later present themselves to every Christian for his solution. Upon their correct solution hangs the prosperity and happiness of his life. This part of the book will be to the Christian the richest and most beneficial of all. He may find herein an answer to many of his heart's questionings and a "lamp to his feet" in some of life's dark hours. With a prayer that every reader

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may be enriched and that God may be glorified, the author commits his work to the public with the confident expectation that the divine blessing that has rested upon him in its preparation will follow it to bless its readers and inspire in their hearts fresh hope and courage to press on to win the crown waiting at life's goal.

Yours in His joyful service,

C. W. N.

Introduction

The Christian life is not all sunshine and roses; neither is it all shadows and brambles. All our skies cannot be cloudless; neither can all our roses be without thorns. The pilgrim's way to the Celestial City does not lie across a low, flat plain; instead, it leads through a great variety of scenery. Now we walk a smooth way, sunlit and bright, with a splendid vista outspread before us. Further along we pass into the foothills and our pathway rises and falls. Now we stand upon the summit and feast our eyes on the broad expanse and the glowing hilltops around us, basking in the sunshine of noonday. Again we go slowly down into the valley and walk beside the still waters, amid the green grass, and breathe the air perfumed by the flowers and hear the carols of the birds as they merrily pass the hours. Farther along we have a bit of steep climbing, with perchance many stones along the way, and here and there a thorn bush catches our garments and pricks our feet. Sometimes the way is toilsome, but presently we reach the top, and there in the clear air, under the dome of heaven, our souls are hushed and awed and filled with holy inspiration.

Down from the mountain sooner or later we must go, sometimes over crags and where it seems no feet have trodden before us. With the outlook of the mountaintop left behind, our vision becomes narrow, and we make our way slowly and painfully down into the

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darkened valley. There are shadows in the valley. Sometimes a great cloud sails overhead and the sunlight disappears. The birdsongs resound no more. The warmth is gone, and the chill of the evening comes on apace. The night falls; but the Celestial City lies still far away, and we must walk in the night as well as in the day. Sometimes then our footsteps falter. Sometimes strange shapes appear, and we hear voices that cannot be interpreted, but we must walk on. When the daylight comes again, there is joy and sunshine once more.

So is the journey of life—infinite in its variety. No matter how much of the old, there is always something new. No matter how much we understand, there is always that which is mysterious. Whether upon the mountain or in the valley, whether by the silent waters or by the gushing waterfall, whether in the calm sunshine or in the beating storm, we must press ever onward. Now and then we may stand upon some mountain of transfiguration and see all things illuminated with a heavenly glory and hear words impossible for man to utter. But we must come down from that mountain and go upon our way again. Sometimes we may catch a faint distant glimpse of the Celestial City, which is the goal of all our hopes; but much of the time it will be beyond our vision, and much of the time we shall see only the ordinary things of everyday life.

The path of life has, as it were, two sides—one bright and attractive; the other with its shadows, from which we instinctively shrink. But it takes both these to make up life's pathway. As children of God, we are still human. And with others we must bear the things that belong to human life—its cares, its perplexities, its unsolved problems, its frailties, in fact, all those things which fall to the lot of other mortals.

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So it would seem best in this volume that I should walk upon the shadowy side of the path, rather than upon that which lies in the sunshine, if perchance the rays of my lantern shall fall upon some of the dark places and shall make the footsteps of the pilgrim more certain and help him to define some of those shadowy shapes that trouble him. The bright side of life needs no illumination, and when the pilgrim walks through the sunshine on a plain path he needs no instructor, he needs no one to interpret life to him. It is when the shadows fall and perplexing things come, when he hears strange voices, and when he feels his need of counsel and of comfort, that he welcomes someone to interpret for him the things of life, and to point out a safe and sure pathway. And so, reader, I offer to walk with you through some of these places, and I trust that we shall be congenial companions and that at last we shall both safely reach the Celestial City and join the white-robed throng in everlasting praises before the Majesty that sitteth upon the throne eternal.

What is Man?

We are surrounded by mysteries, and not the least of these is the mystery of our own being. “Whence did I come?” “Where am I going?” and—greatest mystery of all—“What am I?” are questions that have arisen again and again in the minds of many persons. If we try to solve the question, What am I? by our own understanding and reason, it remains but a question. There are within us the stirrings of strange emotions, a reaching out after things not seen, unutterable things that we cannot interpret. Is man only a material being? Is he a beast of the field? Was he created only to eat and drink and to enjoy material things? or is he something more and something higher, with relationships more profound and far-reaching than those of the mere material?

The Psalmist viewed this question and exclaimed: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet” (Psa. 8:4-6). To him, man was something more than an animal; he stood only a little lower than that celestial host that surrounds God’s throne. And man is something more, something higher, indeed, than those creatures which are his servants in this time-world. When the Psalmist speaks of their death, he says, “Thou

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takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust” (Psa. 124:29). Of man it is said, “If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath, . . . man shall turn again unto dust” (Job 34:14, 15). Man is a trinity, possessing the spiritual, the mental, and the physical. He has a body like the animal, in its functions and desires. He has reason and intelligence, and, above and beyond all these, he has a moral nature. This he alone of all the inhabitants of earth possesses. And it is with this moral nature that man is most concerned. His life in this world is of few days and full of trouble, and all the races of man look forward confidently to another and higher and better life when this life has come to an end.

Animals are creatures of instinct. They have implanted in them certain primary elements of knowledge or consciousness that guide them where their intelligence does not reach. And man also has instincts, higher than those of the beast, but no less significant. He feels intuitively that there is a power above him which is greater than his own power. It takes no argument to convince him of this, unless he has destroyed this primary intuition through the subtleties of his reasoning. He is also conscious that he is responsible to this higher power; that in some way he has some relation with that power that gives moral value to his actions; and that these actions are worthy of the praise of this higher power or else merit retribution as being evil. He instinctively places a moral value upon his conduct, and feels that somehow, somewhere he must give an account. He feels within him the stirrings of a life that is not merely animal life. He feels capabilities and powers which are undeveloped here and now, and to which he finds himself incapable of giving more than partial expression; and this consciousness speaks to him of a future life full of greatest possibilities.

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All these instincts have a substantial basis of reality. The squirrel that has never seen a winter is led by instinct to hoard a store of nuts for the days to come. The bird that knows nothing of climate save the summer, wings its way in the autumn to a more genial climate, led by unerring instinct. The bird which has been reared in captivity in an artificial nest, if given its liberty will build a nest like those of its kind, though it has never been taught. These instincts do not mislead the unreasoning creatures. They are safe guides.

Man's instinct is no less true, and if followed will guide him in the fundamentals of his life as it guides the lower creatures. Only man disregards these instincts. He deifies his reason, and it leads him in devious paths. He sets it up as the guide of his life and bows down and worships it, but alas! how often it causes him to disregard that which the truest wisdom would lead him to value most highly! How many people live as though they were only animals! "Eat, drink, and be merry," say they. They neglect that higher and better self. They silence the voice of conscience. They shut their ears to God. They close their eyes to their own knowledge. They live as though they were no better than the brute. They are concerned only with this world. They may recognize that there is a life beyond, but how little do they consider it!

Reader, you are more than a horse. There is in you that which is higher and better and nobler; and there is something better for you than to give your attention, your time, and your powers for this world alone. As you consider yourself higher than the beast, so should your life be higher than his. I beg of you, consider. How much higher is it? Are you living for eternity, or does your life-plan reach only to the satisfying of your own temporary and temporal desires?

The True Purpose of Life

The Bible tells us that God created man and clearly implies that all the rest of the material creation of earth was for his benefit and for his use. But what purpose had God in creating man? Did God make him simply to gratify a desire to make something new? Is his existence the result of some mere whim? When God created him, did He expect to give him no further attention? The Bible tells us plainly that God had a distinct purpose, and that his creation was for God's own purpose, not simply that man might exist. Speaking of man, he says, "The work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21). Again, he says, "For I have created him for my glory" (Isa. 48:7).

That man was endowed with natural faculties that make it possible for him to know God and to communicate with him, to understand his will, and to obey him, and to find his highest pleasure in all these, shows that the purpose of man's life is something very exalted. It is possible for him to debase his powers, to put them to ignoble purposes, and to fail entirely of the true purpose of his life. He may develop his physical being and bring it to a high state of perfection, so that he is an athlete. He may be in perfect health. He may conform to the laws of his physical being and be worthy of the admiration of his fellows. He may develop his mind until he reaches out into the starry heavens and reads the secrets of the planets. He

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may delve into philosophy and into science until his mental faculties are enriched and highly developed. He may grapple with the great problems of life and solve them. He may fill the chair of some great university. Men may marvel at his learning. He may be eloquent until he can sway the multitudes. He may rise to eminence in the political world and be famous. Men may admire and respect and honor him, but the perfect body and the highly developed mind, or these two united, do not make a perfect man.

Sooner or later disease will seize upon that body. Sooner or later that mind will lose its brilliance and its power. The end is but the grave. What then? Shall we say that a man who has lived only for his body and for his mind has truly lived, has truly fulfilled the purpose of his creation? Not so. He has omitted from his life that which is highest and best. He has failed to develop that spiritual element which is his real self, that element which will live on forever. He has starved and neglected it, and it has withered away, overshadowed by the other parts of his being. If a man forgets his soul, if he makes no preparation for the life that is life indeed, there is no symmetry in his life. It is unbalanced and incomplete. No matter what his success in other lines, his life is a failure. No matter how much wealth he may amass, how much he may win, nor how much of anything of earth may be his, it must end with the word "failure," for he has not lived for God. He was created for God's glory, but how much has his life subserved that glory? Has he honored God? Has he served him? Has he fitted himself for his society in the world to come? The man who fails to develop his mind and then is brought into the society of men of learning feels at once and feels most keenly how he has neglected himself and how hampered he is in his associations with them, how unfit he is to enjoy their society, and how little such society can really mean to him. So the man who neglects his spiritual life, when he shall have

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come into the presence of God will find himself wholly unfit to mingle in the society of heaven. His soul-faculties will not be able to respond to the influences of that place. In fact, it would be torment to him to be there and constantly feel his unfitness.

There is but one true purpose in life. All other things are subsidiary to it. If we fill our life with trifles, with things that amount to nothing, shall we not reap the trifler's reward? God desires our services. He desires union with us. He desires to be honored and worshiped by us—not simply for some selfish interest; for when we give to him that which belongs to him, we do for ourselves that which is best and highest. And when we refuse to give him that which belongs to him and that which he has a right to expect of us, we are injuring ourselves and are placing barriers before our own souls. We are destroying our own selves.

Reader, what is the purpose of your life? What is your life amounting to? Are you spending it for God? Are you developing your soul, your spiritual faculties and powers? What will your life profit you if you are not? Shall you endure the things of this life, its cares, its sorrows, its heartaches, toil on till its end, only to have "Failure" written over it at the last? Be wise. God has given you intelligence. Use it for his glory. Neglect not your soul, that priceless treasure which must somewhere spend eternity, the eternity for which you are now preparing it.

The Moral State of Man

Back in the world's springtime, when nature was dressed in her pristine glory, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). Of nothing else of his creation is this said. Man is marked out as separate and distinct from all the rest of creation. He is of the creation, but rises to a higher plane, and possesses a something seen in nothing else. We read further, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). This was not a physical image and likeness, for such it could not be, inasmuch as God is not physical and does not possess physical organs. It must, then, relate to his mental and moral being. In reason, judgment, choice, conscience, etc., he is in God's image, but we are concerned at present only with his attribute of holiness. As he came from the hand of God he was pure and holy. There was not in him a single element of defilement. God looked upon him and pronounced him very good, and was well pleased. The wise man, speaking of man's original state, says, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright" (Ecc. 7:29).

It was as natural for him to love God as to love anything else. He was blameless, and though without experience he could readily yield himself to all God's will. There was no barrier between himself and God. There was no hindrance to fellowship and intercourse. His

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pure soul shrank not from God. He knew no fear, but in the presence of his Maker walked as a son with his father. What halcyon days were those! But alas! that happy state did not continue. One thing had been prohibited. That prohibition was violated, and in consequence a cloud overspread the heavens. His conscience knew for the first time the sense of guilt and shame. The sweet, sympathetic fellowship between his soul and God was broken. He trembled and shrank in fear. His innocence was gone—that greatest charm, that which endeared him to the Father-heart. Then followed a life of sin, and when he begat a son, the child was in his father's own image. From that time on the current of human life has been a dark and murky stream.

Some tell us that man has never fallen, that he is now in as high a position as he has ever occupied in the moral scale. This, however, is contrary to the Scriptures, as well as to reason. When we look at his present condition and compare that with what the Bible shows him to have been at his creation, we rather marvel that he has fallen so far. The Bible deals with him everywhere as a fallen creature, one who is corrupt and defiled. Thus the record expresses it: “And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. 6:12). God manifested his displeasure by destroying the old world.

The posterity of Noah traveled the same path. Hosea, viewing the situation in his day, exclaimed, “They have deeply corrupted themselves” (Hos. 9:9). So the current flows on. Paul draws a dark picture in the first chapter of Romans and elsewhere. It is true that man did not lose all. There is in him yet some elements of nobility, some godlike qualities; but these are, as it were, only a few good things that have survived the wreck of his life. And when God looks upon him, he sees not one holy element; and when he begins to make

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something of him, he must begin at the beginning and make of him a new creature.

The Motive Purpose of His Life

Man's character is the opposite of God's. God is essentially benevolent; man is essentially selfish. The natural man does not inquire what is the will of God regarding him. He is not concerned in pleasing God. The thing that he desires most of all is to please himself. If he may do this, he asks nothing more. He lives for this alone. If he may but gratify all his own desires, he asks for nothing more. He does not believe that he is moved by such a motive; he does not stop to consider it. In fact, he is likely to suppose that he is moved by very different considerations. God says, "Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations" (Isa. 66:3). Again he says, "They hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof" (Prov. 1:29, 30).

His Attitude Toward God

Man ordinarily supposes that he is on quite friendly terms with God, at least so far as his own feelings are concerned. He looks upon the law of God and recognizes it as a very high and worthy law. He assents that man should give to it a ready obedience. Very often he is pleased to see others turn from sin to righteousness. Like Paul, he may delight in the law of God after the inward man. He may approve of it as being most excellent. He may even praise it most highly. He may sit in the congregation of the righteous and find much pleasure in listening to the Word of God. There may be many things in it that he is glad to see reflected in his own life; but when it comes to submitting himself to this law and making it the law of his life and

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conforming himself to it in detail, another element immediately asserts itself. He finds at once a great reluctance, and if pressed, this reluctance shows itself in rebellion. So long as he can do just as he likes and still fulfil the Word of God, he is pleased to do so. As long as his desires run parallel with the desires of God, he delights in that law; but when his desires are crossed, when he is required to forego them, he at once rebels. And the more God's claims are pressed upon him, the more determined does his rebellion become.

His obedience, so far as he does obey, is essentially selfish. He obeys only because it pleases him to obey. Paul, speaking to the Colossians, tells them their former state, saying, "You . . . were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21). To the Romans he says, "We were enemies" (Rom. 5:10). Speaking of the unregenerate, he says that they are "haters of God" (Rom. 1:30). This is the verdict of God. He knows the true state of their hearts. His verdict is true and it is final. There is no element in the sinful man that is truly friendly toward God, at least before his heart begins to yield to God. He is everywhere pictured as a rebel, one who has defied the authority of God and is standing in open hostility to him. And this, unless he repents, will be his attitude through life, and through the ceaseless ages of eternity. The best unsaved man is not at heart better than this.

God's Attitude Toward the Sinner

But what is God's attitude toward unregenerate man? It has been said that God hates sin, but he loves the sinner. Is this true? Let us hear the voice of inspiration, "Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity. . . . The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man" (Psa. 5:5, 6). Does that express an attitude of affection? Again, we read, "The wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.

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Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness” (Psa. 11:5-7). Read also the following texts: Lev. 20:23; 26:30; Deut. 32:19. We read further, “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psa. 7:11). God is not so meek and indulgent that nothing will arouse his indignation. He hates all that is hateful. He could not love righteousness without hating iniquity. He could not love the righteous without hating the wicked. To love both would be to abolish all moral distinctions. Of the impenitent sinner it is said, “The wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). We are not to understand that God hates the sinner as an individual apart from his sins and his sinful disposition. It is only sin that renders him hateful, but man is responsible for his state of sinfulness and chooses to be what he knows he ought not to be; therefore, to deal with the sin God must deal with the man.

Not only does God hate man’s sin, every sinful word, thought, and deed, but he also hates every evil desire. The natural man loves evil. That love of evil, which is a part of his nature, God abhors. All desire that runs out after impurity or for that which is unholy merits and excites God’s indignation and abhorrence. Every evil ambition that arises in his soul repels God. Every evil disposition, every evil feeling, hatred, envy, malice, revenge, selfishness, pride, jealousy, deceit, hypocrisy, and all the long catalog of evil things, of which man’s heart is the source, are obnoxious to God. All tendency to resist the Holy Spirit, or to array oneself against the will of God, all rebellion at his providences, can excite in God only hatred. How often man rejects his own reason and stifles his conscience! How often he hardens his heart! Can God love the thing in him that causes him to do this? He can love only what is lovable; and only what is pure and holy can appear lovable to a holy God. All else he hates and must hate with all the strength of his character.

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Sinner, look this squarely in the face. Your self-complacency may suffer, your conscience may be troubled, your fears may be aroused, but the picture is not overdrawn. Look over it again carefully. Look at yourself in the mirror of God's Word, and think what it means to have God for your enemy. Think what it will mean before the great judgment-seat, think what it will mean in eternity, and turn from your sins before the day of wrath.

God is just and can treat sin and the sinner only as justice demands, or at least cannot go contrary to those demands. He is also merciful and loving. And his attitude toward the sinner, an attitude different from that just considered, is expressed thus: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17). Again, we read, "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Thou art . . . a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy" (Psa. 86:5, 15). God is so full of love that John calls him love. He is "our Father which art in heaven." His mercy endureth forever. He loves the sinner. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God loves men because they are his sons, the work of his own creative power, even though they have gone astray. He loves them because of his own benevolence; he loves them because of the sacrifice he has made for them. He loves all the lovable qualities that he sees in them. He loves all the possibilities for good and nobility and holiness, and he pities them as "a father pitieth his children." And so God's hand of mercy is outstretched toward sinners. His heart yearns over them. He invites them to come back from their wanderings, to turn away from their sins, and holds out to them the promise of a full pardon and a glorious reconciliation.

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These two widely different attitudes God holds toward every sinner. So long as the sinner is impenitent, love cannot reach him, and mercy cannot save; but as soon as the heart is softened into penitence and turns away from self to God, a welcome awaits him, the arms of love enfold him, and the past is all forgiven. God does not desire to hate the sinner. He is compelled to do so. But as soon as the sinner gives him opportunity by changing his attitude toward God from rebellion to submission, God changes his attitude toward him into one of tenderest love and pity.

How to Find God

The prodigal has wandered far; he is in a strange land. Things there are not as they are in Father's house. As long as he is satisfied in this strange country, the charms of home appeal to him but little. Before the sinner can find God he must, as the prodigal of old, come to himself. He must realize what his situation means. He must become conscious of his true state as a sinner. He must see his sins in their naked reality; and he has only to see them so to abhor them. The pleasures of sin may satisfy for a season. His heart may have no longing after God; but when he comes to himself, he begins to think of better things. Sin loses its attraction. He begins to eat the bitter bread of remorse. He thinks of the outraged father, and there arises in his heart a desire for reconciliation. He is conscious that he has transgressed, that he has deeply wounded the paternal love. He is deeply conscious of the fact that he deserves nothing better of the Father than permanent rejection. The language of his heart is, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son."

No man can ever find God who does not first become thoroughly dissatisfied with his own condition; for so long as he is satisfied in sin, he has no desire to be reconciled to God, he does not wish to be in God's presence. But when once he begins to abhor his sin, and to desire to be something better than he is, he instinctively turns Godward, and says, "I will arise and go to my Father."

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Reconciliation with God is not hard to obtain if there be first this turning away from sin and self. But without it there can never be peace. There can be no salvation while there remains self-satisfaction or rebellion.

Seeking God

It is not hard to become a Christian. It is not difficult to find God. The difficult part is to leave self and to gain the consent of mind and heart to begin the seeking. God is not far away. We do not need to take a long journey to find him. He “is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart” (Psa. 34:18). Yea, he is “not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27), and he has said, “Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one . . . that seeketh findeth” (Luke 11:9, 10). There is, however, a way in which we must seek in order to be successful. We must not seek carelessly nor indifferently. “But if . . . thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Deut. 4:29).

God never hides himself from those who seek him with right desires and pure purposes. The seeker should come humbly and simply and trustingly. He should come as one who expects to find, and, having found the desire of his heart, to turn back no more to his former life.

But if we desire to find God, we must seek for him where he is. The prodigal would have sought long and vainly for his father in the land wherein he was a prodigal. Knowing this, he said, “I will arise and go to my father.” So we must arise and go from the land of our sinful service, from the country of our evil master. God is not to be found there. In vain do we look for him there. He is not found in the way of earthly pleasure. So long as our hearts and affections are set

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upon the things of this world, so long as we care for them, we cannot find God. It is only when we turn to him with our whole hearts and with a full purpose to serve him that we can find him.

Sometimes people desire to be Christians, and they make up their minds that they are going to do better. That is their thought of being a Christian—just doing better. But that is not enough; there must be something more than that. How can a man who is evil do good? Nor is it enough to join with people who are Christians, or who are professing to be Christians. We may unite with some organization of people called a church, but that of itself may not make us either better or worse. Turning over a new leaf and taking up new habits, becoming interested in church work and various benevolences, will never bring us to God. Our souls must become hungry for him. We must desire him more than anything else and search for him until we find him. That is the one thing—we must find God. We must become his. We must have a new life, new purposes, and a new relationship with God. This demands a severance of old relations, a forsaking of the old habits and life, of the old ways and desires. Do not suppose that you can find God as your Savior unless you turn to him with your whole heart, giving up once and for all time everything that displeases him. He will not be a partner with you in anything that is unholy; therefore, all that is unholy must be given up.

God has said, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:7). These are God’s terms, and he will not change them. David said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psa. 66:18). God tells us the result if we seek him while we still hold to sin. “When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide

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mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear” (Isa. 1:15). What, then, must we do? His answer is, “Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil” (ver. 16). If we will do this, the gracious promise is given, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (ver. 18). As long as the soul clings to one sin, it cannot find God. All must be forsaken. The old life must have “Finis” written under it. When we fully turn from sin, then, and then only, can we turn to God. We are told to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin. If we do this, our relation to it will be the same as that of a literally dead man to the activities of this life. Sin must end before righteousness can begin.

Repentance

God’s message to sinners has always been that they should repent. This was the burden of the message of the Prophets, of John the Baptist, and of the Son of God when he came, as it has been the message through the ages. But what is repentance? In its practical sense as respecting the sinner, it means regret or sorrow for sin, accompanied by a turning away from sin. The word sometimes means no more than a change of mind, but in the true evangelical sense it means something more than this—not only a change of mind, but much besides. It means that change accompanied by or produced by real sorrow for sin, that godly sorrow which works repentance and leads to salvation.

One of the most important points involved in this subject is the direction in which repentance acts, or the object toward which it acts. Much repentance is essentially selfish in its nature. Sometimes people grow very sorry because of what they have done when they see the effects upon themselves. When they see disease brought

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upon their bodies and realize that they are languishing under its touch because of what they have done, they are filled with regret. The prisoner behind the bars often is repentant because he is suffering punishment. He is sorry for what he has done, but sorry only because of its effects upon himself. Sin often brings shame, and this shame is not easily borne, and often brings self-reproaches and sorrow, not because the evil was done, but because of the fruit of that evil.

All such repentance is essentially selfish. It leads to no change in the individual, in his attitude toward God, nor in God's attitude toward him. He may have wronged friends and later may come to feel very bad over having done so; he may wish that he had the opportunity to change matters and would be glad if he had not done as he did. In this case his friends are the object of his repentance. Any effectual repentance must have God for its object. It must be directed toward him. The individual must be genuinely repentant because he has wronged God. He must look at his sins from God's standpoint, not from his own. He must consider that he has wronged God, that he has transgressed his law; and he must consider the character of God—how infinitely just and holy he is and how exceedingly wrong has been his conduct in thus breaking the holy law of that holy God. It is only when he views his sins from this standpoint that he can have any adequate idea of their deserts, and only then can he have any proper idea of his own guilt and his own need of repentance.

Repentance implies a turning away from sin with a full purpose never to repeat the sinful deeds. Anything that does not produce such a result is not real repentance. Those who claim to have repented and still go on in their sinful ways, doing what pleases them rather than what pleases God, have never truly repented; for if one is truly

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sorry for sin, is truly sorry that he has grieved God, he will once and forever turn away from doing such a thing. God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts."

That is an essential part of repentance, and if omitted, the repentance cannot be unto salvation.

God says that the wicked shall "give again that which he hath robbed" (Ezek. 33:15). One characteristic of true repentance is the disposition of the individual to repair the injuries that he has done others, so far as it lies in his power. If he has stolen from another, he desires no longer to have that property in his possession. If we have taken from our fellow man by fraud or in any other way things that were his, the things are still his, and if we truly repent, we shall feel an earnest and sincere desire in our souls to restore them. Repentance that leaves the individual in possession of that which has been wrongfully gotten, is not genuine repentance, for genuine repentance wants to make right any wrong that has been done. It takes no argument to convince anyone who really repents that he ought to confess to those whom he has wronged and to make restitution to them to the extent of his ability and opportunity. The thousands of professors of religion who have things in their possession that are not theirs will have a hard task getting inside the pearly gates, as they have now a hard task of convincing those who know of the facts that they are true Christians. It is not enough to be sorry that we have done wrong; we must go far enough to be thoroughly sorry that we have that which is not ours, so sorry that we will not keep it. It is just as truly natural for the penitent sinner to make his wrongs right and to ask the forgiveness of those wronged and to make thorough confession as it is for his soul to reach out after God's mercy.

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Having truly repented, the soul is then upon the threshold of God's mercy and can reach out expectantly to find him.

Submission

The sinner is a rebel against God. He has lived in open rebellion all his sinful days; but if he will find God, if he will be reconciled to him, then he must submit himself to God in whole-hearted surrender. "Submit yourselves therefore to God" (Jas. 4:7). Self has been the king upon the throne of the heart. Self must be dethroned. All its rule must be overthrown, its government entirely demolished. Christ must be enthroned; he must be above all and through all. His will must be law. The soul must yield true allegiance to him. It must yield glad and full obedience. He must be supreme and the soul rejoice to have it so. The yielding must be not only a passive submission, but an active submission. It is good if we shall say, "Not my will, but thine, be done." But this is not enough. We must dedicate ourselves to the fulfilment of his will, to the task of carrying out his will. "I delight to do thy will" is the language of the submitted heart.

We are not fully surrendered so long as we require one condition. Christ cannot be master so long as we offer terms. Our surrender must be unconditional, or it is not real. Here is where many fail. They have their way mapped out before them, and have their ideas of just what kind of Christians they want to be and what they want to do. That leaves them the masters, and if their terms were accepted, they would never be submissive. Some will not yield to God lest he should call them to preach; others, lest they should have to be missionaries, leave home, testify, pray in public, or do some similar thing. Others have plans that they wish to carry out, or things which they desire to continue in, such as dancing, taking part

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in worldly amusements, and the like. God will let us have a form of godliness, if that is what we want, and he may let us be pretty well satisfied with it, even if we are not really surrendered; but if it is real salvation that we want, that is to be had only on condition of an absolute surrender so far as we can understand what that means. We must throw away our maps and plans, and say: “Here I am, Lord, body, mind, and soul. All I am or ever shall be is thine unreservedly forever. Not my will, but thine, be done.” This must be said, not with the lips alone, but from the heart’s remotest depths. This, and this alone, is surrender. This is real submission, and this is one of the steps in finding God.

Believing

In reply to the jailer’s question, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul and Silas said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). Faith is the hand that reaches out to God and lays hold upon him through his promises. Without it we cannot find God; without it we cannot be saved from our sins; but by believing we may be saved. There are, however, two kinds of believing, and both are necessary to our salvation. Jesus said to the Jews, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Many people believe in Christ as a historical character, as a great and glorious teacher, even the Son of God; but that faith affects nothing for their salvation. It is, however, the ground of the other and more important faith. We “must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). Many people believe in Christ who never receive him as their Savior. We must not only believe in him, but believe on him, that is, confidently rely upon him for our salvation, trusting him to forgive our sins and make us all that he has promised to make us. Believing is no hard thing. It is not something that is strained, not something that is forced. It is

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something that operates naturally and easily. The soul that has done what has already been noted under the previous steps, is in a position to rely upon Christ for his salvation; that is, to confidently trust in him that he does now save him. It requires no effort of will, no straining to do this; it is natural, just as natural as breathing.

He has said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Is this true, or is it false? If it is true, then it is true for you, and for everyone else who will come to him in the way of his truth. His promise is, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9). Is this true? If it is true for anyone, it is true for you. Just simply believe it, and you will know that his word is true; you will within you have the consciousness of that fact. But until you do believe it, that is, until you accept it not only as being true but as being true for you, it will count nothing. But when you do so accept it, it will count all, and you will find that your soul reaches out and finds God true and knows him for itself.

Assurance

Belief brings assurance. Peter said, “We believe and are sure” (John 6:69). Effectual faith, that is, faith that reaches out and appropriates God’s promises for salvation, brings to the heart a knowledge of the forgiveness of sin. We are not left to uncertainty as some suppose. John says, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself” (1 John 5:10). What is this witness? Paul tells us in Gal. 4:6—“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” The work of the Spirit in witnessing is stated in Rom. 8:16—“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”

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The Christian has a twofold witness of his acceptance with God. First, this witness of the Spirit, who testifies to him of his acceptance. This is the voice of God himself to the soul. It speaks in the believer's inner consciousness in language that cannot be misunderstood. He knows that he is God's child. He realizes from the testimony of that sacred Spirit that the work of God has been wrought and that he is now a child of the divine Father. He is no more a rebel, but a son. Secondly, there is that inner consciousness known and realized as any other definite fact of human experience. He knows that he is no more what he was; he knows that he is no more a rebel against God, but is at peace with him. He no longer feels the guilt of his sin. He is conscious that a great change has taken place. Everyone who truly becomes a Christian, has this inner consciousness that he is God's. This is a sure product of saving grace.

This twofold witness within our souls continues as long as our faith continues. Only doubts can silence its voice. When faith fails, the voice of this testimony becomes weakened and finally silenced. It is dependent upon faith, and as long as we believe we may expect its testimony; but we must believe in order to retain this glorious realization of divine sonship. John was very positive in his knowledge and assertion on this point. He said, "We know that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John 3:14). Again, he says, "We know that we are of God" (1 John 5:19). In every case, however, saving faith must precede this witnessing, and saving faith must always accompany it, or it is made void.

Regeneration

The Bible does not observe the hair-splitting methods and fine theological distinctions of either modern or ancient theologians. These methods may be necessary to philosophic study; but when we interpret the Bible by them, we narrow it down and lose its real significance. It speaks many times in broad generalizations. Often the thing meant is broader than the term used. Sometimes part is put for all, sometimes all is put for part; and we have need to use our judgment and intelligence most carefully in order to arrive at the true meaning. This is true of the subject of Regeneration. For the work of God's grace in saving the sinner from his guilt, there are many terms, most of which respectively apply strictly to only one particular phase of the work, but which, because of their necessary connection in operation and in time with other parts of the work, are used to represent the whole. As instances of this the following may be noted: *Redemption*—"Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18, 19). *Forgiveness*—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). *The new birth*—"Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (ver. 6). *Reconciliation*—"God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not

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imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). Isaiah thus expresses this reconciliation: “Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me” (chap. 12:1). *Adoption*—“That we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:5). We “have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15).

All these are but differing phases of the one great work of divine grace. By this means we are brought nigh unto God. We are made his dear children; we partake of his Spirit, of his love, of his goodness, and we rejoice in him with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Sonship

Of all the wonderful and gracious promises of God, none are more wonderful nor more gracious than his promise of fatherhood. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17, 18). John says, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1). What infinite condescension that God should permit us who were once so sinful and vile to bear his name, to be called the sons of God, and not simply to be called the sons of God, but actually to be such, for John says in the next verse, “Now *are* we the sons of God.” Jesus said to the wicked Pharisees, “Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:44); but “now are we the sons of God.” What a marvelous change! How glorious the thought—the sons of the Most High! And now that we are sons, we can say in the language of our Lord, “Our Father who art in

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heaven.” This is then to us not mere words, but the outpouring of our hearts, the answering of our spirits to his.

Have you not heard prayers beginning somewhat as follows: “All-wise and Almighty God, maker of heaven and earth”? We may speak to God in such formal language, but we can never draw close to him in this way. The great God, the Creator, the Mighty One who inhabiteth Eternity, he who stretched out the heavens and placed their galaxies, he whose splendor and majesty are too great for human vision—what can we do before such a one but fall down in awe and fear. It is not such a one that we can love, in whose presence we can come with rejoicing and to whom we can make known our petitions; but it is to “our Father who art in heaven” that we can come, before whom we can bow and up into whose face we can look and make known our wants. It is he whom we can love; it is he to whom we may come boldly in every time of need to receive help and grace and mercy.

When a king sits upon the throne, who may approach him familiarly? All must recognize his majesty and his honor; but when he comes down off the throne and goes into the nursery, the children may play about his knees and climb upon his lap and put their arms about his neck and caress him and receive his caresses in return. To them, he is not the King, he is not His Majesty; he is Father. Such God would be to you and me. He wants to be our Father; he will be our Father; he is our Father. He wants to bestow upon us all the affection and tenderness that a father feels for his dear children. This is the relation into which we are brought when we become his sons. All the riches of his love will he lavish upon us, all the tenderness of his fatherly affection. We may approach him with the utmost confidence and the utmost freedom. He loves for us to pour out our

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hearts in tender devotion to him. He loves to know what troubles us. He loves to minister comfort and help to us in all our needs.

Can our hearts today say “Our Father” instead of “Almighty God”? He is the Almighty God, and as such we reverence and adore and fear him. But he is still our Father and we draw near, forgetting his majesty and greatness in the realization of his loving-kindness. “I will be a father unto you,” he said. Whatever he may be to others, whatever terrors his presence may inspire in them, whatever fears they may have, it shall not be so with us, for he is our Father and we are the children of his love.

The New Heart

“From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezek. 36:25, 26). The heart of the sinner is truly stony, and especially in its attitude toward God. How often the same is true in regard to its attitude toward man’s fellow creatures. The story of this world is largely made up of what has been termed “man’s inhumanity to man”—unspeakable cruelties bringing oceans of tears, hatred of God and of his creatures. Yes, man’s heart is naturally a stony heart. But God promises here to take away that stony heart and give a heart of flesh, even a new heart. What a change this expresses! Out of the natural heart flows a stream of wickedness, vile and degrading. It is a very fountain of iniquity. As Jeremiah declares, it is “desperately wicked.” But regeneration changes all this, and God gives, as he has promised, a heart of flesh.

Jesus said, “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure

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bringeth forth evil things” (Matt. 12:35). According to this, the difference between a good man and an evil man is in the condition of his heart. A good man’s heart is like a treasure-house filled with good things, which he brings out in the acts of his life; whereas of the evil man, the opposite is true: he has an evil treasure, out of which flows an evil life. “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (chap. 15:19).

In order for the evil man to become good, there must of necessity be a change in the condition of that treasure of his heart. And so the Lord said, “I will give you a new heart.” This signifies an entire renovation of the heart—a new creation, as it were, in Christ Jesus. Out of this new heart flows new life. Instead of impurity, there comes forth purity. Instead of hatred for God, there is love of God and of all that is good. The new heart is a heart of pity, kindness, compassion, and sympathy. The old hard feelings are gone, the old cruelties are now no more; and there comes into the life a tenderness and a gentleness never known there before. The whole aspect of the life is altered because he is altered. He no longer loves anything that is evil; he loves instead that which is good, pure, holy, noble, and uplifting. His desires are to do right, to please God, and to be a real example of his grace before his fellows.

This same truth Jesus set forth when he said that a good tree could not bring forth corrupt fruit. If the life that flows from our hearts when we profess to be Christians is not a pure, godly, virtuous life, it is because there has not been a cleansing of that inner fountain. In vain do we try to live right until we are made right; but when we are once cleansed within, when once the fountain of our heart is purified, we can then live “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:12). God dwells in that new heart. It is

the place of his sanctuary—the place in which he delights to manifest himself, and out from which he speaks through our tongues, and looks in kindness through our eyes, and spreads forth his hand through us in pity and compassion and helpfulness. Of us then it may be said, “It is God which worketh in you.” Without this change of heart there may be morality, but there can never be Christianity.

The New Life

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17, 18). According to this text, all things in the new life are of God; that is, they are wrought in righteousness. We cannot live partly for God and partly for self and Satan. The life must bear one complexion throughout. God looks upon it as a whole and expects us to live it as a whole for him. He will accept nothing else. He has said that we are either for him or against him, and that we cannot serve both God and Mammon, and that we cannot serve two masters, for we shall either love one and hate the other or cleave to one and despise the other. If we truly love God and are truly living for him, our lives are godly. Scripture says, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (1 John 3:9), and, “He that committeth sin is of the devil” (ver. 8). Our sinning or not sinning shows to which master we belong. Therefore, if we are Christ’s, there is not seen in our lives the practice of sin, but we delight to do his will. We delight in that which is right and just and noble. People looking upon us can be able to say with real conviction that Christ liveth in us. The distinction between the Christian and the sinner is neither superficial nor imaginary, but reaches to the utmost depths of the heart and life. The line of separation is clean-cut and absolute. It is

not simply a difference of profession, nor of acts, nor of association, nor even of character. It is more than all this; it is the possession of a new life divinely implanted—a new life that controls and actuates the being.

New Ideals and Purposes

When the heart is changed from sin to grace, the old ideals give place to new and better ones. The old purposes cease to sway us. Instead of being essentially selfish and living for our own pleasure, we begin to seek God's pleasure and earnestly to desire to do his will—that which pleases him. Whatever may have been our ideals before, they are now much exalted and must be so to be compatible with our new state. God becomes the ideal of our life, and it is our earnest desire that those qualities and characteristics which are manifested in him may be manifested in us. We abhor that which is low and debasing, and we reach out to that which is high and noble. These new ideals and purposes dominate our life and make it one of which we need not be ashamed.

Regeneration—Continued

Effect on the Moral Attributes and Faculties

The effect of regeneration upon man's moral attributes and faculties is most profound. It amounts to a complete transformation. His conscience, his will, his perceptions and sensibilities are all revolutionized. His faculties are quickened and changed. He finds himself different in a thousand ways, and these differences show to him that he is indeed a new creature.

The conscience of the sinner is defiled. "But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, there is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Tit. 1:15). Paul, speaking on this point, says that they have "their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2). This state of the conscience, however, need not be permanent. No matter how defiled it may have become, no matter how unclean, no matter how seared, when the soul turns to God there is a remedy. "How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14). Again, it is said, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" (chap. 10:22). The result of this purification through the blood of Christ is told in chap. 10:2—"Because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." When our iniquities are blotted out, the guilt upon our conscience is removed and we are free. We are before the Lord as though we had never committed sin,

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so far as any sense of present guilt is concerned. We are brought into a blessed state of peace, which is thus expressed: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). This state may be maintained. Paul said, “Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). Among other things which we are to do is to hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Tim. 3:9). There is nothing that can give us more inward satisfaction than a conscience void of offense, one that approves our conduct and our state. Nothing can be more harassing than the stings of a defiled conscience.

God has promised us that we should have his peace, and we can have this peace only as we have a peaceful conscience. This is the Christian’s heritage; this is his glorious portion. We can so maintain our lives before God that we shall have the approval of our consciences and a continued realization that the things we are doing are done with the single purpose of pleasing God. We can be conscious that we are following him as his dear children and yielding our all to him. This inner consciousness is a joy indeed and a satisfaction that can come from no other source.

The sinner is fully bent on doing as he pleases, in following out his own purposes and desires. He does not take God into his consideration. He asks only, “What do I wish to do?” He feels that he is master of himself. He gives allegiance to none. Self sits upon the throne of his life and rules there. In regeneration all this is changed. The will submits to God. It takes its orders from him, as it were. The regenerated person yields his will to carry out the purpose of his Maker. This yielding is not forced; it is willing and ready. The regenerated will delights to do the will of God, delights to carry out his purpose. That charity which is from above “seeketh not her

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own.” Instead of opposing God, the will actively cooperates with him. The one-time rebel has become a dutiful and obedient son.

The moral perceptions are also now greatly changed. We see things in a new light. Instead of seeing in God qualities that make us fear him and dread him and shrink from contact with him, we see those things which attract us and draw out our love toward him. God becomes, as it were, a new God. We find him entirely different from what we supposed him to be. We find his attitude toward us different from what it seemed to be. His love, which we never really knew before, becomes a glorious reality to us. His Word becomes as a new book, and we read it eagerly and enjoy it greatly. Our perception of moral qualities in actions is also very different from what it was before. It was abnormal. We looked at things through the obscurity of our sinfulness. But now we see things face to face. We see them in their true colors, in their true perspective.

Our sensibilities, too, are vitally changed. There is, in fact, a complete reversal of the effect of the causes which excite our sensibilities, the effect upon our feelings of things involving moral questions being quite the opposite of what it was before. Sinful things repel instead of attracting, excite our disgust and disapproval instead of producing in us a sense of pleasure. The company of our former wicked associates brings to us now a feeling different from what it did before. The things of the world have lost their charm. We are strongly drawn to holy things. Contemplation of God and our relation to him instead of causing feelings of fear and distress, stir emotions of joy and thankfulness. New emotions arise and are sometimes very powerful. Spiritual joy, peace, contentment, and satisfaction unite to uplift the soul to new heights.

Different persons have different emotions, depending upon their natural temperaments. There is a wide variation even in the

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same person at different times. Emotion is not salvation or any part of it, but it often accompanies the work of God in us and follows in the life. We are profoundly conscious of the reversal of the effect of outside things upon our emotions. This is the most important thing in regard to them in our new life. In this particular they become an evidence of the change wrought in us. This subject will be treated more at length in a succeeding chapter.

Our natural faculties also are vitally affected. In the sinful life we may reverence God in a way, but not as when we are saved. We might worship him in form as we see others doing, but we cannot worship him in spirit and in truth until our hearts are in harmony with him. In the new life we need no command to praise him or to worship him, for it is natural to do so. Praise flows from our hearts unto him as water from a fountain, and the flow is quickened by every consideration of his goodness to us. The contemplation of his being and character arouses a reverence in us that we could never have felt before. The wisdom and justice of his law excite our highest admiration.

Faith is another thing that is profoundly affected. It passes from the passive to the active state in the individual, and not only so, but it is greatly increased in degree. As sinners we may believe in God; but when we are converted, when we become God's children, our faith is active then, and we trust, we rely in him and believe him, and this faith brings us into and keeps us in vital relation with him.

The sinner is pictured as being without hope and without God in the world. He has nothing to look forward to. Hope brings him no blessings from the spiritual realm. He looks forward to the future, and all is dark and disappointing. He has no foundation for hope. But with a Christian it is quite different. Hope is born anew in him. Hope looks forward and sees its pathway illuminated with a

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heavenly light. It looks beyond this life and sees the future glorious with expectation. The Christian's hope is based upon a sure foundation. He knows that he will not be disappointed. He knows that hope reaches within the veil and grasps hold of that which God has in store for him in the years of eternity. The Christian has hope in his present life and in his death and in God's glorious kingdom of heaven. No wonder that Paul spoke of it as being the "anchor of the soul." The sinner has no anchor for his soul. He is tossed about wherever the storms of life may throw him, while the Christian rests serene and calm and untroubled.

The faculty of love also is greatly changed, or manifests itself in a greatly different way. The sinner does not and cannot really love God. He may have an admiration for the character of God and for the laws of God, but this can never rise to love. He may love himself; he may love his friends and the things about him; he may love and does love his sins, or he would not persist in them. This selfish love and the love of sin must be destroyed out of the heart and is destroyed in regeneration. The new-born soul loves God. He knows not when he began nor how it is, but he feels his heart drawn out in tenderest love toward God. His capacity to love seems to be increased, and all its strength seems to go out toward God. Not that he does not love those about him nor the things that are lovely; he still loves these, but he loves them as they ought to be loved, and he loves God more than they all. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19), and a contemplation of his love for us begets more and more of love toward him in return.

Our sense of justice and fair play is likewise greatly affected. If we are treated unfairly, we no longer feel vindictive. We no longer feel disposed to take vengeance on those who do us ill, but rather to say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The

disposition to enforce our rights by carnal means is taken away. We are willing to let God rule in our lives and rule in the things that concern us. Hatred, bitterness, envy, malice, and all such things have their end, and in their stead come kindness and mercy and justice. Abnormal self-esteem, pride, haughtiness, arrogance, and all such things give way to meekness, quietness, and consideration of others. We learn to value others at their true worth and by the same standard by which we value ourselves.

Effects on the Mental Constitution

The effect of regeneration on man's mental constitution is important. Not only is his mental point of view changed, but the general course of his thoughts run in a different direction. When we are in the valley of sin, the prospect is quite different from what it is when we are on the mountain-top of salvation. Things do not appear the same to us as they did before. Our horizon is widened, and we view things more truly in their relationship to other things. The mind is often strongly affected by the general course of the sinful life. It runs in the channels of sin and upon the things of sin. It delights in the things of the world and of sin. The converted person thinks rather of the things of God and of the things that are pure and noble and uplifting. His thoughts are turned into new channels and upon new objects. The Holy Spirit illuminates his mind, so that many things that were once dark and mysterious now seem plain and clear. He understands the Bible as he could not understand it before. He understands God, and he understands himself. He sees them in a new light. His understanding may be only partial; he may not understand clearly; but things appear quite different from what they did before.

The effect on his reasoning faculties is very marked. He is now in a position where God can reveal to him through his Spirit many

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truths wholly unknown before, and his reason is quickened so that he may readily understand the philosophy of many things that he did not know before and that he could not understand even when he heard others speak of them. The problems of life have a new meaning to him, and one by one he finds their solution. He finds the laws and purposes of God such as to excite the admiration of his reason and to lead it on to deeper and deeper understanding. Sinners have deified reason and bowed down to and worshiped it, but man's unaided reason is not a safe guide. Too often it has led him astray into bogs from which he could not easily make his way. Reason, under the direction of the Spirit of God, finds its way into the path of truth and rejoices therein.

We may well say that the whole course of man's thoughts, so far as they relate to moral things, is changed. He thinks now as a son of God; he thinks now with his reason illuminated. He delights to have his mind dwell on that which is right and just and noble and good, that which will bless him and his fellows, and that which will please and honor his God.

Effects on the Physical Being

The effect of regeneration on man's physical being must of necessity be less than that on the other parts of his being. Its greatest physical effects are probably obtained through the cessation of injurious habits that the person followed in his sinful days. His natural functions are not affected by regeneration. They are necessary to his being; they are parts, as it were, of his physical being. It does, however, oftentimes have a profound effect upon his appetites, especially such as are acquired and unnatural. In most instances the appetite for intoxicating liquors disappears as if by magic. The same is often true of the appetite for tobacco and narcotic

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drugs and other unnatural things. However, experiences are not always uniform in this regard. But in all cases where the appetite leads to sinfulness, the grace of God will be found sufficient to overcome it, God himself intervening usually to destroy the unnatural appetite. The effect on natural appetites is less marked. In fact, these are left to be controlled by the mental and moral constitution of man, according to wisdom and to will.

The least that we can say of the work of God in the human nature and being is that it brings us into a place where we can serve God in holiness and righteousness, in a manner that is acceptable to him and glorifying to his name. We should stop nothing short of this, for nothing short of this will enable us to live a real Christian life.

The Christian Life

Babes in Christ

We must not expect to come into the Christian life in a mature state. This is indicated by the figure of being born. We are at first immature in all our spiritual faculties. We comprehend the things in the kingdom of God with the comprehension of a child and not with that of an adult. Our knowledge at best is only fragmentary. Of experience we have nothing at all. Since we have no data from which to draw our conclusions, our views and conclusions will often be imperfect. We may hear others talk and see them act in a way that seems not to correspond to our views. Their more developed reason may make things appear differently to them from what they now appear to us, and things will later appear to us quite differently in many respects from what they do now.

Then, also, we know and understand little of God in the beginning. We must be patient. We must be willing to learn. We must be willing to be taught. We must be willing to grow and develop according to the laws of spiritual development. If we try to hurry things too much, we shall only do ourselves injury. All we need to do is just to live normally, to live and trust and serve God, letting him take care of the growth, not taking thought about it nor worrying over it, but letting it be in his hands and concerning ourselves with the affairs of life that belong to us.

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In the natural life the child is subject to many dangers to which an adult is not subject. The same is true in the spiritual life. One of these dangers is that we shall overestimate our strength, shall suppose we can resist temptation, and therefore we may become careless and go into the way of temptation and at last find ourselves entrapped. The Lord taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." The babe in Christ often has need to pray that prayer and to watch lest he does himself enter into temptation. By their unwisdom people often bring serious temptations upon themselves, temptations that too often they are unable to overcome. It is wise to keep on the safe side; to keep where we shall not be tempted above our strength. God will help us to overcome those temptations that cannot be avoided; he will see to it that we have grace to meet those if we will trust him. But if we throw ourselves into a position to be tempted, then we may have too great a battle and instead of being victorious, be vanquished.

Another danger to which young converts are exposed is their liability to be overconfident and undertake things too great for them, things which only more mature Christians can accomplish. When such is the case and they fail in their undertaking, the result is often serious discouragement. Many battles have to be fought because they reach out too far. It is best to wait on God and let him direct our undertakings. It is best to be sufficiently modest not to push ourselves forward, especially beyond those who are older in experience in the Christian life. Young converts often have more zeal than wisdom, and this zeal often carries them into things that end sadly unless they are careful and unless they are willing to receive and heed advice and counsel. They are too often prone to estimate too highly their own judgments and wisdom, and therefore not to value as they should the wisdom and the guidance of older

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Christians. The best advice that can be given such an individual is to “make haste slowly.”

Another danger is that of becoming exalted, or proud of one’s own self, one’s abilities, and one’s accomplishments. What we do seems to be greater than what others do. We are so likely to place too high a value upon it. This is true especially of the inexperienced beginner. This pride of self is very destructive of spirituality. We cannot prosper if we give place to it, and sooner or later we shall find ourselves far away from God. The wise man said, “Before honor is humility” (Prov. 15:33). We should therefore, as beginners, be willing to do the little things, and to fill a small place until we grow up to man’s stature. Then and then only can we do a man’s work.

Still another danger of the young convert is that of being deceived by false doctrines. His judgment is immature, but he often does not realize it, but feels himself capable of determining the truth or falsity of almost anything he hears, and that oftentimes with very little investigation. I have known scores of young converts who started out well, seemed spiritual, seemed to love God, but who, because of negligence in this regard, were led into false doctrines from which they never escaped or from which they escaped at last after much difficulty and with much loss to their spirituality. The Bible says, “Take heed that no man deceive you” (Matt. 24:4), and this is wise advice to every beginner in the Christian race. Prove all things and hold fast only to that which you are assured is the truth and that which other spiritual Christians accept.

There is also much danger of being led into something that will destroy spirituality. Frivolous and foolish conversations, worldly amusements, too much of the society of worldly people, or anything of this sort, is likely to dull the spiritual sensibilities, and to draw the

heart away from God. Satan has many traps for the young convert's feet, and he will do well to watch carefully his path and follow only those things which will tend to uplift and make him better. He must carefully cultivate the tender plants of God's planting in his soul lest they should die from inattention.

Another thing of which the babe in Christ must beware is placing too much confidence in those who may not be worthy of his confidence. There are many who have a form of godliness, even many who pose as teachers, whose private lives are not worthy. There are some who wear the garb of religion who would gladly lead him astray. There are others who are deceived themselves and would lead him into their error. Let him remember that he is but a babe; that he must watch his steps carefully; that he must keep close to God; that he must trust in him for all things; and that only by this means can he develop into a strong, useful, Christian man.

Why Some Have Better Experiences Than Others

It is a fact commonly observed that some Christians have better experiences than others. This is true even from the beginning of their Christian life. The difference may be due to a number of things, but the most important cause for anyone's experiencing a lack of that abundance of grace all should have is no doubt found in the fact that he fails to yield himself to God as fully as he should.

This, of course, does not imply a refusal to yield fully, for that would be rebellion; and the soul could not be saved at all under such conditions. But in most instances it is undoubtedly due to the fact that the person does not comprehend the meaning and the necessity of complete surrender. He goes as far as he can see, and stops there, even though there are great fields of his nature that are as yet not fully yielded. Should rebellion spring from any of these, it would

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prove fatal to his soul life. When a question arises that involves this unyielded territory, he must immediately make a decision. He must either yield to God's will, or become a rebel. He cannot consciously refuse to conform himself to the will of God without grieving the Holy Spirit.

God yields himself to us as we yield to him and open the channel for grace. A full and complete yielding of ourselves opens wide this channel, and then grace flows into our hearts in abundance. It is in our power to close this channel and thereby hinder the flow of grace. Any reluctance on our part, therefore, to submit to the whole will of God obstructs the channel of grace, and results in a lack of spirituality in our lives. The Spirit works freely where there are no hindrances. Self-surrender is the hardest but most necessary thing. The more complete that surrender is, the more perfect is the working of God in the soul, and the more Christlike we become.

It is not enough to surrender self to God; but surrender must be maintained. We must carefully guard ourselves lest we permit the channel of grace to become obstructed. It may become obstructed at any time and in a great variety of ways. Self is liable to assert itself; and since it is possible at any time for us to withdraw our submission to God, no matter how spiritual we may have been or how much God may have worked in us, we must therefore be on our guard. We are so constituted that we naturally like our own ways; and if we are not careful, we shall unconsciously choose our ways in preference to God's. But doing so cannot but react upon our spirituality.

Some are more spiritual than others because they exercise more diligence in their endeavor to conform themselves more perfectly to the will of God. Some grow very careless in this respect, and just drift along any way. They take it for granted that they are the Lord's. They seem little concerned about becoming more perfectly his, or

about conforming themselves more perfectly to him. They allow their attention to be taken up by the daily round of duties, by business affairs, by the ordinary things of life; and they give little thought to their drawing nearer to God. They, therefore, make little progress in the divine life. Many people are now not as spiritual as they were when they first began the Christian life. They have professed for years; but today they bear less of the fruits of the Spirit than they bore years ago. They have less of earnestness and power, and experience fewer of the manifestations of God's grace. Their zeal and their love have grown cold. What is the trouble? Is not the grace of God able to cause them to abound in all these qualities? It is not God's fault if they are not prospering—it is their own, because they have let the channel of grace be filled up. Keep open this channel in your soul. Seek day by day to get closer to God and to conform yourself more perfectly to him; then you may increase and develop, and be enriched in God. But the key-note of spirituality is ever and always self-surrender.

The Retention of Grace

In order to retain natural life, we must conform to the laws of life. We cannot violate them without reaping the consequences. The principle here involved is as truly applicable to our spiritual life. There are certain laws we must obey, or spiritual death will ensue. Grace can be retained only by one's living a holy life. Sin is fatal to spiritual life; sin brings us under the condemnation of God's law and Spirit. "The wages of sin is death," both spiritual death and eternal death, death now and hereafter. Now, what is the true standard of the justified life? John says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3:9). To be justified means to be accounted free from guilt, or innocent. Is one who commits sins free from guilt, or innocent? There are many people who point to the seventh chapter

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of Romans and say it represents the Christian life, or is the true standard of the justified life. Many say, “I do not expect to have a better experience than the Apostle Paul had.” The fact is, however, that what he relates in the seventh chapter of Romans is not a narration of his Christian experience. Let him tell in his own words what his experience was. “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe” (1 Thess. 2:10). Shall we receive or reject his testimony?

The picture drawn in the seventh chapter of Romans is not the standard of the Christian life. Paul neither asserts nor suggests that he is speaking of a Christian’s experience. Throughout the New Testament we find, both in precept and example, something very different from this. I called your attention to Paul’s life and to his testimony of his Christian living. Let us now hear the voice of inspiration: “That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:10-12). Again: “That he would grant unto us that we . . . might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:74, 75). Now, God is not an idealist; he does not hold up before us a standard impossible to be reached and then expect us to aim at it only to miss. He does not demand us to try, when he knows we should fall short continually. He does not require too much of us; nor does he place the standard of right living higher than he will help us to live up to, if we trust him and use the grace he offers us.

We should avoid the idealism that represents the Christian life as a constant, onward-and-upward progress, accompanied with a

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cloudless sky and most blissful emotions. Such idealism is incapable of being translated into life. The Bible is essentially practical. It raises no such standard. Life in no condition is always cloudless, nor are the emotions always joyous. Life is made up of sunshine and clouds, of joys and sorrows. There will be tears and sighs as well as joys and smiles. There will be temptations and trials as well as victories and exultations.

We should, however, avoid the extreme of presenting life as being a series of dark and sinful days or as being composed mostly of short-comings. It is not such. The normal life of a regenerated person is one in which God reigns, and in which grace to live above sin abounds. This life will not be without its temptations, its perplexities, its cares, and its disappointments. Its pathway will sometimes be rugged and thorny. But God will ever uphold us and give us grace to be obedient to him if we trust him. No man is compelled to sin. If he sins, it is because he chooses to do so. And when he sins, the relation of his soul to God is changed. He is brought under condemnation. His conscience accuses him; he knows that he has done wrong, and he knows what he has done. His peace and joy are gone. A cloud is between him and God. It is true that if he will repent God will be merciful and will restore him; but God does not expect him to disobey over and over again. He expects us to live right; and we can do so if we will. Those who plead for sin dishonor both themselves and God. The language of the regenerate heart is, "I delight to do thy will, O God." Can we even conceive of one's holding such an attitude toward God and his law, and then breaking that law continually? If we will be God's, we must live above sin; and this we can do by his grace.

Native Depravity

There are already so many treatises on this subject that it need be considered here only as it relates to the practical side of the Christian life in the regenerate state. The doctrine is held in some form by most theologians. The Augustinian and Calvinistic view, that man is guilty and is fit only for damnation because of having partaken of Adam's sin, and the more modified view held by most Arminians, do not concern us here. We wish now to consider depravity only as it relates to and affects the nature of man after he is born again.

That man's nature does contain depravity in some form is generally admitted. The Bible does not give us a scientific or philosophical treatment of the subject. Man's natural depravity is one of the many things that are assumed to be so much a fact of human consciousness as to need no proof. Since the Bible so treats the matter, and man is left to form his own conclusion on this, as well as many other points, it is not strange that there are many different ideas. Regarding the universality of the doctrine, I quote from Miley: "The doctrine of entire sanctification in regeneration was new with Zinzendorff and wholly unknown before him."—Theology, Vol. II, page 367. This can have no meaning except that the doctrine of the existence of depravity in those regenerated was previously universal, as it practically is today.

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From the Scriptural standpoint, it is only necessary to show that believers are promised a sanctification subsequent to their becoming believers. Jesus prayed for the Twelve in these words: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth” (John 17:16, 17). Again, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified” (ver. 19). For the Thessalonian Christians, Paul prayed thus: “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thess. 5:23).

There are two general theories as to the origin of depravity. The first is that it is generic, being a corruption of the nature transmitted through all the race from Adam. This is the most commonly accepted idea. The second, held by Mr. Finney and others, is that depravity is not transmissible but results from the order of development of the child. The physical develops before the mental, and the mental before the spiritual, so that the physical and mental habits form and become wholly selfish before the spiritual is developed enough for it to have a proper moral sense; and thus its nature is depraved. Which of these theories may be correct has no practical bearing on the fact of its existence, so does not demand more than passing attention here.

For my part, I am inclined to adopt a middle ground, that is, that depravity is transmissible and transmitted and that it may be increased by the individual’s own conduct, and also that it is invariable as a transmitted quality, being dependent upon the same laws as are the transmission of mental and physical qualities. That depravity is a constant in all, I am not prepared to accept, as observation certainly shows the opposite to be true.

One thing is certainly true of it. It is not an entity or tangible thing, such as a stump, by which it is sometimes illustrated. Nor is it a plant planted by Satan. He has no power to plant in man any such

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thing. The human will is free, and cannot be coerced by man or the devil, nor even by God himself. Depravity was not a new thing that entered Adam when he sinned. It was only a perversion or corruption of what he already was. It is not a sort of motor that Satan connects with our human nature and by which he operates us. It is not a thing that can be subtracted bodily from a person. It is a corruption that must be cleansed. It is an overdevelopment, or rather an abnormal development, of the natural faculties or propensities which in their normal state are pure and necessary. Self-esteem when corrupted becomes pride. The sense of justice becomes vindictiveness and reveals itself in wrath, malice, hatred, and revenge. Love of the beautiful becomes vanity. Amativeness becomes lust. Acquisitiveness becomes covetousness. This seems to me the only rational explanation that can be given to the subject.

The question is often asked: "If depravity is transmissible, how can the children of sanctified parents possess this depravity?" The fact that it is so should seem no stranger than the well-known fact that mental and physical diseases or malformations and abnormalities are transmitted through healthy links. It is undeniable that such diseases as scrofula, insanity, craving for liquor, and many like things are transmitted through parents who show no trace of such things, the diseases breaking out in descendants removed the second, third, or even fourth generation from grandparents who have been so afflicted or diseased. It is the life-current that is defiled. The sanctification of the parent is only as an accidental thing; that is, it is like the amputation of a limb or the removal of an eye in the physical. Parents who have suffered such mutilations do not transmit these to their children. We may not understand some of the laws of transmission; but our lack of comprehension does not prevent them from being true in human experience, neither does it disprove them. The transmission of depravity is only an example of the law of

persistence of type—a law which, in natural things, is left unquestioned.

Reversion to Type

The animal and vegetable kingdoms are alike subject to man's control. He may produce new varieties and develop them to a high degree; but when once they are left to themselves, removed from man's care, they all revert to their former types. The different varieties of pigeons, of all colors and characters, would, if taken and placed by themselves, out of the reach of man, revert to the one type from which they were derived. This same law acts all through nature; and we ought not to be surprised on finding that the same law acts as truly in the moral sphere. It is not strange that children revert to the type of their ancestors, no matter what was the condition of their parents.

People who have been sanctified may at any time become depraved by unlawfully indulging desires or by going into rebellion against God. In this manner Adam became depraved; and so may we. In our case, however, we cannot call the resulting depravity Adamic; it is the same as Adam's in essence; but we, not he, are responsible. Depravity is, as already stated, not something planted by Satan, but is a corruption, progressive in its nature and capable of being greatly increased by our sinful actions. It can also be minimized by careful cultivation; and by thus repressing it, men become more moral than they otherwise would. Independent of the grace of God, therefore, we can to a considerable extent limit and restrain this inward element. It is, however, capable of complete elimination by the Spirit of God.

State of Those Possessing Depravity

Among the practical effects of depravity in a regenerated person, is that he cannot love God perfectly. There is a frequent assertion of the self-life. It is so easy for him to think that his way is right and best. And in spite of his desire to please and serve God, there is, nevertheless, within him a something that causes him to want his own way, to want to gratify his own personal desires. There is a twofoldness about his desires. There is a something that desires to please God, and at the same time another something that desires to please himself. This latter is sometimes very strong, and may occasion him no little difficulty when he endeavors to submit himself to the will of God. Through grace he may overcome this and submit to God, but he cannot of himself destroy it. It is quite true that we can never become automatically unselfish; but it is also true that the strength of the self-life is depravity, and that, when this is destroyed, we can much more easily and more naturally be unselfish.

Temptation more forcefully takes hold of one when he is in the regenerate state than it does when he is in the wholly sanctified state, because under the former conditions it receives cooperation from depravity. A brother in telling of his personal experience spoke on this wise: "Temptations used to seem to get right up close to me and to take hold upon me. I used, oftentimes, to have a terrible battle with them; but now it seems that things are changed. Temptations do not get close to me as they did then. There seems to be a something that holds them off at a distance from me so that they do not have the power that they used to have; nor does it take the struggle to overcome them that it used to take."

This brother's experience has been duplicated by the experiences of the writer and thousands of others. There is

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something within the regenerated man that seems to answer to temptation; and he must resist, not only the temptation, but also that something within himself upon which the temptation takes hold. I refer, not simply to his natural propensities (for these natural propensities will persist in the sanctified state), but rather to the depraved state of these natural propensities. When we are in the regenerated state, our natural desires are more inclined to run in unlawful channels and are harder to restrain than they are when we are in the wholly sanctified state. The more grace we have, the more our desires are restrained without apparent effort. Grace overwhelms many desires or tendencies in our natural being, making it the more possible for us to guide ourselves in the way of God with ease. The more grace we have, the more easily we can keep ourselves in perfect standing before God and the more perfectly conform to his will. The less of grace we have, the less of power we have to do this.

The warfare between grace and depravity in a regenerated person uses up spiritual strength, and consequently limits his activities in other directions. We cannot accomplish things for God as we might, if we have to use so much of our strength upon ourselves, and so, for this reason the obtaining of release from depravity enables us more fully to throw our energies into the life of salvation and the work of God; the greater grace that we possess when sanctified, increases our spiritual powers and makes us very much more able to accomplish work for God than we otherwise could be. We can thus glorify him in a greater degree. Regenerated people are to a degree conscious of this inner conflict; but they cannot be as conscious of the distinction between the two different states of grace as can the one who has entered the higher state. They must have the personal experience in order to know for themselves.

The Remedy

Two remedies for this depraved state have been proposed. One of them is a palliative and the other a specific. The first is the repression remedy; that is, depravity must be kept in subjection through life by the will. Those teaching this theory hold that there can be no elimination of this element, no cleansing from it, but that it is of such a nature that it will ever be with us through the journey of life and that we must continually watch and guard against its asserting itself, lest it should overthrow us and lead us astray from God. According to this theory, life is a continued and unending warfare against it. Their only hope of ending this warfare is in death; they expect to be sanctified at death and not to take this element with them into heaven. Such as these are ready to exclaim with the apostle Paul, “Oh, wretched man that I am!” but they are not able to join with him in the song of deliverance.

The other remedy, that of eradication, is taught by people who believe in a second work of divine grace. The teaching of these, however, frequently runs into an idealism that leaves nothing whatever to repress in our natures. According to this extreme position, we should become practically automatons. Advocates of such teaching like to picture sanctification as making us a sort of angelic beings; and they would have us live in an ecstatic state, high above the practical affairs of life. They can tell us just how glorious we should feel on all occasions; how rapturous it is to dwell in that condition. Their teaching is idealism pure and simple.

The true idea, it seems to me, cannot be expressed by the extreme teachings of either of these theories. As is usually the case, the middle ground between the two extremes is the most tenable. Our human nature is a creation of God, and as such, it is a necessary part of us; and God will never destroy it, in fact, he cannot destroy

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it without destroying us. Sanctification, therefore, is not the destruction of this nature, but is the purification of it. It corrects the abnormal spiritual condition and brings the natural into a condition in which it may regain a proper balance. Paul said, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection” (1 Cor. 9:27). All the faculties and propensities of our nature are for our service and use. We are to master them. The will is to rule them and have them in subjection to itself and, as a result, to righteousness also. This subject will be discussed at length under the heading Our Natural Propensities.

Entire Sanctification

Holiness, a Biblical Doctrine

In our English Bible we have the two words “holiness” and “sanctification” in their various forms; but they are translated from a single word in the Greek text, and consequently the two words mean the same thing. It matters not, then, which word is used in the English translation; for the meaning is always the same, and the words are perfectly interchangeable. If we would understand what the Bible says about the subject, we must keep this fact in view.

That it is God’s plan that we should be holy, has already been shown; but it will probably be well to quote the Scriptures again. “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13). “He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph. 1:4). “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:28, 29).

Now, this image of Christ, to which we are to conform, is the same as the image in which man was originally created. This pertains especially to his moral image. It is God’s will that we be like his Son so that he shall not be ashamed to call us brethren. Christ

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became like us and took upon himself mortal flesh and the nature of man that we might bear His image, and in nature be like him. That we be in nature like Christ has from the beginning been God's plan and purpose. He has made all necessary provision that it may be so; and we may now be holy like our great high priest, Jesus Christ; of him the Bible says, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). And in Heb. 12:14 we find the following words, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Concerning the purpose of Christ's death, we read, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). Again, we read, "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" (vss. 20, 21). When God called us by his grace, he did not call us to an unholy service, nor to an unholy life. "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7). He has made it possible for us to be holy and to live holy. "That he would grant unto us, that we . . . might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75).

God wants us to be holy because he is holy. He can find pleasure in nothing but what is holy. Listen to what he has said: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16). And Jesus prayed thus: "Sanctify them through thy truth: . . . and for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified" (John 17:17-19). In this prayer he did not make his request merely for the Twelve, for he continued: "Neither pray I for

these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word” (vs. 20).

Many have supposed that holiness is something to be obtained only after death. The Scriptures, however, speak of it as a present experience. When Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he addressed them thus: “To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus” (chap. 1:2). Jude addresses his Epistle to “them that are sanctified by God the Father” (vs. 1). Neither of these apostles was writing to persons in heaven or to persons who were dead. On the contrary, they were writing to persons who were alive and were then in this world. Those addressed in the Hebrew epistle are called “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling” (chap. 3:1). Paul calls the Colossian Christians “holy and beloved” (Col. 3:12). In 1 Cor. 3:16, 17 Paul says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” Surely language could not make anything plainer. Holiness is for us, now and here. Concerning the purified man, Paul said, “He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). And here is a picture that Peter drew, describing the sanctified state: “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). The reader can, if he will consult his Bible, easily find many other texts bearing on this subject.

Two Phases of Sanctification

There are two phases, or two steps, in the work of sanctification. In the Scriptures just quoted no attempt was made to distinguish between these phases; but we shall now proceed to note that there

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are some distinctions. We have before shown, by Heb. 13:12, that Jesus suffered and shed his blood that he might sanctify the people. All cleansing, therefore, of whatsoever sort, that is wrought by the work of Christ comes properly under the term “sanctification.” John tells us that “the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). The Revelator speaks of Christ thus: “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5). In Heb. 1:3 it is written of him: “When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” All who are truly Christians have been thus purified in the blood of Christ; the guilt of their sins has all been washed away. They have yielded themselves to Christ and have become holy through his blood.

The cleansing from guilt, however, is not all that the Scriptures promise. Under a previous heading it has been shown that there is a remedy for that inner depravity that still remains in the believer. To the Thessalonian Christians, Paul said, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thess. 5:23). This language was not addressed to sinners. In vs. 27 he speaks of them as being “holy brethren.” If the reader will turn to the first chapter of the Epistle, he will find that they were neither sinners nor backsliders, but Christians in a very commendable state of grace. They had need, however, of still further attainment, and so he prayed that they might be sanctified wholly. This is in perfect harmony with Christ’s praying for the apostles that they might be sanctified. In 2 Cor. 7:1 Paul mentions “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” and defines it as being a cleansing from “all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.” It will serve no good purpose to multiply texts here, though it might easily be done; for if anyone will reject these, he would reject a thousand, whereas, if he will accept these and submit himself to God, he may know in his own soul the truth of them.

Why People Oppose the Doctrine

There are a number of reasons why people oppose the doctrine of sanctification. One is because they misunderstand it. Some get a very exaggerated idea of what is meant by the term and of what the life of one possessing the experience must be; and that misunderstanding makes the doctrine appear unreasonable to them, therefore they cannot receive it. The experience is, of course, something that no man can understand until he knows it for himself by having entered into it. We may have a theoretical knowledge of it, but real knowledge comes only through experience.

Some persons reject the doctrine because they have, through the influence of others, been prejudiced against it, or because the theology which they have been taught finds no place for it. If we accept any theological opinions that are contrary to the Scriptures, the sooner we can get rid of them, the better for us. Those theological opinions, whatever may have been their source, are likely to prove a barrier when we come to investigate this doctrine. It is something worthy of our most careful investigation, and we should not, therefore, let our theology stand in the way of such investigation.

Some persons oppose the doctrine because they wrongly interpret certain passages of Scripture. It is probable that the interpreting of the seventh chapter of Romans to mean the experience of one who is saved by divine grace, is the greatest barrier in the way of the truth seeker. Many teachers of entire sanctification refer to that chapter as being a picture of the Christian life and as showing the necessity for a higher work of grace. It certainly does show the need of a work of grace, for it is the picture of a man without grace. It is the picture of an awakened sinner, one who finds his mind approving that which is right and good, but at the same time finds sin reigning over him and holding him by its

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power so that he cannot of himself break away from it. If he will be a Christian at all, he must get over into the experience pictured in the eighth chapter. The Christian life at its lowest ebb is higher than that experience represented in the seventh of Romans.

In order to emphasize the believer's need of entire sanctification, many teachers lower the standard of the justified life to a plane wholly inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible. Persons who are in the justified state are represented in the Book as being holy, not as being sinful and wicked. Neither are their hearts full of a great multitude of evils ready to assert themselves at any time. Teachings that lower the standard of justification often cause real Christians to reject the doctrine of entire holiness, because they realize that the standard of justification being preached does not come up to the standard of life to which they are living; and, as a consequence, they naturally conclude that what the preacher is teaching them is simply the experience that they already possess.

Another stumbling-block is the mistakes some preachers of holiness make in applying to the subject many scriptures that have no true application to it. The theology and interpretations of many of the teachers of entire sanctification are much in need of revision. This, however, does not discredit the true doctrine; instead, it discredits those teachers. But it does often hinder sincere people who would otherwise accept the truth.

Another stumbling-block in the way of the investigator is the excesses of some professors of sanctification. They give way to many wild and unseemly demonstrations, actions that cause the beholders to feel ashamed. Such professors declare some things to be of God which, if they truly were, would greatly put him to shame. These demonstrations and excesses often, instead of testifying to the presence of holiness, show the absence of that true quality of

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holiness for which people look. True holiness is godlike, and will not behave itself unseemly.

Some persons disbelieve because of the inconsistency of some who profess. Hypocrisy is not dead. Those who profess to be holy and who live lives, in private or in public, not consistent with that doctrine, prove themselves to be hypocrites. Such persons' lives are not a true test of the doctrine. There are many whose lives do correspond to their profession. They shine as lights in the world. They are blameless and harmless. Such persons do not make a great noise or a show of their lives. They simply live godly and righteously and let their lives tell the story. Their lips may tell the story also; but if the experience is in the heart, the life tells it more convincingly than the lips do.

Some oppose the doctrine of holiness because depravity is in their hearts. This evil element is not in the least favorable to holiness. Being the exact opposite of holiness, it naturally repels it and everything that belongs to it. Another reason why some oppose sanctification is because they are unwilling to bear the reproach that in some places attaches to the professor of entire sanctification. They are not willing to be like Christ, if being like him means to be reproached as he was reproached; and scorned as he was scorned. They think very highly of the people's opinion of them, and they are not willing to do anything that would lessen them in that regard. Peter looked at it differently. He said, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye" (1 Pet. 4:14). But those who love the praise of men cannot see how they could be happy in reproaches; therefore, they refrain from accepting both the doctrine and the experience.

Others are not willing to consecrate themselves to the Lord. They like their own way; they like to make their own plans and to

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do as they please. The doctrine of entire consecration does not sound good in their ears. It does not meet a response in their hearts. In order; therefore, to ease their conscience, they oppose the doctrine. If they do not do this outwardly, they have an internal feeling of opposition, and God sees and knows it very well. The person who holds such an attitude, however, will soon find himself far from God. Whatever be the motive that leads to opposition, either to accepting the doctrine or to obtaining the experience, it cannot but react upon the soul with disastrous consequences. Jesus taught that if any man is willing to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine. Let him put this doctrine to that test, and he will not fail of understanding it.

What the Word Means

The word “sanctification” always has two meanings, or contains two ideas. These two ideas sustain to each other the relation of cause and effect. The two ideas in the word are never separated. The first is dedication, the second sacredness and purity. The first always results in the second; the second can never exist (except in God) without the first. There are two kinds of sanctification taught in the Bible—one, that common to the Old Testament, is a ceremonial sanctification; while the other, characteristic of the New Testament, nearly always conveys the idea of a moral dedication and purification. The theology which makes the word mean dedication only is very superficial in its nature. I shall call attention to a few examples of this twofoldness of the word as used in the Old Testament.

Exod. 29:9 states that Moses was told to consecrate Aaron and his sons. Then follows an account of the directions as to how Moses should do this; and in verse 21 we read, “And thou shalt take of the

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blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him." As a result of this consecration and hallowing of the garments, they are in verse 29 called "*the holy garments*"; and of the priest who had been thus dedicated, it is said "for *he is holy* unto his God" (Lev. 21:7). After telling how to consecrate and sanctify the altar, God said, "Seven days thou shalt make atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be *an altar most holy*" (Exod. 29:37). Again, "And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be *an altar most holy*" (chap. 40:10). Concerning the tabernacle and the things belonging thereto, God said, "And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shall hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and *it shall be holy*" (vs. 9). From that time forward these were called "the most holy things." In Num. 4:4-15 we find a full account of these things and the treatment that must be accorded them on account of their holiness. In 1 Chron. 23:13, we read that "Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons forever." This does not imply that the things were holy before they were sanctified, but that they became most holy as a result of that sanctification.

The scriptures quoted show the truth of the statement already made, that dedication, or the first idea of sanctification, always produced the second, and resulted in the holiness of the object sanctified, whether that was an animate or inanimate thing. Whatever was sanctified became, from that time forth, a sacred and holy thing, and might not be used for any but a sacred and holy purpose. This use of the word is uniform throughout the Scriptures. In the New Testament the same twofoldness of thought runs through

all the texts relating to the subject. The purpose of dedication, both in Old and New Testaments, is that the object may be holy; not simply that it may be dedicated, but that it may be sacred and holy unto the Lord.

A Twofold Sanctification

In the Old Testament there was a double sanctification of the object. In the twenty-ninth chapter of Exodus, after giving instructions concerning the sanctification of Aaron and his sons, the garments, and the altar (vss. 21, 35-37), the Lord goes on to say: “And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest’s office” (vss. 43, 44). It was not enough that Moses and Aaron should sanctify these things, but God himself by a separate act must also sanctify them. When the tabernacle was completed and set up ready for dedication and had been dedicated by the priests, the glory of the Lord fell upon it so that they could not enter in, and thus the Lord did his part of the sanctification.

This idea of a double sanctification is also brought over into the New Testament. We note first man’s part: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). This is man’s part. This he must do, so that God may do his part. Through Ezekiel God gave a promise relating to His part. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all

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your idols, will I cleanse you” (Ezek. 36:25). In Rom. 15:16 we read, “That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost”; and again in 1 Pet. 1:2, “sanctification of the Spirit,” that is, of the Spirit of God. And Jude says, “Sanctified by God the Father” (Jude 1). As the result of this twofold sanctification, believers become “sanctified, and meet for the master’s use” and “holy and without blame before him in love.” Of such Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

Those who make sanctification a mere dedication miss the deepest and most glorious idea which it contains. The idea of purification is always included in the word, and the idea of the state in which the object is left is always that it is pure. It is no longer a common thing—it is holy unto the Lord.

What the Bible Teaches

Just before Jesus was taken away from the apostles, he gave them two promises, or what was equivalent to two promises. The first is stated in these words: “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; which the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:15-17). The second we find in the seventeenth chapter where these words are recorded: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth”; “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (vss. 17 and 19). This, though a prayer, amounts to the same as a promise. He clearly expressed his will for them. He sanctified himself, that is, he dedicated himself to die for them that, through

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the shedding of his blood, they might be sanctified. He not only sanctified himself in the sense of dedicating himself; but through that sanctification he became, as the Savior of men, “holy and harmless,” sacred in that office. He needed no moral purification. He could have none, for he was already pure. Nevertheless, the word contains the idea of his being holy in his office as a Savior, and this is no exception to the common use of the word.

Did the apostles receive this twofold experience? Let us see. In the second chapter of Acts we have the account of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the perfect fulfilment of Christ’s words relating to it. Then was his prayer for their sanctification also answered? and if so, when? Peter ought to be a very good witness. At the council of the church in Jerusalem, Peter said, in reference to the time when he went to the household of Cornelius, “And God which knoweth the heart, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8, 9).

In the tenth chapter of Acts Luke gives the story of Peter’s visit. Cornelius, though a Gentile, was a devout and holy man, one that feared God and prayed much, and in verses 34 and 35 Peter acknowledges him to have been accepted with God. In verses 44-47 he gives the account of how the Holy Spirit fell upon those who were in Cornelius’ house; and in his speech before the council Peter declares that the same thing was accomplished there as was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, that is, those present received the Holy Ghost and their hearts were purified by faith. If the apostles were not sanctified when they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, then we have no account that they ever received the experience; and if they did not, then Christ’s prayer was never

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realized, his answer was never granted. Those who make a separation between the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the experience of entire sanctification do violence to the Sacred Text. And those who say that we are sanctified wholly and then afterwards receive the Holy Spirit, likewise pervert the gospel. The two—being sanctified and receiving the Holy Spirit—cannot be separated. They belong together—they belong together in the Bible, and they belong together in personal experience.

Sanctification has two aspects—the negative, relating to the cleansing of natural depravity, the cleansing which leaves the soul pure; and the positive, relating to the filling of the soul with the divine fullness by the Holy Spirit. Without both these we are not wholly sanctified.

Entire Sanctification—Continued

Incompleteness of the Regenerated

When one first enters into the state of regeneration, that experience usually seems, not only to satisfy the soul, but also to reach beyond one's highest expectations. It fills his whole horizon; he sees and can see nothing beyond it. In course of time, however, as he begins to understand himself more perfectly, he becomes conscious of a certain incompleteness. He sees a spiritual standard lifted up in the Scriptures to which he has not yet attained. He reads such texts as the following: "That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas. 1:4). "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:19). "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17). "In him verily is the love of God perfected" (1 John 2:5). "His love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12). He realizes that these scriptures do not describe his experience, or at least do so only in a limited way.

As time passes, he becomes more and more conscious of this fact. Not only so, but he feels more and more a longing and yearning in his soul for something higher—a reaching out, a calling for something he has not attained. He may not understand this longing nor feel able to express it by words, unless he has been taught sufficiently to recognize his need. This yearning of his soul is for a something that is real. It is for that heart-satisfying fullness of God. This yearning followed out has led into the experience of entire

sanctification many souls who had never heard a sermon or teaching of any kind upon the subject and did not even know that the Scriptures teach that we may enter into such a state. I have personally known of a number of such instances. One brother told me that he received the experience two years before he ever heard a word said upon the subject. No stronger proof of two works of grace can be produced from any source than this heart-hunger that leads one on and on into God and to the full fulfilment of his purpose.

The Test of Experience

It is a self-evident truth that the testimony of one witness who can speak from knowledge gained through his own experience is of more value than that of ten thousand who know nothing by experience upon the subject. There are tens of thousands who have been sanctified, who know what the fullness of experience means because of the work that has been done in their own hearts. To spend time arguing with them against its reality is to waste words. They know what they are talking about; they know what God has done for them; they have applied to the doctrine the acid test and found it true metal. Once while I was holding a meeting for a church that believed in entire sanctification, an interesting incident occurred. There was a business man of that community who had violently opposed the doctrine. He had said a great many bitter and harsh things against its professors. But during my stay there, he became very ill. The physician told him that he could live only a short time. In his distress he desired prayer, and he sent for a neighbor who professed the experience of entire sanctification, and whom he had violently opposed. Others who did not believe in sanctification came in and offered to pray for him, but he refused to permit anyone to do so except that sanctified man whom he had before affected to despise.

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When facing death, he wanted the prayers of a man whom he believed God would hear, and so he sent for this sanctified man.

The people who have been and who are mighty to accomplish things in this world for God, have been and are people of pure lives and hearts. When not in need of prayer, sinners and evil professors may laugh and jeer at them; but when the time comes that they desire to draw nigh to God, they know to whom to turn, they know whose prayers will be heard and answered. In the days gone by the men who turned many to righteousness were men who believed in holiness. Their theology was sometimes at fault; but their hearts were right, and it was because of this that God could work through them so mightily in the uprooting of wickedness. Holiness of heart and holiness of life go together. There can be no holiness of life unless there is first holiness of heart. One is the complement of the other, and having the one, we naturally live the other. And nothing can be more real to the consciousness than the assurance of the heart that is thus cleansed. There is a satisfying reality in the experience that gives a person a real knowledge of the work wrought and of the state into which he is brought. He has a quiet, definite assurance, and in this he rests and is satisfied. He knows for himself. All the testimony that may be offered contrary to it, affects him not. He knows, and he trusts, and he is at peace.

How to Obtain the Experience

We are sometimes asked to direct people over a road which they have never traveled. We may do this to the very best of our ability, telling them about all the general characteristics of the way; but notwithstanding our best efforts, they are sometimes perplexed and do not know just which way to turn, or which way to go; they do not and cannot understand our explanations and directions, and

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sometimes, even after we have done our best to point out the way, they must needs inquire of others. The same is true concerning our explanations of how to obtain the experience of entire sanctification. Make it as plain as we can, there will be some things that we cannot explain to the satisfaction of the seeker. He can only partly understand the things that we tell him. When he comes to some place in the road where he would put our directions into practice, he may find himself perplexed, not knowing what to do; our directions fail of being plain to him.

I used to wonder why the Bible did not make the way plainer. I could not understand why the way should not be marked out step by step even as others and I tried to mark it out for seeking souls. I tried to make the way still plainer, but failed to obtain better results. I was much troubled and prayed over the matter long and earnestly. When at last the answer came, I marveled that I had not understood it before. I saw that, if the way should thus be marked out step by step with what the teacher supposed to be great clearness, souls would often follow it out in a mechanical and formal way and would fail to obtain the experience; they would not get their hearts into the seeking enough to enable them to find. But I saw also that, if the way could not be seen as clearly as the seekers would wish, their hearts would longingly turn to God, and they would seek for *him* instead of an experience. They would seek for him instead of anything else, and in seeking him, their hearts would seek aright and find.

I saw then the wisdom of God's silence. I saw that, if the footsteps were sometimes uncertain, it would more fully arouse the desire, and that that pent-up desire would burst through all obstacles to God. Whatever increases the heart's hunger for God, whatever draws us out more earnestly to him, is a step upon the way, even

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though it be a step taken “in the dark.” God is not hard to find. He places no difficulties in the way of the one seeking him; but what he desires is that he be sought so earnestly that the soul will reach that depth of consecration which will make it all his own. Though I cannot tell all the details as to just how one should seek the experience, I can point out a few way-marks that may be of benefit to the seeker.

There are some things that a person must needs know. Whether this knowledge be obtained through preaching or through his own heart’s yearnings, it matters not; but first of all he must know his need. He must have an internal consciousness that there is something more, a deeper experience, for him. His heart must hunger and reach out after God for higher attainments of grace and spirituality. The more conscious he becomes of his need, the more certain will he be to seek so as to obtain. Also he must believe that there is such an experience as he craves obtainable. If he believes teachers who say that these heart-longings can never be satisfied in this world, he may be discouraged and not seek for satisfaction, or at least he may seek only in a half-hearted, discouraged way without really hoping to find. There are those who would tell him that life is a time of long-drawn-out dissatisfactions, of lifelong conflicts with the internal corruption. They will tell him that there is no remedy for it, no way of having his heart cleansed. If he believes this, he will have hard work getting beyond his present experience; that false idea will stand as a barrier in his way. Therefore, it is necessary that he have knowledge that he can obtain a higher state of grace. Having this knowledge, he can go forward.

Desire must follow knowledge. I have seen many persons seek in a half-hearted, uncertain sort of way, not feeling in their hearts that fervency of desire which made them earnest in their seeking.

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Desire is the foundation of all true seeking. The more intense that desire becomes, the more likely the soul is soon to find the thing he seeks.

There must be a consecration or dedication of ourselves to God. When we came to him for pardon, we sought him with all the ardor of our souls and yielded to him so far as we could understand. But now we know him better, and we know ourselves better; and we are, therefore, able to dedicate ourselves to him in a higher and better and fuller and deeper sense than we could then. Some tell us that we must consecrate our houses and land, our relatives and friends, and everything that we possess to him. This is useless. They belong to him already. What he wants us to consecrate is ourselves. If we ourselves, with every power and resource of our being, are his, then everything that belongs to us, or everything that has to do with our life, belongs to him. All is in his hands to use as he sees fit. The secret of consecration is but the yielding of self. Everything else may be given up to God, and yet self be held back. If such is the case, there is no real consecration; for that means that I myself am laid upon the altar of his will in a complete and unreserved sacrifice. God must have full control. There must be a “yes” in our hearts to all his will. We must empty ourselves of everything else before we can be filled with God; but when the heart is once truly empty, God will come in and fill it to the utmost.

We sometimes hear a great deal about meeting conditions in order to get sanctified. Let us remember this one fact: Nothing that we can do puts God under any obligation to sanctify us. We may meet all the conditions we ever heard of, but that does not put God under obligation to us. When he does sanctify us, he does so by the act of his free grace. We cannot purchase sanctification, we cannot earn it, we cannot do anything to bring ourselves into the experience.

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The whole work is God's work. All our desire and consecration and seeking merely serve to remove the barriers that are in the way of God's working. When all the barriers are removed, then faith reaches forth and opens the channel of grace; and when this channel is thrown wide open, God's grace runs in as naturally as water runs down hill. In Acts 15:9 we are told that the purification of our heart is by faith. In Acts 26:18 we are told that we are sanctified by faith in God. Remember God is to do the work, but we are to do the believing.

We cannot, however, believe over any obstacles. If there is something yet unconsecrated, faith cannot act. It can overcome all obstructions without, but it cannot surmount obstructions within ourselves. These must be overcome by our own wills, by definite heart surrender to God. Faith is simply trusting, just relying on God to carry forward his plan in us when we give him the opportunity. It is just believing that his Word is true, true for us, and true for us right now. God will not fail us. He has placed himself under the most sacred obligations to do his part, and he will not come short. When the soul has poured out itself before God until it is conscious that it has reached the full depth of its measure, when it realizes that it has done all within its power to do, it may then rest and wait. Now has come faith's opportunity. Let her reach forth her hand and take hold upon God, and declare "it is done." Faith is not a trying to believe; it is not a straining and struggling; it is a confident relying upon God's promises. Never mind what the emotions are; they have nothing to do with the case. God does not want our faith to stand in emotions, but in his unchangeable Word. When we reach the point where our faith does take hold on God, there is an immediate result. There comes into our hearts a consciousness that God hears us and accepts our offering. Faith always brings assurance. This assurance

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cannot come so long as the heart is full of doubts; but when faith really takes hold upon God, assurance comes.

We must carefully distinguish between this assurance and the emotions that sometimes come along with it. Assurance is that inner knowledge by which we know that we are wholly the Lord's. It is also the testimony of the Spirit of God in our hearts. Its voice can never be heard when faith dies; but so long as faith is quick and vigorous, its voice is never silenced. When we have reached the place to believe, we may confidently believe and trust regardless of emotions. We may have no emotion or feeling at all, or we may have a variety of emotions, one following another. But no matter what emotions may come, or what emotions may go, it is our privilege to believe. Emotions are superficial; faith goes to the very foundation of things, and produces satisfactory results. The emotions, no matter how great they are, will soon subside; but the assurance stays so long as faith holds true. If we believe, we need not trouble ourselves about the outcome—God will take care of that. God wants us to rest calmly, to wait on him, to trust him in full assurance. He will see that our hearts are fully satisfied.

An Instantaneous Experience

Sanctification is often taught as being a state to which we gradually attain. It is said that we grow in grace and become more and more holy as time goes on until finally somehow, someday, sometime, we reach the experience of entire sanctification. I have yet to find among those who hold to this theory the first person who claims to have reached the fullness of the experience. They are all still growing, still going toward it but never getting there, or never knowing when they do get there if they do. The fact is, this is not the method at all. Sanctification is not a thing of growth; it is the

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work of God. Growth there is and must be in the Christian life; but growth does not change the nature. Only the work of God can do that. In every case in the Bible where people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit “fell upon them,” or “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” This baptism was not a gradual thing, a thing that came by degrees; it came suddenly. It was a definite something at a definite time and in a definite manner, and so it always is.

Sanctification is received by faith; and being the result of an act of faith, it must of necessity be an instantaneous work. A man may be sick and be dying by inches, and he may be a long time in this condition, coming nearer and nearer to death; but there comes a time when he dies. One moment he is alive; the next moment he is dead. Death is invariably instantaneous. The same is true of sanctification. We may draw nearer and nearer to God. We may become more and more like him. We may yield ourselves more and more to him. We may receive more and more of his grace. But we cannot say that we are wholly sanctified until we have fully surrendered self and have received the baptism of his Holy Spirit and have been filled with all the fullness of God. When this is done, an instantaneous work of God has been wrought. One man under the influence of the Spirit may yield in a few minutes what it has taken others years to yield; but in either case the outcome is the same, the work of God is the same.

How to Retain the Experience

There are two things necessary to the retention of the experience of entire sanctification. One is faith. The other is a life of obedience to God. If we rebel against God, we become sinners. If we fail to believe in God, we open the door to doubts of all kinds, to fears, troubles, trials, distress, uncertainties, and perhaps despair. A mere

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weakening of our faith under trial will not destroy the grace out of our hearts, it will not render our hearts impure, neither will it bring us into sin. It will, however, destroy that assurance God gives to us, and it cannot be restored until our faith is restored.

Doubts do not contaminate the soul. We may get bothered and feel uncertain, having various sorts of fears about our experience, but this will not render us impure. When our faith mounts up to God again, the assurance will be restored to our souls, and we may go on our way rejoicing. Only sin can destroy the experience from our hearts. Only sin can drive away the Holy Spirit. So long, therefore, as our hearts do not turn away from God, we can rely in him. No matter what our emotions are, no matter how dark some days may seem, no matter how we may be tested, we are still sanctified. This subject will be further considered in the chapter on Faith.

Christian Perfection

The subject of Christian perfection is often greatly misunderstood. This is true not only of those who give the subject little attention, but also of those who study it and sometimes of those who are even teachers of it. Texts bearing on different phases of it or not touching the subject at all are often jumbled together into a hopeless confusion, from which there can come no clear knowledge of the doctrine. It is highly necessary, therefore, to “rightly divide the word of truth,” applying to each phase of the question those scriptures which belong to that phase. The connection in which they are used determines their meaning. To class the word always under one definition is to involve ourselves in endless difficulty. We can arrive at the truth only when we carefully study each text in its proper connection.

There are two kinds of perfection—absolute and relative. Absolute perfection means perfection in every attribute, that is, lacking in nothing and having no imperfection whatever. This sort of perfection can be attributed only to an infinite being, and as God is the only infinite being, he alone can be perfect in this absolute sense. He is perfect in this sense. He is a perfectly infinite being, imperfect in not a single attribute. Such a perfection is unattainable by man either in this world or in the world to come, or by any other beings of God’s creation. It is just as unattainable by the angels as

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by man. In the consideration of Christian perfection, therefore, we must needs lay aside this definition. We must find another sense in which the word may be applicable to man. If man is perfect, he can be so only in a relative sense. He is finite and imperfect in all his attributes, and he will never be otherwise. For this reason, his perfection must be judged from an entirely different standard from that of absolute perfection.

God is perfect in his nature; therefore the acts that flow from his nature are perfect acts and reflect nothing of imperfection. He always chooses and wills and does that which is just and right and holy. He will ever be what he is now, and his actions will ever be as they are now, so far as their quality is concerned. As already stated, we shall always remain finite, so always more or less imperfect, and we cannot therefore apply the word “perfection” in its absolute sense to ourselves.

Relative perfection means a coming up to or fulfilling of some particular standard. This standard requires certain things, whatever they may be. That which possesses those things or qualities is perfect judged by that standard. There are degrees of perfection, strange as that may seem, but only as they relate to the relative nature of this perfection. To illustrate: You walk out into the field and pluck a blade of grass. You look it over. You see no imperfections in it, and you say, “Here is a perfect blade of grass.” But look at that insect crawling yonder. It is a higher type of life. It possesses a higher organization. It has higher and greater powers. It need not stay in one place as does the blade of grass, simply waving in the wind, but it moves about from place to place at will. You may take it up and look it all over, or examine it with a microscope, and possibly you will find in it no defect of any character. If so, you may say that it is perfect. But that animal which stands yonder under the

shade of that tree is a still higher type of life. If it possesses no defect, you may say that it also is perfect. Man is a still higher type of life, and if he is without defect, he may also be said to be perfect.

These objects, when compared one with the other, are very different. One may be said to be a much more perfect type of life than another. When the grass, the insect, or the animal is compared with man, it is found much inferior. There is, however, a sense in which each may be perfect, that is, as a type of the life of which it is a specimen. The grass may be perfect as grass, the insect as an insect, the animal as an animal, and man as a man; but none of them are perfect in the absolute sense. It is in this same relative sense that man may be perfect as a Christian. He cannot be perfect as a God, nor perfect as an angel; but he can be perfect as a Christian man. To be perfect in a spiritual sense means to fill up the measure of God's requirements in that particular field.

What the Scriptures Say

Jesus recognized the possibility of man's being perfect. To the rich young man he said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matt. 19:21). In the Sermon on the Mount he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Paul believed that men could reach a perfect state. "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect" (1 Cor. 2:6). He not only believed that they could be, but commanded that they should be. To the Corinthians he said, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect" (2 Cor. 13:11). Not only did he teach and command perfection, but he professed to be perfect. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded" (Phil. 3:15). He also taught that provision had been made for the attainment of that state. He said that the Scriptures are given "that

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the man of God may be perfect” (2 Tim. 3:17). In Eph. 4:11, 12, he says, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints.” James speaks on the subject thus: “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jas. 1:4).

From these Scriptures we are forced to conclude that there must be some definite New Testament standard of perfection to which man can attain in this life. Otherwise these scriptures would be meaningless. This perfection is not something held up to be merely aimed at and never realized. It is something to be attained, and that attainment is to be reached in this life. It is something capable of present and actual realization. It is not an idealism; it is a practical reality. Throughout the whole New Testament, it is so viewed and taught.

This perfection is not a perfection in knowledge, wisdom, power, foresight, judgment, or other such quality. In this world our knowledge is and will be imperfect; our wisdom is often inadequate; our power will often come short of our needs; our foresight will often fail to pierce the future; our judgment will often be mistaken. Christian perfection does not imply perfection in any of these qualities or attributes.

The word has different applications in different places; not all texts where the word is used apply to the same thing. We need to distinguish carefully between its various uses; unless we do so, we cannot have clear views upon the subject. In our study, therefore, we should give each text a critical examination. Let us first notice the application of the term to moral perfection. In this sense it means the purification of our natures so that they no longer contain any moral corruption. This idea is expressed in Heb. 13:20, 21, as follows:

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“Now the God of peace . . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will.” The blood of Christ was shed solely for purification; it has no other office. Therefore, this text must refer to a moral cleansing, and that cleansing reaches through to the state which is here called perfection. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). John said, “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Paul thus expresses the purpose of God’s commandment: “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1:5). That men could be so perfected in their moral natures as to be truly pure in heart is expressed by Paul in 2 Tim. 2:22—“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” This shows not only the condition of the heart to which man may attain, but also the life which flows forth from such a heart. The nature and extent of this perfection is thus set forth: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). According to this text, it is holiness in which we are to be perfected, and Paul defines that as being the result of a cleansing from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, that is, a making pure in heart so that there remains no moral corruption. The apostle John says, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3).

Attention has already been called to the fact that there is both a divine and a human side to this purification, this perfecting of our moral natures. We are now noticing only the final effects, the perfected result. Paul says, “Unto the pure, all things are pure”

(Tit. 1:15). By this he recognizes the fact that men are pure, and we are made pure only by the blood of Christ.

A Purification of the Nature

This perfection or purification is the purification of our natures, so that from our hearts we desire and love and seek only what is good. It is the purification of our wills, so that we choose God's will ever as our guide and the limitation of our lives, and gladly conform our conduct to his will. The holy heart sincerely seeks to know and do God's will. It is moved only by motives that are holy and just. Our attainment of this state does not prevent our having all those natural functional desires that belong to our being. It only requires us to subject these desires to the will of God. God does not raise up for us an impossible standard, one to which we cannot attain. All his ways are just and right and wise. He requires of us only what he ought to require and only what we can duly render unto him. He has made full provisions for our attaining the state of grace that he marks out as being in his mind perfect. There is nothing unreasonable about his standard. There is nothing idealistic; it is intensely practical all the way through. It is only when we misapprehend the subject that difficulties appear which are insurmountable. The way to this state lies through the grace of God; it is not a human attainment independent of grace.

This perfecting work of God's grace purifies our affections so that we may love God supremely. All other things must take a secondary place. The nearest and dearest of earth, and even our own selves, our lives, our ways, and our possessions, must be loved less than God. He becomes the soul's beloved one, so that we may say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Paul speaks of us as being espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin. In this experience the strength

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of our souls is poured out in tender affection to him, and in return we receive the riches of his love. John expresses it as being the perfecting of our love, or of God's love in us, which amounts to the same thing. He says, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (1 John 2:5).

Again, John says, "Herein is our love made perfect . . . because as he is, so are we in this world" (chap. 4:17). From this we see that this perfecting of love is, according to John's idea, being like Christ in this world. The professor of Christian perfection who does not bear the image of Christ upon his heart and manifest the life of Christ in his daily deportment does not come up to the standard of these scriptures. The man to whom God is not nearer than everything else has not yet attained unto this grace. There is no such thing as a worldly-minded sanctified man. Those who are worldly-minded are of the world, but those who are God's are minded after the things of the Spirit. Their desire runs out after God and the things that will please him, and when they enter this perfect state, their desire runs stronger and fuller after God than ever before. He fills their whole horizon, as it were. Into all the avenues of their being comes his Spirit, his power, and his light. We may expect to see in the life of a truly sanctified man or woman the characteristics of Christ that we see pictured in the Bible. "As he is, so are we in this world," said the apostle. This is the true standard of the sanctified life. Christlikeness is the key-note of that life.

Speaking of Christ, John says, "But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Our mortality will be changed, and we shall put on immortality, but that is not all: we shall be like him spiritually—not made like him when he comes, but like him when he does come; ready and waiting for

him in his likeness. A pure heart and a pure life are inseparable from the experience of entire sanctification or the perfected moral state.

Perfection of Conduct

The word “perfection” sometimes relates to our conduct. If the fountain is pure, the stream which flows out of it will be pure. Likewise, if the heart is pure, the life that flows out of it must of necessity be pure. In Matt. 5:48 Jesus says, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” He had been speaking specifically of conduct. Illustrating God’s perfection, he says in verse 45, “For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Our being perfect in this regard means that we shall act from the same principles and considerations as God acts, and that those acts will be of the same character as his acts. It does not mean that our acts must needs be as wise as his, nor correspond to them in some other regards; but there is one thing in which they must correspond to his, and that is, they must flow forth from love. That love must be the underlying and all-powerful spring of our action. This is the secret of a sanctified life. God’s love, being perfected in us, flows out in love to all our fellow men, in kindness, gentleness, mercy, forbearance—in fact, in all those virtues which are God-like in their nature.

Back of conduct lies character. This character gives quality to conduct. The moral quality of conduct lies in the intent, and not in the outcome of the action. The things that we do are judged, not by the wisdom of the acts, by their timeliness or success, but by the purpose back of them. Pure purposes always arise from a pure heart. Through lack of knowledge these pure purposes may not always be perfectly translated into pure and holy and wise and good actions, at

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least so far as the judgment of our fellow men is concerned. We may make mistakes; we may come short of our expectations; things may not turn out as we supposed they would; but out of a pure heart flows only deeds prompted by love, and deeds so prompted are always pure in God's sight.

I once heard the testimony of a man who had formerly been a saloon-keeper and an exceedingly wicked man. He said, "When I was a sinner, I was wholly sanctified to the devil." I was forcibly struck by this saying, but I knew, when I considered a little, that it was true. In his sinful life he had acted from wholly selfish considerations. His heart had contained nothing whatever of righteousness. Just as Paul says, "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness" (Rom. 6:20). There is nothing whatever in the sinner's heart that God can count as righteousness and he who gives himself over to do the will of the flesh and of sin may truly be said to be wholly sanctified to the devil. To be wholly sanctified to God means the exact opposite of this. It means that our hearts and our lives are conformed to the image of God. Perfect conduct is that conduct which, springing from pure desire and pure intent, conforms to God's standard for us here in our present situation and state. It is not conforming to man's standard or judgment, but to God's.

However much we may come short of an absolute standard, God judges us by quite another standard. He judges righteously. He requires all that he should require of us, but no more; he is always reasonable. He knows our situation; he knows what we can do and what we cannot do. Whatever conduct flows from pure love, that conduct is pleasing and acceptable to God. But he who is love and he who knoweth the secrets of man's heart can be pleased neither with the heart nor with the life of one who does not act solely on the

principles of love. This is the supreme test of heart and conduct. If his love is truly perfected in us, then will our lives be acceptable and well-pleasing in his sight.

Perfection of Development

There is a third sense in which the word “perfection” is used. This is entirely distinct from those previously noted. In this sense it relates to a state of maturity. Beginners in the Christian life are represented as being *babes*, while mature Christians are called *men*. In Eph. 4:11-15 Paul uses the term “perfection” in relation to development. Speaking of the perfecting of the saints, he says: “Till we all come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” This perfect manhood to which we ought to attain is the measure of the stature or age of the fullness of Christ, and it is attained, as he says in verse 15, by “*growing up into him.*”

We begin our Christian life as new-born babes. It is indeed a new existence to us. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. We begin to reach out and explore the kingdom of God. We find on every hand glorious realities in the divine life which now works in us and works out in our lives. God does not expect us to remain always in this immaturity of childhood. He has made provisions for our growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ so that we may develop our spiritual faculties and our spiritual powers and our spiritual understanding. As it has been said, “the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and

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more unto the perfect day.” The light of the morning may be only a faint gleam, but it increases and develops until the glorious sun rises in all his majesty and the day is made perfect. So the Christian life from a small beginning goes forward and upward, increasing in the love and power and grace of God, in Christ-likeness, until at last in the fully developed strength and glory of Christian manhood, we can indeed “shine as lights in the world.”

This subject is illustrated in the fifth chapter of Hebrews, verses 12-14. The writer there shows that in attainment those addressed were only as babes, just like beginners, and that they needed to be taught again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. These first principles he interprets in the sixth chapter as repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Those believers were not such as could eat strong meat; that is, they were not able to understand those deeper and greater truths which only more mature Christians had the capacity to receive and understand. “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age”; that is, those who are full-grown, and he explained such to be “those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Coming to Christian perfection, that is, the perfection of Christian development, is not a thing of a day nor a year. It is a “growing up,” a “growing in grace and knowledge.” This is a perfection entirely distinct from the perfection of our moral state and of our conduct. The sanctification of our hearts does not give us this Christian maturity. It comes only through the exercise of our senses to discern good and evil, and the putting into practice of those things which we do discern to be good. It is the result of conforming to the laws of spiritual growth and increase. James speaks of it thus: “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire,

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wanting nothing” (Jas. 1:4). By this he means that in developing patience we develop into a state of maturity. This does not mean a state beyond which we cannot go, but it means the same as maturity does in the physical man. The same principle applies to all our other powers and faculties. They may be developed to such a state of maturity that we can truly be said to be men in God and for God. Spiritual maturity, however, never passes beyond the comparative state. It never becomes absolute; for we may continue to increase so long as we follow after God in this world, and the future world no doubt will see a still further increase.

Some persons seem to remain as babes all through their Christian lives. They must be nourished and cared for. They are unable to stand alone, it seems. They must be guarded and watched and cared for like a child. But this is not God’s standard for the Christian. He ought to go farther; he ought to become more mature; he should not be content to be a child all his days. God wants him to be a man of strength and power for himself and to accomplish things worthy of a man.

Old Testament Perfection

The word “perfection” is common to the Old Testament as well as to the New, and had a very definite meaning. Some of the worthies of the Old Testament are said to have been perfect men. In Gen. 6:9 we read, “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God.” God has always had a practical standard of perfection, to which men could attain if they would. There have always been men who attained this standard and whom God counted faithful and perfect. “The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1). To the whole nation of Israel, God

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said, “Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God” (Deut. 18:13). This was no unattainable standard, but a practical and readily attainable one. Of Job it is said, “And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1). In verse 8 God himself calls him a perfect and an upright man. When Hezekiah was sick nigh unto death, he had enough confidence in his standing before God and in the life he had lived, to pray thus: “I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight” (2 Kings 20:3). David was a man after God’s own heart. Speaking to Jeroboam, God said, “Thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that which was right in mine eyes” (1 Kings 14:8). Again, we read, “David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite” (1 Kings 15:5).

Of King Asa it was said, “The heart of Asa was perfect all his days” (2 Chron. 15:17). The nature of this perfection is defined in chap. 14:2—“And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God.” This testimony is repeated in 1 Kings 15:14—“Asa’s heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.” This perfection is defined in verse 11—“And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father.” Old Testament perfection, then, consisted of doing that which was right and just and pleasing in the sight of the Lord. It was quite possible, as we have seen, for men so to live; and not only was it possible, but some of them did live such lives. How many did we are not told, but there were many who pleased the Lord and enjoyed his blessing and approval. Such men as Abraham, Moses, Caleb, Joshua, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, all the prophets, and many thousands of others were worthy

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examples, and God accepted and blessed them in their lives and poured out his love upon them. It is quite true that these ancient men could not attain that moral perfection which is made possible for us through the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. There had been no provision made for the cleansing of their natures, other than that of the influence of the Spirit of God upon them, and his fear that was in their hearts. This led them to live a life that was commendable in the sight of God.

In every age God has required perfection, and he has given a standard of perfection to which men could attain, not one which was impossible and altogether out of their reach, but one which was reasonable and adapted to their circumstances and age. Our privileges at this time are greater than the privileges given to men in any other age. The gospel age is preeminently the age of the Spirit of God, and when he comes into and takes possession of the soul of man, he can work in it and through it after his own good pleasure in a way never possible before the gospel age. In those ancient days, however, men oftentimes lived lives that would put to shame many professing Christians nowadays and not a few professors of entire sanctification. Inasmuch as God gives to us much now, he requires of us much more than he did of people in former dispensations. But this much more which he requires of us is no harder of attainment by us than what he required of them was by them in their situation. We can, therefore, be “perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

The Bible also speaks of a perfection that is not attainable in this life. Paul says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect” (Phil. 3:12). Sometimes this text is used to oppose the doctrine of Christian perfection. It is held to mean that no one can be perfect in this life, and of course it is true that in the sense here meant no one can be perfect in this life. The thing of which Paul

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was speaking, however, was not moral perfection. In the preceding verse he said, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” He was speaking of that perfection which shall be ours in the future life, and not of anything relating to this life. In another place he says, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known” (1 Cor. 13:9, 10, 12). This glorious perfection lies beyond the vale, and into it we may not enter until this mortal shall have put on immortality. When our bodies are changed to the likeness of “his glorious body” and we are in the glorified state, then shall we have attained this final state of perfection. To it we look forward with bright hopes and joyful anticipations.

The Sanctified Life

Some Misapprehensions

There are many misapprehensions regarding the sanctified life. It will not be possible to mention more than a few of them here, nor will it be necessary to notice these few in detail. Some such misapprehensions are extreme in their nature. A number of years ago a religious teacher who at that time was enjoying a great deal of notoriety was conversing with a lady who professed the experience of entire sanctification. This teacher was an opposer of the doctrine. While talking with her upon the subject, he moistened the corner of his handkerchief and, watching his opportunity, he rubbed it across her neck. As she had just alighted from the cars after a long trip, the handkerchief was, as he had expected it to be, soiled somewhat. In triumph he held it up before her, declaring it to be a conclusive argument that she could not possibly be sanctified. Of course, this was ridiculous, but it showed his idea of sanctification. He published the incident with much glee in his paper. To him it was conclusive disproof of the doctrine.

Although few people make such errors as this, there are those who feel that sanctification unfits us for the ordinary employments of life. They think it raises us up to some sort of superhuman state and quite takes us out of and away from ordinary things. This, however, is not true. Sanctification purifies our hearts and fills us with the Holy Spirit, and we are then more than ever in a position to

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be natural in our life. It makes us pure and holy, but not superhuman. We are still only men with the faculties and powers of men, with this added, that the Holy Ghost dwells in us and possesses us.

Another error is that, to maintain such a life, we must hold ourselves aloof from others, or that it makes one feel that he will be contaminated by contact with others. Sanctification does not make us Pharisees. It does not take us out of the natural relations of life. It only fits us more perfectly for them. Jesus was our perfect example in this respect, and he took part in all the affairs of life and mingled with all sorts and classes of people, yet he kept himself unspotted from the world. He was “separate from sinners” even when he mingled with them and was most closely associated with them. He partook of none of their sins; he kept himself aloof from all that was bad in their lives; but in other things he partook with them. So may we. We may fill our part in the social world and in all the relations of life in a way becoming to Christians and in a way that is pure and holy. To feel that we are better than others and to hold ourselves aloof from them will not attract them to our religion; on the contrary, it will make them despise us. It is only pride that leads to such an isolation. We must not partake of the sins of sinners, and that sometimes will keep us out of their company; but we should not carry the separation farther than is proper. We should be sociable and neighborly at all times.

It is supposed by many and taught by some teachers of holiness that when we are once sanctified we cannot fall from that state. This too is a misapprehension, a doctrine that the Scriptures do not teach. After being sanctified we are still moral agents and have the power of choice; we can still choose the evil as well as the good. We are in a world of temptation, to which we can yield at any time. John 3:9 is sometimes taken to prove that we cannot sin if we are sanctified.

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It says, “He cannot sin, because he is born of God.” This applies, however, to all that are born of God, and must be considered as a moral, not an actual, impossibility. We can sin if we will to sin, but if we will not to sin, we can refrain from sinning, by the grace of God. We cannot sin while we love God, nor while he has his way in our lives. Heb. 10:29 is conclusive evidence upon this subject. It says, “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” This clearly asserts that sanctified people may not only fall, but may become worthy of sore punishment.

A misapprehension allied to the one just considered is that if we do fall we cannot be restored. This finds no foundation in the Scriptures. They teach no such thing. On the contrary, they teach us that all sin except sin against the Holy Ghost is forgivable; that if a man repents he will be forgiven, and not only forgiven, but restored to his former state through the grace of God.

Another and rather common misapprehension is that if we are sanctified the human imperfections are all gone, and that we shall therefore make no mistakes. Such a thing would be possible only if we were made infinite in knowledge and power. We shall never be so; we shall come short in many things on account of the imperfections of our faculties. But mistakes are not sinful in their nature and do not contaminate the soul. Still another error is the supposition that in sanctification all the human passions are destroyed. We are still human, and we shall so continue. God created the human passions for a wise and good purpose, and they still serve that wise and good purpose in the sanctified.

The doctrine of entire sanctification is reasonable. It appeals to our reason; and if we look at it as it really is, it is convincing, it is beautiful and uplifting. It excites our admiration and makes us long for the experience.

Justified and Sanctified Life Compared

There is no small difference between the justified life and the sanctified life. The line dividing them is no imaginary line. In the justified life we have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We have grace to live above sin; otherwise we could not keep justified. We have within our hearts the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” This Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. The blessing of God is upon our lives and upon our hearts. We are often enriched by his presence. We are often filled with thankfulness and appreciation, and sometimes our joy overflows. The justified life is a high and holy life. It is a glorious life, far beyond and above the ways of sin. But above and beyond this life is the sanctified life. It not only includes all that is good in the justified life, but includes all beyond it that it is God’s will to give us here. Some of these greater things we shall now notice.

The sanctified life means a closer union with God. In the justified life the Spirit of God is with us and in us as the Spirit of adoption. This Spirit leads, guides, and directs our lives. He has a powerful influence over us, and it is through his power that we live justified lives. In the sanctified life the Spirit of God comes into us as the Sanctifier. He comes to us to possess us in a new and higher and greater sense than before. He comes in all his fullness, glory, and power. He is the Comforter, the Preserver, the Sanctifier. When we are wholly sanctified, we know from practical experience what

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it means to be “filled with the Holy Ghost.” From henceforth we are the tabernacles in which he abides. In us he works the good pleasure of God. This important feature often remains almost unnoticed because of the great emphasis placed upon the cleansing feature of sanctification. The cleansing, however, is only a negative thing. It is merely a step in the process of God’s possessing us more fully; only a taking out of the way of barriers to his full possession. The coming into our hearts of the Holy Spirit is the really great thing in the sanctified experience.

True, the cleansing is very necessary; there can be no sanctification without it; and the Spirit will not come into us until we are cleansed; but if we magnify too much this particular feature, it will cause us to base our hope of sanctification or our faith in our sanctification on what we consider as the internal evidences of that cleansing. This opens the door to all sorts of spiritual trouble. This is the reason why so many people never become established. They are always looking within at their own feelings, their own emotions, and the things that concern them; whereas the real question is, Is the Holy Ghost abiding in me? Has the Holy Ghost come into my heart? Is it he who is working therein to do the good pleasure of God?

Let us not overlook this fact, that in sanctification there is a presence with us, an abiding presence ever and always with us. I do not mean that it is always being manifested to our emotions and our sensibilities; it is, however, always present in our lives; its power is there, and it is working there whether we can feel it and be conscious of it or not. The Spirit is not always saying to us, “I am here, I am here, I am here.” He is often quiet, but when the need comes, he shows his presence and his power. A wire may be highly charged with electricity, and still we cannot discern the fact by looking at the wire, nor by listening to it, nor by any motion that it may have; but

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when there is opportunity, that power is manifested. So it is with the Spirit in our lives. Sometimes we cannot tell by our feelings that he is present, nor by any emotion nor in any other way except through faith; but if he is there, when the opportunity and the need come, he will manifest himself and will work and show that he is indeed the Spirit of God. After he comes into us, he is never absent, unless we grieve him away. We must carefully distinguish between his presence and his manifestations. If we do not, we throw open the door for all sorts of doubts.

In sanctification there is a deepening and enriching of the spiritual life. To suppose that we are sanctified when the current of life runs no deeper and is no richer than before is to be mistaken. All the fruits of our righteousness are increased. All the graces of the Spirit are multiplied. How inconsistent it is for one to profess to be sanctified when his life is superficial and occupied by frivolities and trifles! and how sad it is to hear the lament of such a one when he cries out, "My leanness, my leanness"! Is this truly the sanctified state? Is this all that it means? I grant that people who have once been really sanctified may come to such a state, but how sad that state and how far from the normal condition of a sanctified life! God means that we have a bountiful supply of his grace; that we be rich in grace, in faith, and in all the things that go to make up the experience of entire sanctification. The sanctified man has a heart full of treasures. If he grows impoverished and lean, it is because he is well on the way to a backslidden state. The channel of grace has become closed, and the supply has been cut off. The Spirit of God is hampered and hindered, and his spiritual life is not normal in any respect. Sanctification touches and enriches the deepest depths of man's nature. It brings out all his better qualities, and increases and develops them; and as the years go by and he develops more and

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more in the divine life, he is more and more enriched and ripened, and more and more glorifies God.

The sanctified life excels the justified life in power. The coming of the Holy Spirit means that we receive an endowment of heavenly power. Jesus said, “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). The Holy Ghost is not a weakling; instead, he is clothed with all the power of the Almighty. When he comes into our souls as an abiding Comforter, it means the bringing into us of a power that never was there before. It is not a power that seizes hold of us and makes us do unseemly things; it is not a power that takes hold of us and operates us independently of our own will. God does not act in this way. He acts in us only when he can act in conformity to our will and his own at the same time. The power that we receive is a power to be what God designs that we shall be in our inner lives. It is the power to be victorious over sin, and the power to rule our own lives. It is the power of self-control, and the power to yield to God and be completely under his control. It is the power to be pure within. It is the power to be in subjection to the will of God. It is the power to love God with a pure heart fervently. It is the power to keep from loving other things more than we should. It is the power to preserve our spiritual balance.

It is power over temptations, so that they may not rule us, so that we may resist and conquer them, no matter what may be the form in which they come nor the strength with which they come. It is the power that gives mastery over natural desires. It is the power to say “no” and to enforce it. It is the power to keep under our bodies, to keep them in subjection to the will of God. It is the power to live right in our everyday life. It is the power to translate the Bible into human life in all its beauty and grace.

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It is the power that enables us to overcome timidity and man-fear and to be witnesses for Christ. It not only enables us to witness for Christ, but puts into that witnessing a power that makes it convincing and effective. Many a sermon is powerless and many a testimony falls flat because the power of the Holy Ghost is not in it and through it. Look upon the timid apostles, fearing and shrinking before the day of Pentecost, and behold them thereafter. What boldness! what power! what authority! What was it that wrought all this change? It was the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them in power. He wants to come into our lives in like manner and mark them with his power. He wants to put into our words the same power that he put into the words of Peter and John. He wants to put into our hearts the same boldness that they had, the same unshrinking courage and fortitude. How many sermons are merely words, words, words! How little the hearers are moved! how little they are pricked in their hearts! Ah! the power of the Holy Ghost is not there! But when we are full of might and of power by the Spirit of the Lord, the words that we speak have in them this power of the Holy Ghost to take hold upon men's hearts, to stir them to consider their condition, and to make them feel that it is the voice of God and not the voice of man that is speaking to them. He will manifest himself not only in public testimony, but in our ordinary conversations. If we are full of the Holy Ghost, his power and presence will manifest themselves in our words, and they will be effective in bringing conviction to the hearts of those who hear. Empty words are of little avail. Words full of the Holy Ghost and power are full of something that touches the spring of life.

This enduement of power fits us to serve. A truly consecrated man is one who is willing to fill his hands with busy labors for the Lord. He is saved to serve. He does not serve for honor, for the applause of his fellow men; he serves because he delights to do so.

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The sanctified man does not need to be offered a reward in order to be induced to serve; he does not have to be bribed to do his duty. If honor comes, well and good, but he does not live for honor alone. He serves not for what he may receive, but he counts serving a privilege. There is a disposition among many “holiness” people to want to be the “bell sheep.” They strive to excel that they may be leaders. Such a disposition does not come from the workings of the Holy Spirit. It is from man, pure and simple. It is opposed to the Spirit of God and his workings. If we are sanctified, we are willing to serve even in an unnoticed capacity. We are willing to serve as unto the Lord and not unto man. We are willing to serve whether we are praised or criticized, whether men take note of what we do or disregard it. It is true that we still have the faculty of approbateness, and not only desire the approval of others, but feel that when we do well we merit proper recognition and approval, and we feel encouraged when we receive such; but the true heart is willing to go forward and do for God even if men withhold what is due. It will serve whether conditions are favorable or unfavorable.

When we are wholly sanctified, we have power to accomplish for God, and need not be faltering and weak workers; but, being clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit, we accomplish what others cannot do, not because we are greater than they, but because he that worketh in us is greater than he that worketh in the world. Oh, for more men and women with the power of the Holy Ghost in their souls! That is the need of the hour. That is the need of the world. “Ye shall receive power” is the promise. Reader, has that been made true in your own life? Is the power of Christ resting upon you—the power to be and to do and to act for Christ, the power to witness, the power to conquer, the power to serve? It is your privilege to have it; it may be your possession.

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In this higher life there is a greater illumination of the spiritual understanding. The Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He broadens and elevates our vision. He reveals to us the mysteries of God. He unlocks the secret of the Scriptures and makes us to truly know the Almighty. Our spiritual perception increases in keenness, so that we can understand more readily the things of the Spirit. The Bible sometimes appears as a new book. Jesus promised that when the Spirit of truth was come, he should guide us into all truth. This does not mean that he will lead us into all truth at one time, but that step by step he will lead us from truth to truth; and not only so, but he will protect us against error if we will carefully follow his leadings.

Entire sanctification brings us into an evenness of life and temperament not possible before. It brings a stabilizing of our lives, so that we are not so easily moved by outside influences. We are not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine like children. We are not easily affected nor moved by everyone's opinion. Our feet are planted on the Rock of Ages; we are solidly anchored there. Sanctification brings a calmness into our lives. It is like oil on the troubled waters of life. There is a holy quietness that broods over the soul and keeps it serene.

People do not backslide from the sanctified life every little while and get restored to it over and over. Those who claim to do so, do not reach this grace. It is not an "up-and-down" life. One of the qualities of truly sanctified souls is their steadfastness. They are settled, established, rooted, and grounded in God; therefore, they are not swept off their feet every little while. Doubt may sometimes cloud the life and obscure the light and dim the assurance; but the sanctified state is far removed from sin, and people do not, except under extraordinary circumstances, fall from a high state of grace

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into sin. There is almost always a preparation for sin by a previous declension of the spiritual life. Backsliding from a sanctified life is not merely stepping over a line; we must go far before we reach that line. It is true that we may sin at any time, but we are not inclined to sin. It is not a “prone to wander, Lord, I feel it” experience. Sin is unnatural to the purified man. His natural element is holiness. In it he delights. It is only when the channel of grace is obstructed so that it no longer flows into his heart as before that spiritual declension begins. He may decline rapidly, for it is not possible for him to be spiritual without this inflow of grace; but it is only when his supply of grace has greatly dwindled that sin comes to have any attraction for him. In the normal state it repels him, and he repels it. It is obnoxious instead of attractive to him. So long as his experience is normal, he is altogether unlikely to do that which is evil.

Sin

Sin is a subject upon which there are widespread misunderstandings. There is a great variation in the teaching of religious men upon it. Preachers say very contradictory things about it. The greatest cause of this is the lack of a definite standard. The absence of such a standard leads to endless confusion and contradiction. There can be no agreement unless there is first an invariable definition. I have seen men who agreed in principle, but who, because of a lack of definite, invariable definitions of the terms they were using, would argue for hours and could reach no common understanding. One of my present tasks, therefore, will be to supply such an invariable definition. The Scriptures speak upon the subject in no uncertain tone, and if we will but 'rightly divide the Word of truth,' we may proceed with certainty to our conclusion.

There are many who teach a life free from sin. They say that the Christian is not a sinner; that instead of working evil, he works righteousness. Those who have a different standard of sin condemn them for thus teaching, and say that they are raising an impossible standard and are making Pharisees of the people. There are others who teach that we sin more or less every day in word, thought, and deed, and that there can be no higher standard of Christian life or Christian attainment. As an example of this teaching, I quote from a book published by the American Tract Society. The quotations

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below are from “Prayers for Family Worship.” I quote only the prayer for sin.

“MORNING FAMILY PRAYER

“Hear thou us . . . forgiving our sins . . . guard us through this day and keep us from evil.”

“EVENING FAMILY PRAYER

“We beseech thee to forgive the sins we have committed this day, and wherein we have omitted duties or have failed in any way, do thou mercifully pardon . . . take from us all love of sinning.”

“SUNDAY MORNING PRAYER

“We confess, O Lord, our many sins and transgressions. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. Amid the affairs of this world we have forgotten thee. Give unto us true repentance. Forgive our sins.”

“SUNDAY EVENING PRAYER”

“Pardon in thy mercy the sins that mingle with all our worship and service.”

It would be utterly astonishing to think of anyone’s making this the standard of Christian life did we not know that it comes from the lack of a Biblical definition of sin. If a man who knows what sin really is should use that formula of prayer, he would deliberately insult God and his own reason. What sinner could do worse than indulge in the sins therein mentioned? What sinner’s life is more culpable?

The Bible says, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (1 John 3:9). According to its teaching, Christians are not

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sinner, and sinners are not Christians. We are therefore brought face to face with the question, What is sin?

Evil and Moral Evil

We need to make a clear distinction between evil and moral evil. Animals can do evil, but not moral evil. Animals can destroy property or even human life, and that is a great evil, but for them it is not a moral evil. Only moral beings can do moral acts, either good or bad. The feelings, desires, and acts of animals cannot possess a moral quality, inasmuch as they possess no moral nature. Their acts, however evil in their nature, cannot be sin. All their activities are unmoral, that is, they have no moral quality whatever and cannot be judged by any moral standard. Man, however, is a moral being; therefore, his acts are either moral or immoral; that is, if they involve the question of morality at all. In the common acts of life, the question of morality does not ordinarily enter, our acts being on the same plane as those of the animal; that is, when we eat, drink, walk, run, play, laugh, etc., no moral principle is involved, and therefore the acts are not moral in their nature, but unmoral. Being only the natural and lawful functioning of our being, they have no moral quality. They are neither good or bad, considered alone. Let us hold in mind throughout the further consideration of this subject the distinction here drawn between evil and moral evil.

Two Standards of Sin

There are two standards of sin, or two standards from which moral action is considered and judged. One is the absolute standard. Judged by it, whatever contains moral evil of any sort is sin. Any violation of the principles of the moral law, no matter how slight and no matter under what circumstances, is sin. Whether the person has

any knowledge of the right and wrong of the act, whether he does it willfully or accidentally, whether consciously or in unconsciousness, matters not; it is a violation of moral principle and is therefore sin. The other standard is that of imputed sin. Paul tells us that sin is not imputed where there is no law. This standard takes into consideration all the circumstances surrounding the case and having to do with it, no matter how slight their bearing upon it. The state of the individual, his knowledge, his intentions, and all other accidents of the case have their bearing under this standard and must be taken into consideration in determining the guilt. These thoughts will be further enlarged later on.

Four Laws for Man as Standards of Sin

There are two kinds of moral law. One is the subjective, or that primitive knowledge of right and wrong which God has implanted in mankind and which is the basis of the action of conscience in those who have no revelation and possibly to some extent is operative in those who have a revelation. The other is objective law, or the direct revelation of God's will.

There are, or have been, four different laws by which God has judged sin. Someone of these has made man responsible to his Creator in each age of the world. There is, first, that subjective law which the heathens are under—sometimes called “the law of conscience.” Contrasting it with the law which was given by revelation, Paul says, “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and

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their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another” (Rom. 2:12, 14, 15). This primitive subjective law, supplemented by their reason, was a sufficient law to establish in their minds the standard of righteousness. It is the law that the heathen are under. They have no direct revelation of God, but they are not excusable in doing evil. That “inner light” of reason and conscience gives them a standard. Imperfect it may be, yet it is real. Judged by that standard, their conduct is either right or wrong so far as moral quality is involved in action.

Another law is the revealed law under which people lived from Adam to Moses. At various times God has revealed himself to the race or to members of the race in various ways, and these revelations, so far as they were known, became to men laws under which they were to live. To Adam and his posterity, God revealed the true principles of righteousness. Of the limits of this law we know very little at the present time. It was, however, sufficient to make them morally responsible to God, and by it they will be judged in the last day.

To Moses God gave a whole code of laws for the governing of Israel and those strangers who might abide with them. It was a more complete law than any that had preceded it; it revealed more broadly and more fully the principles of righteousness. It was, however, only temporary in its nature, leading up to the gospel.

Since the coming of our Lord and his sacrifice on Calvary, the gospel has been the standard for all men, so far as they have been brought under its teaching and influence. It is the highest and most perfect revelation of moral principles that has ever been given to man or that will be given to him in his earthly state. By it all who hear it will be judged in the last day.

Sin Under the Old Testament

Under the Old Testament there was an absolute standard of sin. All violation of the law, no matter of what nature nor under what circumstances, was imputed as sin, except in some specific instances. Sometimes a person had to violate one law in order to keep from violating another, as, for instance, when a priest did servile work on the Sabbath in offering the sacrifices commanded. In such and similar cases the person was not counted guilty. Ordinarily, however, all breaking of the law, no matter of what nature, was considered sin. Whether it was done wilfully or ignorantly, purposely or accidentally, it brought guilt upon the individual. "Every transgression . . . received a just recompense of reward" (Heb. 2:2), says Paul. Not only was this true of those wilful transgressions which were so common among the Israelites and which drew down the vengeance of God upon them so frequently, but it was also true of the sins of ignorance and their "unwitting" sins. Of these sins of ignorance we read: "And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; or if his sin, which he has sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering . . . for the sin which he hath sinned" (Lev. 4:27, 28). In Num. 15:27, 28, we read: "If any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin-offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him." Practically the same thing is said of the whole congregation of Israel in Lev. 4:13-15 and Num. 15:22-26. Nor were the priest and the ruler forgotten. Provision was made for their cleansing from the sins of ignorance (see Lev. 4:3, 22-23).

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Thus, we observe that there was no excuse made for sin, but that a man became guilty of sin if he violated any of the precepts of the law. That law did not take into consideration any of the circumstances attending the act. It judged the act as an act, and the man was either condemned or approved because of the act. If he kept the law, he lived by keeping it; if he broke it, the penalty must be reaped.

Two Classes of Sin

Considered from the standpoint of the nature, there were two classes of sin under the old covenant. One class were those sins which involved a breaking of the moral law, or which in their nature involved the violation of moral principles. These were such as adultery, murder, lying, theft, and the like. They were such things as in their nature are wrong regardless of whether there is a law given that forbids them. The other class of sins were ceremonial sins, such as breaking the law of the Sabbath, eating unclean meat, the neglect of any of the ceremonies commanded, and, in fact, any violation of the ceremonial law. The Israelites might neglect some of the holy days or the ceremonies of purification, or omit some of the feasts, but no matter what they did or omitted to do that broke the ceremonial law, the violation was a ceremonial sin and they had to make atonement for it the same as for those moral evils which they might do. This twofold classification of sin as relates to its nature we must keep in mind if we are to understand the Old Testament, or if we are to compare its teaching with that of the New Testament and see the two in their true relation.

Two Times of Guilt

Under the Mosaic law there was one class of sin of which the individual became immediately guilty, and another of which he did not become guilty until he learned of the sin. Of the first class we have an account in Lev. 6:1-7. These were such sins as the transgressor knew to be sins when he committed the acts. He sinned against knowledge and therefore became immediately guilty. The other class were those sins done ignorantly and unwittingly. Of these we read in Lev. 5:3-6, 10, 13, 17-19. I quote verses 17-19: "And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. . . . And the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not, and it shall be forgiven him. It is a trespass-offering. He hath certainly trespassed against the Lord" Of this class of sins it is said, "When he knoweth of it, then shall he be guilty" (verse 3). The same is repeated in verse 4.

These two types of guilt, immediate and deferred, we must keep in mind if we are to understand the difference between sin in the Old Testament and sin in the New, for the New Testament regards no such classification. The standards of sin being different, we should naturally expect the language concerning sin to be different in the two Testaments; so unless we observe this difference of standards, we cannot make the proper distinction between the teachings of the two books, nor have a clear understanding of the subject of sin.

Three Classes of Sin

As relates to guilt, there were three classes of sin under the Old Testament. The first class consisted of presumptuous or high-handed sins. These were the grosser sins, as murder, blasphemy,

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adultery, and others of like nature. For these there was no forgiveness. He who sinned presumptuously, or despised God's commandment and sinned "with a high hand," had to meet the death penalty. The only question was his guilt; if that was once established, the penalty must be inflicted. The next class were sins wilful in their nature, though less serious than the former. They were such as lying, stealing, swearing, cheating, and sins of a like nature. They were forgivable. There were certain penalties attached, but not the death penalty. They were forgiven if proper atonement was made. The third class was ignorant or unwitting sins, and these also were forgivable. The acts were sins and brought guilt whether the will was involved or not, yes, even if they were accidental or unavoidable. (It might be noted here that accidental defilement when not known became sin when known, probably because the person had omitted the prescribed cleansing when cleansing was required and had perhaps done things when so defiled that were forbidden to the unclean. Such uncleanness was not ordinarily sinful. See Lev. 11:24, 25, 31, 39, 40.) This classification of sins is not extended into the New Testament.

Imperfect Standard of Sin in Old Testament

In speaking of the old covenant, Paul said that it was weak and faulty, and that it was because of this that God took it out of the way and gave us a better one. Because of its weak and faulty nature, it was not fitted to be a permanent standard. It was not based on exact standards of justice and could not be under the circumstances. The Israelites had not yet developed to a state of spiritual or moral understanding that would render it possible to reveal to them such a law as the New Testament. It was necessary first to develop in them a sense of holiness and purity. This they possessed in some degree, but in a very low degree. A perfect standard, therefore, would have

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been too high for their attainment, and would have defeated its own end. For this reason, it was necessary for God to give them a less perfect standard, that he might develop them and bring them to the point to receive this higher standard which he had for all the race.

To develop in them this sense of holiness and purity, he hedged them around with all sorts of restrictions, things which seem to us entirely unnecessary and which would be unnecessary to people as highly developed in knowledge as we are. The division of meats into clean and unclean was a great step in this direction. The ceremonial defilement produced by touching a dead body or an unclean thing, or by being a leper or having some other unclean disease, went far to establish in their minds the idea of holiness. Under the New Testament we have no such distinctions, there being no need of them; but they were absolutely necessary to bring Israel to understand the meaning of holiness and purity. The New Testament standard is based on the true principles of right and justice; it contains no such arbitrary elements. Right is right because it is right, and wrong is wrong because it violates some principle of right.

Again, the old law was a civil as well as a moral law, and so in many things it had to be of an arbitrary nature. The New Testament law is fundamentally a moral law, with but few ceremonial observances added. It leaves to the civil powers the making and enforcing of civil laws. Sin under the old covenant was of necessity a very different thing in many respects from sin under the New Testament. It was to emphasize this distinction that I have gone so far into the subject and given such a lengthy analysis. It all leads upward to a correct understanding of the New Testament view of sin.

Sin—Continued

Explanation of Old Testament Texts

The distinction of the various kinds of sin already made will help us to explain some texts in the Old Testament that point out man as a sinner all through his life. It is a mistake to bring them over to New Testament times and apply them to the New Testament standard of life. They were meant for the Old Testament and its standard of life and sin, and have no relation whatever to the New. Such texts as “There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccl. 7:20) and “There is no man that sinneth not” (1 Kings 8:46), ought never to be applied to the question of sin as it relates to us today. Few men besides the priests were acquainted with the law sufficiently to know when they were doing some things forbidden by it. There were few copies of the law outside of the temple and the synagogues. Certain ones said contemptuously in the time of Christ, “This people who knoweth not the law are cursed.” They were likely to commit sins of ignorance at any time; especially were they likely to violate the ceremonial law or to be contaminated by some uncleanness. Not only did they have to make atonement for themselves every now and then as individuals, but atonement had to be made on the great Day of Atonement every year for the whole nation. These and similar texts must be understood as relating to their time and situation.

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David said: “I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found” (Psa. 32:5, 6). I used to wonder why the godly were the ones who confessed their sins and asked for forgiveness, but since getting a clear view of Old Testament sins, I understand. It was natural that those who had a conscience toward God should be the ones most likely to confess their sins and to pray for forgiveness. Those who were less conscientious and less godly would be inclined to be indifferent if they did violate some of the commands of God. They would not be so careful to keep the ceremonial law, and infractions of it would not mean so much to them as to the godly; the godly would pray, while the others would not.

We turn now to the New Testament, and in it we shall find a simpler and truer standard.

Sin Under the New Testament

Sin is dealt with in the New Testament from a different angle from that from which it is viewed in the Old Testament. In the New Testament sin is not considered from the absolute standpoint. Sin is imputed only on the principles of justice. A man is imputed guilty only when he sins in a manner that makes him fully responsible for the act. A thing is not imputed as sin simply because it is an infraction of a perfect moral standard; various modifying circumstances are considered and each given its due weight. The New Testament does not recognize any ceremonial sin. It defines sin as moral evil, and that alone. It does not classify meats and animals as clean and unclean, nor regard any form of disease as rendering one spiritually unclean. It takes no note of uncleanness

except uncleanness of the moral faculties and of the acts that flow from such moral uncleanness. Ceremonial sin has no place whatever in the gospel economy. In the Old Testament there was a remedy provided, so that those who became unclean or sinned ceremonially might be cleansed; but under the new covenant we find no such provision made for such cleansing. The only ceremonial cleansing found in the New Testament is baptism, and that is “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh” nor any ceremonial uncleanness, but has its reference distinctly and altogether to moral impurity.

In the New Testament there is no such thing as accidental sin nor unwitting sin. Its definition of sin includes nothing of this kind. It is quite true that many present-day teachers do include such in their definition of sin, but this is incorrect and out of harmony with the teachings of the Scripture. Under the gospel, nothing but moral evil, that is, that which involves the moral nature of man, is sin. To be guilty of a moral evil, man’s moral faculties must be involved.

Definition of Moral Evil

A moral evil is any act or attitude that disrupts or disturbs the moral relation of moral beings or that sets up antagonism between them. All moral creatures naturally have certain rights and privileges, such as the right to have life, liberty, happiness, to possess what is theirs, etc.; and the moral relation of such beings is such that all these rights and privileges of each individual can be maintained undisturbed. Anything that encroaches on the moral rights of another, whether that other be God or a fellow being, is sin. Whenever we wilfully wrong our fellow man in anything, we sin against him and also against God. The normal state of all moral beings is one of moral correspondence and harmonious relation, so that the full rights of each is conserved and the highest happiness

and good of all maintained. Sin is a thing of relation. It is not a question of the intrinsic value of the act. To blaspheme a god whom we know exists in name only, cannot be sin; for it cannot change our relation, and when there is no change of relation, there can be no sin. If we were to blaspheme God, it would be sin, because it would be doing him an injustice and robbing him of the respect and reverence due him, and would create a discordant relation, for which we would be to blame.

What Gives Quality to Action

The moral quality of an act does not depend upon its wisdom, its timeliness, nor its success. In the responsible, moral sense, quality never lies in the act itself considered alone, nor in the results that flow from it. Acts that are identical may, and often do, differ greatly in moral significance. We must invariably go back of the act to find its quality. *Sin lies always in the will, and never in the act.* It is intent that gives moral value to an act; it is intent only that can make the act morally good or bad. Whatever is done with pure intent cannot be a moral wrong; whatever is done with a wrong purpose cannot be morally good, no matter what it may be. This fact is clearly stated in Rom. 14:5, 6—“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.” Here we find people doing exactly opposite things, but in each case the intent is to please the Lord. One regards the day because he believes the Lord is pleased that he should do so; the other disregards it because he feels that God does not desire him to regard it. One “eateth to the Lord,” that is, he gives God thanks and

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receives with appreciative heart the meat as being from the Lord; the other “eateth not,” since he feels that God desires him not to do so; he abstains with the purpose of pleasing God. Here is proof absolute that the quality of the act depends, not upon the nature of the act itself, but upon the intent back of it.

The man who looks to lust is as truly guilty as if the deed were done. The doing or not doing of the act does not change the moral value of the intent. If I purpose in my heart to do that which is wrong, I am guilty though the act is never committed. Circumstances may prevent my performing the act, but they cannot render me innocent. If I plan to commit murder and then fail in some way or have no opportunity to carry out my evil designs, I am nevertheless a murderer. There is a difference, however, between the sinful intent and the finished act: there is guilt in both cases, but the finished act involves others and affects them in a way that a mere intent cannot. Therefore, in this sense it is worse to do sin than it is merely to will to do it. He who plans murder but does not commit the deed does not have upon his conscience the blood of the victim, neither is the person deprived of his life, neither is the community shocked by a terrible crime. Guilt there is, to be sure, and it differs not in quality but only in degree from that which comes from the completed act.

Since, therefore, the New Testament judges the intent instead of the act, there can be no such thing as accidental sin. Sin is ever wilful; hence nothing can be sin except that which involves the will in a wrong way, but when the will becomes so involved, there is sin whether the purpose ever becomes translated into act or not.

What Gives Quality to Intent

The child desires to do things and does them and knows no reason why he should not do so. The enlightened person desires to

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do and does even though he knows a good reason why he should not so do. The one is innocent, the other guilty. Both transgress, but only one is imputed guilty. It is knowledge that gives quality to intent. The acts of a child can possess no moral quality, for there is no knowledge, which alone supplies the data for choice. His relation with God is passive and his acts, no matter what they are, do not affect it. The relation of the adult is active so far only as his knowledge goes, but thus far it is affected wholly by the acts or choices of his will, and every act into which choice enters affects that relation; but accident, things done in delirium or sleep, or through misapprehension, cannot affect him morally, since they do not involve the will or choice in a morally wrong way.

These truths are clearly set forth in the New Testament. Paul says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Again, he says, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (chap. 7:7). In verse 13 it is clearly shown that knowledge brings guilt. He says, "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." In chap. 4:15 he says, "Where no law is, there is no transgression," and in chap. 5:13 he says, "But sin is not imputed when there is no law." In other words, a person can be responsible for his acts and become guilty thereby only as he has knowledge of the quality of those acts. It is knowledge of the righteous principles involved that brings him to the place where he can intelligently act as a moral being, where he can choose between right and wrong in a manner to make him responsible for that choice. Paul says that "without the law sin was dead," that is, powerless. He continues, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9). The coming of the commandment means the coming of it to his understanding. He became enlightened by the commandment, and that changed his relations entirely. Through the

coming of the commandment, sin, which had been dead, or powerless, revived, and the “I,” who had been “alive without the law,” died because of the knowledge that the law brought him. He says elsewhere, “The strength of sin is the law” (1 Cor. 15:56). The law gave a knowledge of the moral quality of acts and of purposes; gave a standard of right and wrong. Responsibility to that standard became immediate. This responsibility gave sin its opportunity. The child chooses to do many things in his unenlightened state that are in themselves violations of the moral law, but sin is not imputed to him, since he is not in a position to choose from moral considerations. He considers only his desires. He can consider nothing else, for he knows nothing else. Until he is enlightened, there can be no quality in choice; but as soon as he becomes enlightened, choice at once has quality, and his purposes then become either good or bad.

When Sin is Imputed

Sin is imputed only when there is involved the active or passive consent of the will to do wrong. In the last analysis, sin is always rebellion against God. It is choosing and willing that which we believe to be wrong, to be contrary to God’s will or law. Nothing else is sin or can be sin under the New Testament definition. Sin always involves intentionality. It is always a choice of that which is believed to be wrong, and always discloses a wrong attitude of heart toward the right. The choosing of the evil may be done without consideration, or it may be done after consideration, but in either case the act is the result of choosing evil. Sometimes we do things with a good intent, and they do not turn out as we expect them to do. Sometimes we feel bad over the outcome, but we should not condemn ourselves as having sinned. God does not look at the outcome; he looks at the purpose. It is only when choice rebels

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against what we believe to be the will of God that we become sinners.

Sometimes there is a twofold intent in action—an immediate intent and one more remote. We may desire to see something accomplished that would be very good, and we purpose to do that good thing, but in choosing means to the end, we may choose that which is evil. This involves two choices—the choice of the end (remote choice) and the choice of the means by which that end is to be attained (immediate choice). Sometimes it is held that the end justifies the use of wrong means, or that it is lawful to attain the end by the use of any means. This is untrue. Both the immediate and the remote choice must be good, or sin is involved. Speaking on this point, Paul says, “For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner, and not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil that good may come?” (Rom. 3:7, 8). Here he plainly teaches that even though the object aimed at is good, if the means used are improper, a person is judged as a sinner. To do evil that good may come is evil in the sight of the Lord. All intent, therefore, that enters into action must be pure.

Effects of Sin

Sin affects moral relation and conscience, both or either. When moral relations are affected, these relations must be restored; and when conscience is affected, it must be satisfied. Acts sometimes involve the conscience when they do not change the moral relation nor violate any principle of righteousness; that is, a person may do certain things in good faith, not questioning their moral quality, either before or at the time of acting, but supposing them to be right, and *afterward* may come to consider them wrong. In such a case

God does not impute the acts as sin, though the person may sometimes feel as though he had sinned. To restore the spiritual repose under such circumstances, it is necessary only to satisfy the conscience. When moral relations are disturbed by transgressions, there must be such repentance and reconciliation as will fully restore these relations, at least so far as the transgressor and God are concerned. If fellow men are involved, they may refuse to be reconciled, but in such a case the sinner is clear when he has done his part to effect such reconciliation.

Three Ways to Sin

Under the New Testament there are three ways, and only three, to commit sin. These include everything that God counts sin. The first way is by the wilful transgression of a known divine law. John says, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). When we give the consent of our will to do that which we know to be wrong, we sin. As already pointed out, things done by accident, under compulsion, or in any way except where the will is involved, where the will chooses to do that which it knows to be wrong, are not now imputed as sin.

The second way to sin is thus expressed by James: “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17). This implies a refusal to do what we know we ought to do. Such refusal involves the will. Things left undone through lack of knowledge of duty are not sin; things omitted because there is not power to do them is not sin. It is implied that we could do if we would, but that we refuse to do, that the not doing is because of choosing not to do, and not from any other cause.

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The third way of sinning is by violating the conscience or by doing that which we believe to be wrong, outside of the things commanded in the Bible. Paul lays down the principle covering this when he says, “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything unclean, to him it is unclean” (Rom. 14:14). Again, he says, “All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense” (verse 20). “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned [condemned] if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (verses 22, 23). According to the principle already laid down, an act is right or wrong according as the choice involved is right or wrong, and not according to the intrinsic value of the act itself. If we believe a thing to be wrong morally, no matter whether the Bible says anything about it or not, and we choose that thing, our choice is involved in a wrong way and becomes evil; and therefore the deed, since it gets its quality from choice, becomes evil.

These are the only three ways in which a person can sin according to the New Testament. In every case where sin is imputed, the act must be wilful; that is, a wrong or supposed wrong must be deliberately chosen. Nothing else is sin or can be. All conduct must be judged by this rule; it is the only true standard. It is an accurate and true standard, and never varies in its application.

The testimony of those who say that they are Christians, but that they sin more or less every day, implies one of two things—either that they are willingly and wilfully disobedient, and could obey if they would but do not do so from choice, or that God demands of them what they are unable to do even with the grace that he gives. Either is a serious charge, reflecting severely on man or God. If man

can do right and will not, he becomes exceedingly sinful. He is an outright rebel, setting up his will before the will of God. If he says that God demands too much of him and that try as he will, using all the grace that God gives, he is still unable to be obedient, then he charges God foolishly. He charges God with being unjust; for God would be highly unjust if he should require of us that which we could not do. The man who says that he is a Christian and then admits that he sins more or less every day, must take one or the other of the horns of this dilemma. Let him look this subject squarely in the face; let him consider it in all its bearings; and then let him look up into the face of God and say whether he can be a Christian and sin in view of these facts, that is, whether he can continue sinning and at the same time continue to be a Christian.

When Christians Sin

The normal Christian life has already been illustrated from the Scriptures. It is not needful to repeat that here. I will, however, call attention to the picture drawn by Paul in the sixth chapter of Romans: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (verses 11-14, 18, 22). This is positive and explicit, and needs only to be read with care.

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It is true that in this world we are surrounded by temptations and may sin at any time; but if we do sin, we are at once brought under condemnation. There is but one way to be absolved, and that is by repentance and confession. If we sin, God will never forget it; the record will not fade out of his book of remembrance; time will neither condone it nor remove its guilt. God's "mercy endureth forever," but mercy ripens into forgiveness only when there is penitence and confession. Impenitence greatly aggravates sin. It causes the heart to be hardened and finally to be set in an attitude of stubbornness and rebellion. Many times people sin and think that they will repent in some revival meeting some time later, and be restored to God. This is utter folly. Repentance should be immediate. Neglect is always a form of rebellion. When a Christian sins, the Spirit immediately tries to bring him to repentance. If he refuses or neglects to repent, he is holding himself in a sinful attitude and may thus greatly increase his sin. God is kind and merciful. He desires a reconciliation as much and even more than is possible for us to desire it. When one has sinned, the thing to do is to come to God in open-hearted confession. Form a habit of being open-hearted with God, of being on familiar terms with him. Treat him as you would your very dearest friend. He will always have mercy on our sins if we will be truly penitent and seek him with all our hearts. He has said, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:1, 2).

Principles of Divine Law

Laws are of two kinds. First, there is arbitrary law, or law based on the will of the lawmaker, or upon his caprice or whim. Such laws are not based on considerations of right or justice; they are based on authority. They may be just or unjust, or partly just and partly unjust. Such laws as these have characterized tyrants in all ages of history. In making them men have consulted only their own wills or their own pleasure. There is another kind of law, that is, reasonable law, which is based upon the principles of reason and justice. Such laws embody the principles of right; they are based upon right, not upon authority.

God being a God of justice, his laws embody the true principles of justice and righteousness. They are not arbitrary in their nature. God does not command things just because he has the authority; back of every requirement is a just and adequate reason. In speaking of God's law in the New Testament, Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation . . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed" (Rom. 1:16, 17). From this scripture we see that in giving his law (the gospel) God had no selfish purpose. He did not give it as the result of a mere whim or caprice. He has no desire to command things just to show his authority. His law reveals his righteousness. It can do so only if it is truly just and reasonable. Some people seem to think that

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God is a tyrant and that he requires of us some very unreasonable things, even impossible things. He does command things that are not acceptable to us in our sinful state, but when we are once saved, we can say with him of old, “O how love I thy law!” (Psa. 119:97). John said, “His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). This is the testimony of everyone who is of a willing heart to serve him. Micah puts it in this way: “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic. 6:8). God’s laws seem extreme and harsh and rigid only to those who have not the spirit of obedience in their hearts.

God is a being of the greatest benevolence. God is love. His highest happiness, like ours, must come from unselfish purposes. There is a sort of selfish happiness, or a happiness that we may have and still be selfish or that may flow from selfish purposes, but that happiness is a very low form of happiness. The higher and truer form of happiness can come only through unselfishness; therefore, it must come largely from the happiness of others. Our truest happiness comes from making others happy and having their happiness reflected in our own life. This is true of God as well as of man. He finds his happiness most truly in making others happy. Any laws, therefore, that he has given his creatures are for the purpose of making them happy. Every law that he has made for us is for our good and is necessary for our safety and wellbeing.

His laws are not intended merely to restrict us nor to prevent in any measure our happiness. On the contrary, all restrictions are wholly with a purpose to increase our happiness by preventing that which would be fatal to our highest happiness. He requires us to give up nothing but what is harmful to us. He never requires anything from arbitrary selfishness. He requires us to give up sin and the

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follies of this world because they work destruction to our own happiness, to the happiness and good of others, and to our eternal interests. Selfish happiness is the lowest type of happiness; so he forbids it that we may be more happy. He does not place a single restriction upon us unless that restriction is necessary in its very nature. To secure felicity for us is the chief object and purpose of all his laws, and all his working for us, and all things that he requires of us. He knows that in order for us to be happy we must be holy; so he requires us to be holy and to give up all that would prevent our being so. True happiness can come only from correspondence with God, so he requires this of us. So long as our own happiness is the end in view in our lives, we can never be truly happy. If our own happiness is the thing we seek, our purpose is purely selfish and can never result in real happiness. God never seeks his own happiness as an end. He would be selfish if he did, and so could not be truly happy. True happiness always results from unselfish and pure purposes and acts. If we are righteous for righteousness' sake, happiness is the result.

The New Testament is not a book of rules, but a revelation of principles. God deals not with technicalities but with principles. In the Old Testament most of the laws were specific, as was necessary for that time, and revealed the principle only through some special application. In the New Testament the principle is usually revealed and the application of it to the details of life left to us. In every case we are to endeavor to get a correct understanding of the principle involved. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6). As already stated, the New Testament is not a book of rules, though many persons have looked upon it as such. This has led to many and serious errors. This view is a prolific source of fanaticism and extremism. Every command of the New Testament is based on some broad principle of righteousness. We need to go back of the letter of

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the command; we need to get the principle. If we are technical in our interpretations, we shall almost invariably miss the principle involved, and when we miss the principle, we have only the empty shell without the kernel. There is a “why” back of every requirement, and until we learn what this is, our fulfilment of the requirement will be only a blind submission to authority.

People often adhere very rigidly and literally to some precept or teaching while they freely violate the principle in other things. This is well illustrated in the case of certain monks in a monastery in Europe. They are said to have had a prolonged controversy among themselves as to who could obey in the most Christian way Christ’s command, “Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” So one would smite another on the cheek, and the one smitten would bear it with all the equanimity possible. Then he in turn would smite the other upon the cheek with all his might, and that one would bear it as well as he was able. After such contests of stoicism they would fall to quarreling most violently as to which one had shown the most Christian spirit. While they were doing literally what Christ commanded, they were in reality violating its principle in the most open manner. How careful some people are to keep the Sabbath holy (?) who during the week can lie, steal, cheat, or do almost anything of the sort without troubling their conscience! Only when we learn the principles involved and then apply them in all the activities of our lives are we truly Christ-like, truly obedient.

To illustrate what I mean by the principle and the precept, or the difference between them, I call attention to Matt. 6:17, 18. In warning the disciples against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in their fastings, Jesus gave directions how a person should fast. Here is the precept: “But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face.” But here is the principle: “That thou appear not unto men

to fast.” Today, under changed conditions, we must either violate the precept or the principle. At that time and in that country it was common for people to anoint their heads every day; at this time and in this country there is no such custom. If, therefore, we should carry out the precept now, anointing our heads when we fasted, it would appear to all men that we were fasting; if we would not appear unto men to fast, we must not anoint our heads on that special occasion. The principle is the thing of importance; and if we have learned that and apply it in our lives, it will fit all occasions and all customs. If we cling to the letter of the law, we shall oftentimes find ourselves missing the real intent and purpose; we shall have the shadow without the substance, the letter without the spirit.

God’s laws are flexible in their nature, except where moral principles require rigidity. They are adapted by infinite wisdom to man’s state and need in all ages, climates, states of society, and stages of enlightenment. The sacred books of other religions are adapted only to the nations, the geographical location, and the state of society existing where they were given. The New Testament is different. It is a revelation of broad principles; therefore, it is applicable to every time and in every place and to every condition. It says that we shall love one another, but it does not mention all the variety of ways in which that love will manifest itself. It does not enumerate all the things that love will lead us to do, nor describe all the feelings that love will cause us to have. It says, “Do good to all men,” but it does not explain fully to us what this means; it leaves us to make the application ourselves when we once learn the principle. It teaches us that we should dress in modest apparel, but it does not tell us all about what modest apparel is. It does not give us a list of all the things that may be worn and say, “This is modest” and “This is immodest”; in fact, it has very little to say as to what is and what is not modest. It leaves to each age and time and place the

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formation of a definition of modesty. The principle, however, applies in all ages and to all people, from the king upon his throne to the ordinary citizen and even down to the slave. It teaches us that we should not steal nor swear nor lie, but it leaves to us to formulate a definition of these things; and if we are willing to regulate our lives according to his will, he will help us to find a definition that is satisfactory both to himself and to us.

God's law is flexible. An absolutely rigid code would defeat its own end. If God had required men to measure up to an absolutely perfect moral standard, the result would have been that no one could have been saved. For that reason, his law must be flexible. It must fit all conditions, all times and views and circumstances. Under the Mosaic law God permitted divorce for many causes, even though it was contrary to the true principles of marriage. Under the New Testament he tolerated polygamy, also slavery and the moderate use of intoxicating liquors. These were evils that could not be extirpated immediately. The leaven of Christianity must work until the people were raised to a height of understanding where they could see the evil of these things and lay them aside. This flexibility of the law is shown in the case of Naaman. Though he promised to serve the true God only, he was permitted to return and go with his king to worship in the idol's house and even bow down with the king. He was required by his position to do this, and the prophet did not ask him to surrender his position. See 2 Kings 5:18, 19.

As nations or individuals become more enlightened, they become able to apply the law in a more perfect way. Things are wrong to some that are not wrong to others, since some are more enlightened and can better apply the principles. We are never justified in doing a thing just because others have done it or are doing it. Each of us is required to live to his own highest standard.

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Slavery, once esteemed all right, is now considered a great evil. Society has come to see a higher standard of human rights. Science has taught us the evils of the use of alcohol and narcotics, and so a higher standard has come to prevail in regard to their use. God overlooked what he could not at the time prevent, and his law by its flexibility was adapted to the needs of the age. Its flexibility now makes provision for our failure to understand and apply it perfectly to our own lives, but that accommodativeness can never cover willful disregard of duty. The Bible, not the fathers, is our standard. It may pass over our ignorance, but never over willful wrong-doing. God is ever as lenient as he ought to be, but never more so. His law was made to be kept, not to be broken.

How to Walk to Please God

Sometimes people think that the Lord is a hard master. They are ready to say, like the servant, in the parable of the Pounds, “I feared thee, because thou art an austere man” (Luke 19:21). The motive of the service of such persons is fear, not love. They serve God because they are afraid punishment will come upon them if they do not. They look at the results of not doing instead of looking at the results of doing. Their religion is a negative thing, and can have little of joy in it. Their service is a forced service, and not really and truly a willing service. If they do not serve God, hell will be their doom; therefore, they try to do that which is right or which they esteem to be right.

God is not a hard master. His requirements are all reasonable. Thus says Micah: “What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic. 6:8). Is there any hardship in that? anything that we cannot gladly do? No, God is not a hard master; he is a God of loving-kindness and of tender mercy. Paul calls our service to him a “reasonable service.” God is always just; he is always kind; he always makes all the allowance that he ought to make for us. If we are weak, he will strengthen us; if we are ignorant, he will give us of his wisdom; if we grow faint, he will uphold us; if he is kind to the unthankful and the evil, how much more so will he be to those who love him and try earnestly to serve him. He is not hard to please, and if we really

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try to please him, we shall not only succeed, but have the testimony of his Spirit in our hearts that he is well pleased with us.

He can be pleased only with that which is right. He hates iniquity; he hates every evil thing and can find no pleasure whatever in such. If, then, we would please him, we must depart from evil; must shut it out of our lives; must allow none of our conduct to be evil. God is pleased with that which is good and all that is good. In order to please him, therefore, we have only to do that which is good and right. Some people think that the Christian life is an unnatural and hard life; they seem to think that we must put ourselves in a sort of strait-jacket and live a life of bondage. They look at the negative aspect of the life and think that the life of the Christian consists in not doing and not being and not feeling and not thinking this, that, and the other. They feel that they must shut themselves off from that which they naturally desire. This is looking at things from the wrong angle. The Christian life is a positive life; it consists in doing and being. It is not an unnatural or forced life; it is not a strained life. It is not a life in which we have to repress all our normal desires; on the contrary, it is a life wherein our desires are brought into conformity to the will of God so that we can carry out these desires in a natural and normal and holy way, and find in carrying them out our truest pleasure and God's greatest glory.

The Christian life is not a repression of desire. It is the revolution of desire, so that our desires become holy desires and our purposes become holy purposes. If we try to live Christians without this revolution, we shall have a hard and irksome task. That is why so many professors say they have such a "hard row to hoe." The reason why they find little or no joy in Christian service is because their lives have not been transformed by the power of God. Their life is lived wholly in their own power. It is thus an unnatural and

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powerless life, one beset with many difficulties, and one which cannot be a real Christian life, but at best can be only a cold formality.

The Christian life is a life full of warmth and strength and beauty. The law of that life is love. We are to walk in love. To do this we must lay aside all selfish purposes. This is not hard if we really love. That is the question—Do we really love? Christ is our example in pleasing God. He said, “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). Why did he do this? and how was he able to do this? It was because he loved the Father with a pure and tender love; it was because he loved the things that the Father loved. The basis of all acceptable service is love. God could force us to serve him had he chosen that way, but that service would never have satisfied the heart of God or the heart of man. Love, not force, is God’s method. He has not put us under compulsory law; he has left for us to choose whether we will serve him or not. There is no harshness in his rule. He will not compel us. Jesus thus stated the foundation of God’s law: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings” (John 14:21, 23, 24). If we love, we will serve, not because we must, but because we love. The only compulsion is the compulsion of love, and that, after all, is the strongest of all compulsion. If we love God, we desire with all our hearts and with all our strength to please him. We shall seek throughout our lives to conform to his will in all the details and in all the aspects of our lives. It is not hard for love to serve; in fact, love finds its greatest delight in service. It is true that there is self-denial in service, but to love, self-denial is not bitter, but sweet. How

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gladly we lay ourselves out for those whom we love! and how sweet is the approval thus gained! The early Christians “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.” They bore persecution of the bitterest kind and rejoiced. Why could they do this? Because they loved.

The power of love is illustrated by the following incident: A minister who was ill was lying on a couch one day while his little girl played around the room in her childish way. Presently he said to her, “Daughter, will you bring Papa a drink?” She went on with her playing as though she had not heard him. He repeated his request. She was all absorbed in her play, and said, “Oh, I don’t want to.” Her father said, “I thought you loved Papa.” Instantly she dropped her playthings, her face lighted up, and she started, saying, “Oh, yes, Papa, I’ll go, I’ll go”; and quickly she ran and brought the desired drink. When her love was appealed to, her response was immediate. So God appeals to our love, and if that love is genuine, our response to him will be ready.

The contemplation of God’s love and goodness is the strongest possible incentive to live holy. We love him because he first loved us and gave himself for us. When we behold how good and how kind he has been through all our lives, how he has borne with our evil ways and not cut us off, how he still offered us mercy day after day until finally he won our love—when we view all this, how strongly we are impelled to serve him and how easy his service becomes! We do not wish to wound those whom we truly love.

We may find many things in the Christian life that are hard to do with our own strength, but we do not have to trust to our own strength alone. Paul, who had learned the secret of the Christian life, says, “Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). Ah, that is the great secret of the life! That is what makes it easy, that is what makes it joyful, that is what makes it glorious—

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Christ liveth in us. Again, it is said, “It is God which worketh in you” (Phil. 2:13). The secret of a victorious life is permitting him to work in us—submitting to him that his will may be wrought in us, and not only submitting, but throwing our will actively with his, causing his will to be accomplished. Too many people try to live the Christian life without first becoming Christians. They take upon themselves a profession of religion, but they do not get Christ in their hearts. Their service is all a human service, and consequently it fails and comes short and is inadequate. Throw open your heart’s door. Let Christ come in to reign. Let him be the power that worketh in you, and then you can live the kind of life that will please him. To try in your own strength is but to fail. To succeed you must needs have his power joined with your power.

For a year and a half, the writer tried to be a Christian before he really became a Christian. It was his heart’s true purpose to serve God and do right, but alas, how often he came short! alas, how often he was involved in sin! Sometimes he felt that it was not worth trying any more, that only failure awaited him. At last he threw himself upon the mercy of God and received Jesus Christ into his life. What an unspeakably glorious change was wrought! He could now live—Christ could live in him; and for more than twenty-five years he has proved the Christian life to be an easy, a natural, and a happy life filled with the glory and grace of God. Christ broke the gravitation earthward and established a gravitation heavenward. From that time forward, service was delightful, and it has been his joy to follow Christ, and he knows what it is from personal experience to have the testimony of the Spirit of God in his heart that God is well pleased with him. He is not an isolated example. There are tens of thousands who know this in their own lives and hearts. They live this kind of life and have this kind of testimony. In fact, such is the outcome of a true Christian experience. If service is

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hard, it is from a lack of love. If service is imperfect, it is from a lack of love. Therefore, let us love that we may serve, and serve because we love.

Adorning the Doctrine

In Tit. 2:10 we read, “That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” The doctrine of God as revealed in the New Testament is a glorious system of truth. His law is a high and holy law, and one that excites our admiration. When it is preached, it draws men unto it and unto God. Even in the worst of men there is something that approves it. It is strikingly beautiful and high. It has a grandeur all its own. The problem of the Christian is to translate it from words into deeds and life and character. When this is done, the gospel is seen to be a practical reality, and not a lofty and impossible standard.

Our lives are to adorn the gospel in all things. To adorn means to ornament, to beautify. Only that which is beautiful and attractive can adorn; hence if we adorn the doctrine of Christ we must be attractive and beautiful in character and life. But can our lives and characters be such as to adorn the doctrine? God has promised to “beautify the meek with salvation” (Psa. 149:4). In Psa. 29:2 we are told to “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” In the sight of the Lord, therefore, holiness is beautiful. It is also beautiful in the sight of men when they look at it with unprejudiced eyes. Sin, on the other hand, is unlovely and defiling in all its aspects. There is nothing in it to adorn the life or the character. It is ruinous. “Sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). Only when we are made holy

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can we adorn the doctrine of Jesus Christ our Savior. Only when we are made partakers of the divine nature and have in us the beauty of the Son of God can we shine so as to adorn the doctrine as jewels. Speaking of his children, the Lord said, “And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels” (Mal. 3:17). Speaking of his people collectively as his bride, the Lord says, “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:8). This shows a condition in which his people must be in order to adorn his doctrine, and this is the condition to which he will bring us if we but give him the opportunity. Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). It is in this way that we adorn the doctrine. The doctrine teaches such good works, and when those good works are seen in our lives, it reacts to the glory of the doctrine and to him who gave the doctrine.

If we desired to adorn ourselves, we should not put on old rags, stick lumps of clay around over our clothing, nor put on anything that was repellent. We know very well that such would attract no one. We would not smear our faces with soot or dirty grease to render ourselves attractive. How ashamed the housewife feels when visitors come and find her children with dirty hands and faces and clothes ragged and unclean! As these things destroy attractiveness, so does ill conduct. One who professes to be a Christian and yet whose life and character are not Christ-like cannot adorn the doctrine. Unkindness in a person does not attract us to him nor to his religion. Untruthfulness or insincerity is not only a blot on his own character and life, but a blot on his religion if he professes to be a Christian. To be harsh or rude or unreasonable, to be selfish or self-willed, or to be proud, is to dishonor God instead of honoring him.

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Sometimes persons are hard to please. Do as you will, you cannot satisfy them. They are always wanting things some other way. These same persons are sometimes very well pleased with themselves, but nobody else can come up to their standard or do as they desire him to do. This is not a characteristic of holiness. This is not something that will honor God. Instead of these things and other things like them being an advertisement of grace, they show the lack of it. What would such persons do if they were to go to heaven? The mere transference from earth to heaven will not change our moral state. If there is anything in us here that we should not like to have in us in eternity, here is the place to get the change made. Here is the place to have our lives made as we desire them to be in eternity. Here is the place for character-building. Here is the place to become Christ-like. Here is the place to adorn the doctrine, that men may see your good works. God has told us that nothing that defiles shall enter heaven. Only that which is beautiful and good will be there.

Oh for more holy lives! Oh for more consistency among those who profess to be Christ's! Oh for more of the glory of the Lord resting upon hearts and lives! Oh for more of the beauty of salvation, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit! Many professors of religion adorn themselves outwardly with gold, pearls, and costly array, with feathers and flowers, and with many other things that they think adorn them; but oh for that inner adornment of heart that is precious in the sight of God and that lets the beauty of God's light shine out into the world! How often outward adornment covers a heart filled with iniquity! How often such adornment is the outward show of that inward pride which God hates! How often it reveals the corruption of the nature instead of its purity!

God wants our lives to be adorned with jewels, and the gold in which those jewels are to be set is purity. This is the background

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upon which all the jewels of character are to be displayed. It is the fundamental requirement in every life. If we are not pure, our lives will not be pure, and God will not be glorified. Impurity in word or thought or desire cannot long be hidden; it will manifest itself, and always in a way to dishonor the individual and his God. The pure in heart and life always shine for God, and they always adorn his doctrine. God wants us to be true and faithful. He desires “truth in the inward parts” (Psa. 51:6). He desires truth manifested in the life. He wants all our words to be true. He does not want us to speak evil of any man. He does not want us to speak that which dishonors him, or that which is evil in his sight. He wants us to be faithful, “showing all good fidelity,” as he has said. Fidelity is one of the most glorious of Christian virtues. God wants us to be faithful to our word, faithful in our dealings, faithful in our public life and in our private life, and faithful in every way. In this way we can adorn the doctrine. If we are unfaithful, we dishonor him. He wants us to be earnest and sincere, to be gentle and meek, to have the law of kindness in our tongues. He wants us to be kind in our thoughts, in our actions, in our words. He would have the sound of his own kindness in our voices, the look of his own kindness in our eyes, and his own pity and tenderness in our feelings. He desires us to be temperate—temperate in our lives, our actions, our words, in every way. If we are to adorn the doctrine, we must avoid excesses and extremes. We must also be reasonable in the positions we take, in our actions, and in the things that we require of others. By this means people will see that we are Christ-like, and the doctrine will be glorified and adorned as no earthly jewels can adorn it. Men will listen to it and say that it is true, for that person lives just as the Book teaches.

Fellowship with God

Some people would have us believe that after God created the world he went off about his business elsewhere and now pays no attention whatever to mankind nor to their interests. They think that whatever happens now is merely the result of the operation of natural forces. If they consider God to be anything more than force, they think him so far away as to be totally out of our reach. They scoff at prayer and of our speaking of having personal relations with God. Such teaching does not alarm the Christian, nor disturb him in any way. Its advocates might as well tell him that there is no sun shining in the heavens when he feels the glow of its warmth and sees everything around him lighted up with its beams. The Christian knows God. He is no more a stranger nor a foreigner, but he has been brought into personal and tender relations with God. John says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). Fellowship does not imply cold and formal relation, or no relation at all. It implies that the relations are close and intimate. John believed that there is something very practical and very real about the relations that we are to sustain to God, and after telling us about this relationship, he said, "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (verse 4). There is something in this fellowship that

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creates joy. Every true Christian knows that this is true. He knows it, not as a matter of theory, but as a matter of his own experience.

Fellowship implies a likeness of nature and of interests. There can be no fellowship unless there is a mutual correspondence. “For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” (2 Cor. 6:14-16). Sinners cannot have fellowship with God. They are utterly unlike him; they have no correspondence with him. There are tens of thousands of church-members who have never known from their own experience what fellowship with God means. They are still sinners and know that they are sinners; therefore, they are shut off from fellowship with him. John says, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 John 1:6).

God makes the Christian like himself in nature and character, and therefore the Christian is in a position to have fellowship with him. Speaking of this, Paul says, “For we are made partakers of Christ” (Heb. 3:14). In Heb. 12:10 he says, “That we might be partakers of his holiness.” Peter, speaking on this point, says, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). It is because God implants in us his very nature and likeness that we have correspondence with him. When we have the same nature, it is natural that our interests should run in the same channel.

Fellowship implies a partnership. “We are laborers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:9). We become, as it were, business partners with God. We are saved to serve, not saved for idleness. God has a great work to do in the world. For that work he wants many partners.

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He can fill many hands with activity. God's work is to save the world, and how glorious it is that we can have fellowship therein or have a part in this great work! We are partners with God in the salvation of our own souls. True, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but, at the same time, it is God that worketh with us. Some seem to think that the burden and responsibility for saving their souls lies entirely upon their own shoulders; others think that they can do nothing to bring about their own salvation, but that it is a matter wholly dependent upon God. Both these views are extreme. We have a part and God has a part. God is as much interested in our being saved as we can be interested; therefore he joins his forces with ours, and together we work out the glorious accomplishment of his purpose. We have burdens to bear, but he is our helper. We have difficulties to meet, but he is our strength. What we can do, he expects us to do; but what we cannot do, he is ever ready to do. Dear soul, God wants your life to be a success here in this world, and he wants you to reach heaven safely in the end. He desires it so much that he has agreed to go into partnership with you and to throw all his resources into the balance to enable you to accomplish his purpose. You do not have to fight your battles alone; you do not have to bear your burdens without help. Your strength is too small for this, but you have a glorious partner, one who will help you in every time of need; therefore look to him and lean upon him. Trust him, and you will make a success of it. You are sure to win if you trust your partner and do your part.

We are partners in manifesting his grace to the world. He cannot show his grace as he would like to except through humanity. He wants us to give ourselves to him and let him so manifest his grace in us that others may know how glorious it is. The world can know God most easily through his children, and so God gives to us the supply of his grace, not only so that we ourselves may be benefited,

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but so that the world may know the riches of his grace in us and, seeing it in us, may be led to seek it directly from him.

We are partners with God in saving others. God saves souls largely through the human instrumentality. Our part in this partnership is the giving of ourselves—our hands, our feet, our tongues, our ears, our minds, our hearts, our all, in fact—to be dedicated to this high and holy work. Let us not hold back ourselves from this fellowship. Let us join in it with all our ransomed powers, that the world may be saved.

Fellowship implies friendship. Jesus said, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends” (John 15:14, 15). We were once enemies, but now being reconciled by his blood, we have become his friends. On that friendship he places one condition; that is, that we obey him in all that he tells us. In our partnership with him, he must be the managing partner. His children are glad to have him be such. Abraham was called the friend of God. God does not want us to have merely a speaking acquaintance with him; he wants us to be on terms of close and intimate friendship. Human friendship means much to us. The man who realizes that he has no friends is lonely indeed. How little of good the world holds for him! How little his life seems to amount to! How fortunate the one who has many friends! How these ties enrich his life! If human friendship means so much to us, how much more will the divine friendship, and how much more will our lives be enriched by it! What a wonderful privilege it is, then, to be the friend of God, to have him who is greatest of all for our friend! But God is in heaven, and we are upon earth. Friendship is blessed even though we are far from our friends, far separated by space from their presence. How our memory loves to dwell upon them! How

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well we like to think of the associations of former days! How we desire their presence with us now! How we appreciate letters from them and news from them! But it is when we meet them and see them and hear their voices that our joy is stirred. Will God be to us only as a far-away friend? Will he be only “our Father which art in heaven”? Ah, no! our fellowship with him will be something more than this.

Fellowship means companionship. Fellowship with God means companionship with him. The angel said, “They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matt. 1:23). Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). “He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him” (verse 21). What gracious promises these are! Again, he says, “I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20). “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). What can be dearer to us than being in the presence of those whom we love? These promises are not mere words; they are to be realized as facts of human experience. God is with us. He is not with us merely in the sense that he is everywhere, but in a special sense he comes to abide with us, to dwell in us, to sup with us, and to be our companion through life. Words cannot express what the Spirit is to the Christian. Our eyes cannot see the Holy Spirit, our ears cannot hear him, our hands cannot handle him, but nevertheless that divine presence is with us, and in our inmost heart we feel him and see him and hear him and know him. Nothing can be sweeter than the conscious presence of God abiding with us. His presence is not secret. He is not present without our knowing it. Christ said, “I will manifest myself unto him.”

Oh, how blessed this companionship! How satisfying to the inmost soul! If the world could know it, how they would hasten to secure him to be their friend! but alas! they do not know it. It is a thing hidden from their eyes; it is a thing of which they cannot truly conceive. Its sweetness, its depth, its glorious realities, are hidden from them. It is also hidden from many professors of religion. It has a strange sound to them when we speak of it. They do not understand what we mean. They look at us with uncomprehending eyes. They know nothing of the kind in their own experience. This is because their religion is a matter of externals, leaving the soul cold and empty. If they will but surrender really to Christ and receive him into their hearts, they may know this blessed companionship. If they will forsake their sins and submit themselves to his will, he will gladly come unto them and let them taste of the sweetness of his love and the blessedness of his presence.

Fellowship not only implies companionship, but communion. He is our Father, and we are permitted to have intimate relations and privileges as sons. There is a sense of understanding between the soul and God. It knows God, and it knows that God knows it and understands it. How sweet is this sense of being understood! How blessed it is to go into the secret of his presence and lay before him all the troubles of our souls, to tell him our desires, our aspirations, our thoughts, our purposes, and to know that he understands them all and that he gives to us his sympathetic affection! If others misunderstand us, he will not. He knows and he cares. Even when words fail us, so that we cannot tell him what we would, we know that he can read the secrets of our hearts. He not only hears, but replies. He speaks to us in our inner consciousness in a way that the soul can understand, and when he speaks to us, how sweet the sound

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of his words and how our souls are stirred! Like the disciples of old, we may say, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?” The sound of his voice causes our hearts to leap with joy and to burn within us. In vain do we try to describe this experience.

Fellowship with God means a partaking with or sharing with him. This glorious privilege we are permitted to enjoy. Not only do we partake of the divine nature when we are saved from sin, but he opens the storehouse of his kingdom and gives to us of his treasures. He is not selfish with his pleasures. He wishes us to enjoy them with him. The Psalmist says: “How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures” (Psa. 36:7, 8). Jesus said, “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 as though the heart of God overran with joy into our hearts. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents; there is joy in our hearts at the same time. How we rejoice to see the wanderer come home! How we rejoice at the prosperity of Zion! How we rejoice in the rejoicing of God’s children!

We are made partakers of his peace. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27). Again, it is written, “Great peace have they which love thy law” (Psa. 119:165). Paul says, “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). How wonderful is the fellowship of God’s peace! It comes into our hearts dispelling all our fears, quieting all our troubles, and bringing a great calm, a joyful calm which brings our hearts and minds to sweet repose. The surface of our lives may be stirred by many a storm and

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the waves of trouble may beat upon us, but down underneath all the commotion there remains that settled calm—the peace of God. Sorrow may come and cause our tears to fall like rain; business disasters may rob us of our possessions; but underneath all is the peace of God in the heart. Oh the peace of God! How inexpressibly sweet it is to the human heart! and how blessed to be allowed the privilege of the fellowship of his peace!

We partake of his grace also. Of the early church we read that “great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33). We partake of his love. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5). How rich the fruitage of this glorious union with God! It is hidden from the eyes of the world; how little they know of it! The Christian knows of it. He enjoys the realization of it in his own heart. It is the very life and strength of his soul. But he cannot tell it to one who does not know of it from personal experience, any more than he can tell the flavor of a fruit to one who has never tasted it. We must taste ourselves and see that the Lord is good; and this is the privilege that God freely gives to us if we will serve him. The way to partake of this fellowship is to draw nigh to God. The nearer we come to him, the more intimate relations are established between our souls and God, the more perfectly we partake of this fellowship and the richer and sweeter it becomes to our souls.

There is another phase of this fellowship quite different from that of which I have been speaking. Paul says, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings” (Phil. 3:10). He explains this in Col. 1:24—“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh.” In Phil. 1:29 he says, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but

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also to suffer for his sake.” Suffering is a thing from which most people shrink. They marvel that it should be a part of the Christian life, but it is a part, nevertheless. In speaking to Ananias of Paul, Christ said, “For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). When we read his life, we find that it was a life of suffering.

But why should the Christian have to suffer when he has turned away from his sins and is doing what he knows to please God? Why should suffering be laid upon him? Is it not a burden that he should not be asked to bear? Ah no, it is not such a burden! It is one of God’s blessings to us. It is God’s most useful tool in forming Christian character. Only by pain can he make us into his image.

Behold how our Master suffered for us. What ignominy, what shame, yea, what cruelty, came upon his devoted head! He suffered for us that he might bring us to God; but after he had suffered the utmost that was in the power of his enemies to inflict upon him, he went back to heaven, and now they cannot reach him. He is not here in fleshly form so that evil men may vent their wrath upon him now as in the days of his flesh. He still dwells here, but he dwells in the hearts of his people, and all the enmity and wicked rage and malice of sinners that would be directed toward him if he were here in person, is still directed toward him, but it is directed toward him in the hearts of his people. So Paul, looking at the matter thus, called his sufferings filling “up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ” (Col. 1:24). Paul looked at his persecutions as being directed, not toward him, but toward the Christ in him. It was the Christ in him that suffered. It was the Christ in him that men hated; therefore, it was the Christ in him at which their evil words and actions were directed. And so, my brother, sister, the things that come upon you because you are Christ’s come upon you, not

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because people hate you, but because they hate Christ in you. “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own,” Christ said, but “ye are not of the world . . . therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19). We have only to grieve Christ out of our souls and to go back to the world again, to find that it will receive us and welcome us and love us, and that all our persecutions will be at an end.

Since Christ has suffered for us, shall not we bear the little suffering that comes to us, without regret and without murmuring? Shall we not, as our ancient brethren, rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for his name? What a privilege to bear a part of that suffering which would have fallen upon the Lord had he remained in this world! Shall we shrink from it? Nay, but rather let us glory in it. When some Christians are tried and tempted and persecuted, they wonder why it is. It seems a very strange thing to them that it should be so. Sometimes they question themselves and think there must be something wrong with their lives or their hearts, or they would not have to endure these things. On the contrary, this is rather a proof that they are Christ’s. Why should the world hate us? Why should Satan hate us if we do not belong to God?

Peter explains the matter to us. He says: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. Wherefore let them

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that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” (1 Pet. 4:12-16, 19). Reader, you will do well to study these scriptures until you fully get their meaning, until you comprehend their depth.

Paul says, “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed” (Rom. 8:18). Our trials and temptations and persecutions and all the things that we suffer because we are Christians are only seeds which we are planting. From them we shall reap in the days to come a glorious harvest of joy. We may sow in tears, but we shall reap with rejoicing. As Peter says in the verses just quoted, “that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

Shall we, then, shrink from the fellowship of his sufferings? Shall we, then, shrink from that which may come upon us in this life? Ah, no! let us rather glory in it. Let it be our delight. Not that it is joyous in the present. It is oftentimes grievous to us and sometimes hard to bear. It requires courage and fortitude, but did it not require the same thing for him to suffer? Remember the agony of Gethsemane. Remember the heartbroken words on the cross. He still suffers what his children suffer. God’s great heart is too tender not to be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. The stripes that are laid upon us smite him; the pains that we feel are felt in his great heart. Jesus endured for the joy that was set before him; so let us endure for that joy also, for we shall be partakers of that joy as we are partakers of his suffering. If we suffer, he knows just how to give to us the balm of consolation. He knows just how to heal the wounded heart; he knows just how to help; he knows just how to strengthen. Let us, therefore, with joy fellowship his suffering and press on from day to day, counting it a glorious privilege. To view it thus will help to lighten our burdens, to sweeten our bitterness,

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and to give joy for our sorrow. It will make us strong to bear. It will give us courage to endure. It will help us to face the odds that are against us and in his name to overcome. Be strong, therefore, and endure. Bear the little portion of his suffering that falls to you; then in the day of crowning, you will have rejoicing, and he will treasure you throughout eternity as one of his precious jewels.

Human Fellowship

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another” (1 John 1:7). Fellowship does not mean the acknowledgment of others as being Christians or the approving of their conduct. Sometimes we hear it said, “I just cannot fellowship that person.” By this the speaker means that he cannot approve the person’s conduct or feel that he is a true Christian. This is not, however, the true meaning of the word “fellowship.” Acknowledgment or approval is not fellowship at all. Fellowship is an internal, not an external, thing. It is the harmonious blending of kindred spirits. Fellowship can exist only among those who stand upon common ground, or those who are of a similar spirit. Fellowship can exist only where there is a likeness, a similarity, where the same elements exist in the different persons.

We can have fellowship with people in anything where there is a common tie or common interest; for example, those engaged in the same work, members of the same organization, or persons interested in the same cause, etc. Wherever these common interests exist, people will be drawn together and will have a fellow-feeling for each other. Good people find each other and seek each other’s society. Evil men do the same. One sportsman is attracted toward another; one business man, to another man engaged in the same business. A member of an organization is drawn to other members of it whether

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it be a political, religious, business, social, or other form of organization. All this is fellowship.

There are many kinds of fellowship, but we are interested here only in spiritual fellowship, or fellowship in the spiritual life. When Christians are associated in a church, they have two kinds of fellowship. There is, first, associational fellowship, or the fellowship that comes from being associated in the same organization. This tie of association that binds them together is often mistaken for the fellowship of the Spirit. It is not, however, this fellowship, but something quite distinct from it. Spiritual fellowship is the blending of kindred spirits, whether these be good or bad. Christian fellowship is the blending of the Spirit of God in the hearts of God's people. It is the heart-tie that unites them one to another. It has its origin in God. It cannot be made; it cannot be forced. It is spontaneous. It is the affinity of like elements. We cannot make ourselves have fellowship with someone. If it exists at all, it exists naturally, simply because both parties are possessed of the same spirit.

Sometimes a congregation will seem to be in fellowship with one another, and each will have confidence in all the others. A stranger may come in and may discern at once that some of those in the congregation do not really possess the Spirit of Christ; in fact, they may possess quite a different spirit. The congregation has fellowship with them, but it is associational fellowship, not fellowship of the Spirit. The one coming in from the outside does not have this associational fellowship, and so he can readily recognize that no spiritual fellowship exists. Sometimes the mistaking of this associational fellowship for spiritual fellowship allows things in a congregation to come to a bad state before the members are aware. A pastor will often detect in certain members

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of his congregation things that the body of the congregation cannot discern. Such cases are very hard to deal with, because the congregation or a part of it are liable to mistake the associational fellowship they have with those members for real spiritual fellowship, and to think that such persons are all right and that the pastor is wrong in his judgment. They are likely, therefore, to take a stand against the pastor and for the individuals with whom he would deal, for whose souls he labors.

Fellowship is not always a safe test of the spiritual condition of others. They may be all right, and they may not be all right. If we are right and have spiritual fellowship with them, then, of course, they have the Spirit of God; but we may have associational fellowship with them, and yet they may not possess the Spirit at all. Let us, therefore, make our judgments carefully. Let us not render our decision in haste. Let us prove all things.

Again, there may come among us persons who are real Christians and with whom we would have fellowship in the Spirit were it not that we realize that we have not this associational fellowship; but, realizing that we have not such fellowship, we are apt entirely to overlook the spiritual phase. This may prevent us from giving acknowledgment to some of those who are really God's people. We ought, therefore, to be careful to distinguish between these two different kinds of fellowship.

Fellowship is something that is very sensitive and easily influenced by circumstances. A number of different things will prevent us from having fellowship with people, even if both we and they have the Spirit of Christ. Fellowship cannot exist where there is a lack of confidence. No matter what the cause of that lack of confidence, it will prevent the operation of fellowship. Whatever destroys our confidence in people destroys our fellowship with

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them. If our confidence is based upon fellowship and anything happens to hinder that fellowship, then our confidence in the person is immediately weakened; after confidence is weakened, fellowship is still more decreased; and as fellowship is decreased, it still further weakens confidence. Thus, the two things react upon one another to the destruction of both.

Suspicion will destroy fellowship. As soon as we begin to question a person, at once fellowship begins to decline. Any wrong attitude that we may hold toward a fellow Christian will hinder fellowship with him, no matter what that attitude may involve. If we find fault with and criticize others, it will break our fellowship with them. If we in any way do them a wrong, the fellowship is broken. Let us beware, therefore, how we judge people from the standpoint of fellowship alone.

Fellowship is a tender plant. It will grow nowhere but in the sunshine; therefore, anything that casts a shade will destroy it. The thing that causes the shadow may be a real thing, or it may be only a thing of the imagination or supposition, but the result is the same in both cases.

How sweet is true Christian fellowship! How glorious to have our hearts bound together by its ties! How we should cherish and nourish it! With what care we should protect it from harm! We can have this fellowship with people that we have never seen, yes, even with those in the remotest part of the globe. Our love goes out to our brethren and sisters in the heathen lands. Those of another race and another color and another language than ours become very dear to our hearts. The Christian ties become stronger than the ties of relationship. Our brethren in the Lord become dearer to us than our flesh and blood kin. The ties that bind us are sweeter and stronger. How precious is the communion of saints when we all drink in of

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one Spirit, when fellowship flows from heart to heart and God is in all and through all! Let us treasure it, therefore, and watch it carefully lest harm come to this tender plant.

The Transformation of Divine Energy

Christ told his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. Paul speaks of the power of Christ resting upon him. It is God's will that all his people be endued with this heavenly power. God's power never works in the soul of man independently of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Whatever power people possess that does not come through the Holy Spirit is not the power of God; but when God is present with us, his power is always present, and this power will manifest itself. This power does not work according to the human will, but works according to the will of God; therefore, we must be submitted to his will in order for it to work through us. God will never take orders from us. If we attempt to use his power for a wrong or selfish purpose, it will react to our own hurt.

Sometimes people mistake for manifestations of the power of God things which are not such at all. Some think that noise and demonstration are the result of power, or indicate the presence of power; and the more noisy and demonstrative a person is, the more power he is thought to possess. Noise is not power nor an indication of power. It often indicates only human enthusiasm or hysteria. Some bodies of religionists are very noisy, and yet they have very little of the power of God in their lives. As a rule, those who make the most noise accomplish the least for God. It is generally a mark

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of superficiality, especially where there is a disposition to carry it to the extreme. Some modern religious movements are noted for the demonstrations of their adherents. They leap and shout and “fall under the power” and do many unseemly things. They do many things that make the people ashamed who look upon them. Sometimes they “carry on” until they are utterly exhausted. Sometimes they go through strange contortions and jerkings, and sometimes froth at the mouth. They think all this to be the manifestation of the power of God. One thing I have noticed about these people who go to such extremes is that very often those who are the most demonstrative are living lives which are anything but commendable and in some cases even immoral. There is a power in such people, but it is not the power of God; for the power of God does not manifest itself in an unseemly manner. There is something beautiful and attractive about his power, something that draws the soul, something that melts it and inspires it and awes it as if in the presence of the Almighty.

Noise is not power. One day I walked with a friend down a street in a large city. A motorcycle passed us, making a great racket. There was much noise, but little power. We walked on a little farther and went into the engine-house of a great factory. I stood beside the great Corliss engine there and watched it running so smoothly that there was hardly a sound. I could not realize what power was there. It seemed as though I could put out my hand and stop it. But there was power there, great power. It turned the wheels throughout that large factory and kept the machinery busily running. Likewise, those who are most powerful for God are often persons who are quiet and attract little notice. The power in them works softly and silently, but mightily. It accomplishes God’s purposes.

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It is true that persons of some temperaments do sometimes make considerable noise when they are full of the power of God, but this is the result of temperament, not the result of the power, for the same amount of power in another may work quietly and silently, though none the less effectually. I do not object to some noise in religion if there is divine power back of that noise, the power to be what a Christian should be, the power to live as a Christian should live, the power to glorify God, but the noise without the real power for accomplishment is a vain thing. God does not judge people by the amount of noise they make; he does not value them for their noise, but for the power that they possess. There are some who once were powers in the hands of God, but who now are like shorn Samson. The power is gone. They have the form, but they lack the power. Some sing, "There is power, power, wonderworking power"; but when you look for it in their lives, you do not find it. Power is the thing that counts, and God wants us to be filled with it. Natural ability counts for something, but no matter how great our natural capacity, if the power is lacking the capacity counts for nothing. We are like empty vessels. God has plenty of power, and he will give us power if we will tarry before him. Power is something that comes down, not something that is worked up. The "howling dervishes" work themselves up into wild hysteria and fall in fits and have all sorts of manifestations, but there is no power of God in it. So we may do. I repeat, enthusiasm is not power, hysteria is not power. Only the presence of God can give us power.

Power Transformed

Electric power passes silently through the wires; but as it passes through the incandescent bulb, it is turned into bright light; as it passes through the resistance-coil, it is transformed into heat; as it passes through the motor, it is transformed into activity; and as it

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passes through the magnet, it is turned into magnetism. So God would have his power transformed in us, and so it will be transformed if we give him his way. It will be transformed into light so that we may shine for God and so that those around us may behold his beauty in us. God would have us be lights to the world, and so he lets his power rest upon us that it may be transformed into light and shine out into this dark world. He wants men to see our light and thereby know his power to save and to keep.

He wants his power turned into heat so that our lives are no more cold and barren, but our affections and emotions are warmed and enriched and bring forth fruit unto his glory. He wants all our faculties and powers to be filled with fervency, all our lives warm and radiant with his glory. He wants his power transformed into activity so that we may work righteousness, that 'men may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven.' People who are full of the power of God are not content in idleness. They feel that they must work the work of God while it is yet day. You do not have to coax such people to work. They are ready for a job any time. The power of God will manifest itself in zeal. Where zeal is absent, power is absent. Power is always seeking an outlet. If the power of God is resting upon us, we cannot be easy while multitudes around us are going to destruction. There is much Christian activity that comes to naught because there is no power in it or too little power in it. There may be zeal without power, but zeal will be ineffectual without power. The power of God does not need elaborate ecclesiastical machinery in order to work. It will work in the heart; it will work out in the life. All that God asks is that the heart be submitted to his will and all the powers of life dedicated to his service; then he will fill us with power and work through us the accomplishment of his purpose. Our lives then will be fruitful to glorify his name.

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God wants his power in us turned into magnetism, that we may draw men to ourselves and through ourselves to Christ. If our lives are unlovely and unattractive, God cannot draw men through us. It matters not what may be our situation in life nor how few may be our natural talents. Our lives may be hampered and our development may be hindered, but if the power of God rests upon us, we shall attract men to Christ. The humblest life may be glorified and made attractive by the presence and power of God. But magnetism not only attracts; it also repels. So we, if we are full of this divine magnetism, shall repel all that is evil. Our very presence, even though a word is not spoken, will be a reproof to evil. Our looks will be louder than the words of those who are without the power of God. Those who are wicked and corrupt will feel ashamed and reprov'd in our presence. They will try to hide their wickedness. They will be careful of their language. They will find no pleasure in their wickedness in our presence.

Oh! let us be filled with the power of God and let us manifest it in our lives, so that the world may believe. Let us submit ourselves to the divine will. Let us seek daily a real enduement from on high, and then when it comes let us realize that the excellency of the power is of God and not of us, and let us give to him the glory. Let us manifest to our fellow men this power, not to show that we have the power, but that we may win them to Christ—that we may make them to know the riches of his love, the power of his grace, and the wonders of his holiness. “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”

Our Natural Propensities

We are twofold beings. The real man, the man who will live forever, the man who is made in the image of God, is not the man that our eyes gaze upon. For a little while we are dwellers in a body of clay. In regard to our physical body we have no preeminence over the beasts: it is made of clay, and it will return to the dust from which it came. Our bodies correspond very closely to those of the animal creation: theirs and ours have practically the same functions; they are subject to the same physical laws. So far as his physical being is concerned, man differs from the animal only in being more highly organized.

We must not suppose, however, that because we have an animal body the body is necessarily impure. Such is not the case. Nothing of God's creation is impure. The body becomes impure only when it becomes defiled in some way through the sin of the soul, but the body considered by itself is pure, perfectly pure from a moral standpoint. Every part and every organ of the body was created for a pure and holy purpose. They all fulfil God's purpose. They are, therefore, as pure as God.

All the natural functions of our bodies are good. We ought to distinguish carefully between privacy and impurity. Some functions of the body, we naturally feel, belong to us alone; others include also those nearest us; and still others are public in their nature and have

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to do with our fellow men in general; but all these functions are God-created and pure. Do not allow yourself to believe that they are otherwise. It is proper and necessary that there should be a standard of modesty relating to these functions. It is proper that we should regard the standard of modesty and not deviate from it, but we wrong ourselves whenever we attach to any of these functions the idea of impurity. Our bodies are pure. Let us use them as such and keep them as such.

The desires that naturally arise from these functions are all pure. Get this thought firmly fixed in your mind: it may sometime save you serious trouble. When I was first saved, I did not understand myself, and I supposed that certain of these functional desires would cease when I was converted. As they did not, I became troubled and thought I was not right. I supposed that if I were really right in the sight of God, those functional desires would have ceased, and the fact that they had not ceased was evidence to me that I was not right with God. This misapprehension caused me great distress of mind and doubts and fears and perplexities. I prayed much, but found no way out of my difficulty. It was not until I learned that salvation does not destroy the natural functions of our bodies that I arrived at a point where I could have a settled experience.

Such desires have no spiritual significance. They are neither moral nor immoral; they are unmoral. To be thirsty is not to be sinful. This is only nature's way of calling for what she needs. It is only her way of making known the things that are needed for the proper functioning of the body. So all other natural desires and appetites arising from the body have to do only with its proper functioning and are pure and holy. Do not allow yourself to think that they are not. You will do yourself an injustice if you do and

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make for yourself much trouble. These desires are every one necessary. You could not spare a single one of them and be normal.

The gratification of these functional desires in a lawful way is pure and beneficial. These functions and the desires arising from them were made for man and pertain only to man. They have no spiritual significance whatever. They have no more relation to God than have such desires in an animal. Spiritually we are none the worse if we have them, and none the better if we do not have them.

But God has seen that it was fitting and wise to impose upon us certain restrictions in the gratification of natural desires. These restrictions are for man's good. The restriction is upon *willing* and *choosing*, and not upon desire. We have no choice as to whether we shall have these desires or not, but we do have a choice as to how they shall be permitted to manifest themselves. The will regulates their gratification, and if they are given improper gratification, it is the will that becomes responsible, and it is the will that is defiled. The improper use of our physical functions, improper gratification of desires, may make those functions and desires abnormal. It may require the exercise of considerable willpower to restrain them within proper bounds, but even in such a case the desire itself is not evil. It is only unlawful gratification that is evil. Sometimes we have desires that we wish we did not have. Sometimes desire is hard to control. It asserts itself with force and clamors for gratification. We may wish that it did not do this, but, as already stated, such desire is not impure. It only requires that we keep it within the bounds that God has set for its gratification. Sometimes desire becomes abnormal, as desire for liquor or tobacco or narcotics. Such desires cannot be defiling so long as the will says no to them. Sometimes the procreative function originates strong desire. This is sometimes especially true where the body is in an abnormal condition. The

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principles already stated apply in such a condition also. There is no impurity unless the will fails to properly control desire when it might and should control it.

Do not lose sight of the fact that God created all the functions of your body and that you may gratify all these functions in a lawful and pure way with his approval upon you. To associate the idea of impurity with these functions or the desires arising from them or the lawful gratification of these desires is to charge God with being the author of impurity.

All these physical desires will persist so long as our bodies function properly. I have known men to teach publicly that after we are sanctified certain of these desires never manifest themselves again. There is no warrant for such teaching. It implies that such desires are impure. God will never take out of us anything that he put in us. He will never condemn us for doing that which he sees necessary for our wellbeing. Sanctification purifies us and renders us holy in body and spirit, but it does not make us anything but men. It does not make of us something different from what God intended us to be, and in the beginning he made us what he intended us to be.

All these functional desires must be guided by intelligence and restrained by the will. God has given us judgment, and he expects us to use it in the right way. He expects us to keep under our bodies and bring them into subjection so that we may be holy and without blame before him in love. He has given us the power to judge and discriminate between the right use of and the abuse of all our faculties and proclivities. We should use this intelligence. We do not need superhuman intelligence for this; we need only common sense. If we go to extremes in any way, nature will exact the penalty. The presence of the Spirit of God in our hearts will oftentimes have a

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modifying effect upon our physical desires; especially is this true where these have become abnormal.

During life there is a constant warfare between the flesh and the spirit. The man who is ruled by the flesh and has desire for his master, works that which is evil in the sight of the Lord, but the man who has “power over his own will” (that is, the will to use his power of self-control) and brings himself into subjection to the Spirit of God, will live righteously and godly in Christ Jesus. Appetite knows nothing of property rights nor of the laws of God or man. It knows no distinction of right and wrong, of purity and impurity. If I am hungry, any appetizing food will attract me, and desire will reach out after it. Who owns that food does not matter; desire wants it. Desire knows nothing of ownership nor does it care about the owner. Intelligence knows and recognizes property rights; therefore, intelligence and will must control appetite. If they do not and appetite gains the mastery, then the man becomes a sinner. As long as the spiritual man is in the ascendancy, as long as he rules, he keeps under the physical; but when the physical gains the ascendancy, the spiritual man ceases to be innocent and pure, and becomes sensual. That is, either the spirit must give up its way or the flesh must surrender to the spirit where their desires are contrary. This warfare is not a warfare of sin against righteousness; it is a warfare of the spirit against the flesh, of the spiritual against the natural. This warfare is not a thing of a day nor a month, but it is a thing of a lifetime. Natural desire runs out to any object that can gratify it. The spirit’s task is to limit it, and gratify it only in a right manner. When this is done, purity is maintained. If we fail to do this, we become defiled and sinful.

The Mental Constitution

Mentally man is a trinity, composed of reason, will, and the sensibilities. We might compare him to a steamship. His body is the hull and the power-plant. Reason or intellect is, or should be, the navigator. The will is the engineer and pilot. The sensibilities are the heating and refrigerating plants. It is in reason and will that man rises farthest Godward. These are the really important things in his constitution; everything else is secondary. It is through these that he knows God and obeys him. It is through these that we are made moral creatures and are subject to moral law and can know and understand moral problems and principles. It is through these that we draw nigh to God. We do not have to depend upon instinct as do the animals. When God illuminates the intellect and controls the will, he has a man for his service. These are the citadels of man's soul, and it is to them that God's appeal is made and through them that man becomes godlike.

The place of reason is in the chart-house of our vessel. God has given us a chart—his precious Word. Reason must study this chart and from it lay life's course. It must choose the port to which we shall sail and the course over which we shall sail. It must watch for the dangers that lie in the way. It must know the hidden rocks; it must know the shoals, the currents, and the various other dangers of navigation. It must read the weather-signs, so that we may know when the storms are coming and how to prepare for them and how best to weather them when they come. It must take the observations and locate our position on the voyage of life. It must decide all the problems of navigation. It must find the way out of all difficulties and dangers. Reason, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, is our only safe navigator. If we trust to anything else, we shall run upon the rocks and be lost.

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The will must steer our vessel upon its course. Our lives must not be left to chance, but must be guided by a steady hand. Many dangerous rocks lie hidden in the sea of life. Unless a strong hand holds the wheel and obeys the voice of the navigator, we may make shipwreck. We dare not let every current carry us whither it will. We dare not let ourselves drift wherever the wind would blow us. We must keep straight upon our course. Knowing this, God has given us our wills to be the helmsmen of our vessels and to steer them in the straight and safe course that leads to the port of everlasting glory. The will must have the directing control of all the energies of our vessel. It must keep its hand upon the throttle of our lives. It must direct all our energies in the proper way. If any of our energies are not subject to our will, there is certain to be disorder in our lives. The will must be absolute master of our powers.

We need never expect to come to the place where our powers will always work good automatically. There is no such thing as an automatic Christian. Doing right is a matter of willing to do right and bringing the forces of our being into subjection to our will so that they work what the will has decreed that they shall work. We must often use our wills to compel ourselves to do that which is right, against our natural inclination. The Bible takes no account of our feelings. It points out duty. It says, "Do this" or "Do not do this." It says, "Be this" and "Do not be that." It does not say, "Feel patient"; it says, "Be patient." It does not say that we shall not feel tempted; it says that we shall not yield to temptation. When it points out any duty, it does not say, "Feel inclined to do this duty"; it says, "Do this." It lays upon the will the whole responsibility for the conduct. We are never judged by our feelings, but are judged by our wills. If reason and will are on the side of right, then the individual is judged as being right, and his conduct is approved.

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The will must be subject to the orders of reason and resolutely carry them out. The reason that so many people are evil-doers is not because they have not enough intelligence to know the right, but because their wills do not act in harmony with their intelligence. They know what is right, but they do not will to act according to their knowledge. In many things they go contrary to their judgment; they do things that they know are unwise. They deliberately set aside their reason and do that which they know will bring the condemnation of God upon them and will be ruinous to their lives here and hereafter. When the will chooses its own course regardless of the reason, it always makes shipwreck of the life. It is imperative, therefore, that you make your will subject to the dictates of your reason. If you do not, only disaster awaits you.

Our Natural Propensities—Continued

Our Sensibilities and Emotions

I have likened our sensibilities and emotions to the heating and refrigerating plants of a steamer. All the warmth in life comes through our feelings; all the joy, peace, gladness, mirth, contentment, brightness, happiness, and other similar things come to us through our feelings. Without emotions life would be a cold, bleak waste. They are the things that make life worth while. They are as needful in their sphere as reason and will in their spheres. Not only does the warmth and charm of life come through our sensibilities, but also all that chills in life. Sorrow, pain, sadness, gloom, discouragement, despondency, remorse—all these have their seat in our sensibilities. From these come both the sunshine and the clouds of life. They bring to us both the bitter and the sweet.

Our emotions are always active, or at least rarely in a state of rest, during our waking hours. They are in a great measure independent of control. They work as they will. The will can influence them, but its control is limited. We cannot feel any certain way just because we will to do so. We cannot feel pleased or happy or contented just because we desire to do so. Our feelings are creatures of influence and circumstances. Whatever acts upon our feelings will produce results, no matter what it is that acts nor in what manner it acts. The feelings have no power of judgment, no discretion; they respond to whatever influence works upon them.

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They have no power of choice. They are like the strings of musical instruments, which respond to every touch and likewise to the quality of the touch. Circumstances may strike sweet melodies and rich harmonies of rejoicing, or they may strike discords of pain and sorrow. The chords that sound out depend more upon the player than upon the instrument; for the same instrument is capable of sounding forth many differing chords.

I said that the will could influence our feelings, but not rule them. The extent to which it may affect them depends upon the strength of the will. It may affect them in different ways. It may repress them for a time. It may put a brake upon them and prevent their free action. It may often set bounds to limit them, even though it has not perfect control over them. It may also set up a contrary influence through some other emotion by bringing some influence to bear upon it, and thus make one emotion balance or restrict the other. This is something that every Christian needs very much to learn. We may turn the attention away from that which is exciting some emotion to the contemplation of something that will either quiet the emotion or set up another kind. If we are sad or discouraged or despondent, and we let our minds run in the channel of our feelings, we shall only feel worse and worse. We should deliberately turn our minds from the dark side of the picture to that which is bright and uplifting. Look upon God and the beautiful things of his character. Look at the promises of his Word—look at the things that are in our favor. Look at hopeful things. Look away from the gloom and darkness, and you will soon find that the things at which you look react upon your feelings and that the gloomy feelings pass away. Giving your thought and attention to these brighter things will set up an emotion contrary to that which has been working, and it will balance or restrict the former, or possibly entirely overcome it.

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Have you ever seen a person who had some trouble physically and who seemed to delight in telling his trouble to everybody he met? It was a favorite topic of conversation with him. Of course, the more he would talk about it, the more he would feel it and the more conscious of it he would be. Probably if he had quit talking about it and forgotten it, he would soon have felt all right. It is the same with our spiritual feelings: the more we think about our troubles, and the more we tell them, the greater they become. Never let bad feelings hold your attention. Turn your mind resolutely away from them. As often as it comes back to them, turn it away to something else, until you form the habit of thinking of that which is good and uplifting and encouraging. In such things as these we are what we make of ourselves. Gloominess is a habit; so is cheerfulness. We cannot prevent bad feelings from coming sometimes, but we need not give them place or pet them when they do come. There are too many good and too many beautiful things in life, too many things enjoyable, for us to allow our minds to run on the dark side of things very much. Whatever occupies our attention, shuts out other things. Therefore if we let the dark side of the picture occupy our attention, we cannot see the bright side; but if we will turn our eyes away from the dark side, we shall find that there is a bright side at which we may look. As we look at the bright side, it will react upon our emotions, and we shall be joyful instead of being in heaviness. We may be glad instead of being in mourning. We may be encouraged instead of being discouraged. Say to your emotions resolutely, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." Set a bound for them beyond which they may not pass, and repress all bad feelings, and so make way for good ones.

The sensibilities are active and very often try to usurp the place of reason and the will. There is danger in permitting this. If we decide by our feelings what is right and what we ought to do, our

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feelings may soon change, and we shall think something else is right or that we ought to do some other way, and so we shall be unsettled. One time we shall feel as if we should do a thing, and shortly afterwards we may find that we feel as if we should not do it. At one time we may feel that a thing is right, and soon come to question it when we feel some other way. Reason must be the master. It is the one that is to lay out our course. Reason should decide for us what is right and what is wrong. Do not let your feelings usurp reason's place. Try to understand the principles that are involved. Decide the rightness or wrongness of the thing by these principles, not by your feelings. This is the only safe way. It is only by doing this that you can ever be settled in any course of conduct very long at a time.

The feelings are blind. They cannot observe the compass; they cannot see the chart; they cannot see where the dangers lie. Hence they cannot lay a safe course. Suppose the captain of a vessel should place a blind man in the pilot-house, and this blind man should trust to his feelings to mark out the course and to steer away from the rocks. Should you like to trust your safety to such a pilot? This is exactly what you do when you trust your feelings to be your pilot on the sea of life. Whenever we let feelings usurp the place of reason, we have a blind pilot. That is why so many persons make shipwreck and why so many get into trouble. If the feelings give the will orders how to steer and how to use our energies, only disaster can come; but this is just what thousands are doing. They give more heed to their feelings than to anything else. The Word of God counts less than feelings. No matter what it says, if their feelings do not agree with it, they cannot trust it.

Too many people let feelings make the observations in their lives. When they want to know where they are, they consult their feelings. They feel that they are so and so, and they conclude that

feeling knows. They must be as they feel, they think, or they would not feel so. Suppose you were on a ship when you knew that the captain was running the vessel according to his feelings. He would suppose himself to be where he felt he was. He might have ever so much confidence in his feelings, but would you feel really safe? Could you make yourself believe that his feelings were a safe guide for the ship? If our feelings are not safe guides in natural things, are they in spiritual things? Notwithstanding the folly of such a course, many persons judge themselves almost exclusively by their emotions. When they feel all right, they think they are all right; when they do not feel so well, they do not have such confidence in themselves.

Reason has its chart and compass, its sextant and its astronomical tables, and all other things necessary to make observations with accuracy and certainty. Feeling only guesses. Shall we take the ready and impulsive answer of our feelings, or shall we wait for reason by its more sure means to tell us the facts? When reason speaks and feeling contradicts it, which is the safer to believe? Which is the safer guide? Sometimes people know from the standpoint of their reason and the Word of God that they are doing what is their duty to do as Christians, but at the same time their feelings are not what they suppose they ought to be. In fact, they may not feel as they desire to at all. Their feelings may be exactly opposite to the testimony of their understanding. Such persons are often prone to accept the testimony of their feelings rather than that of their intelligence. This is always an unwise course. Our sensibilities are blind; they have no power to discriminate between fact and falsehood. Whatever we accept as truth or probable truth has upon our emotions all the force of things known to be facts. If I believe my friend is dead, I shall have the same feelings as though he were dead, no matter if he is in perfect health. If we believe that

we are wrong in something, we shall feel that we are wrong, whether we are or are not. Do not be a creature of your feelings. Do not be ruled by them. Do not let them mar your peace. Settle your condition from some other standpoint. Take the Word of God. It will not deceive you, but your feelings may if you trust in them.

Evidence of Feelings Unreliable

We may feel safe when we are in grave danger. Two men were recently walking across a piece of ground. They felt very much at ease. There appeared to be no danger whatever, but just in front of them was a heavy charge of dynamite with a burning fuse attached. Only the earnest cries of a man who knew the danger saved them from walking right upon it and possibly being killed. On the other hand, we may feel that we are in danger when we are perfectly safe. The sinner often feels very safe in his sins, when, in truth, he is in the very greatest danger. Some Christians feel themselves in grave danger, but they are perfectly safe if they will but trust God.

Sometimes people feel very bad when they do not know of their having done anything amiss. Again, some feel condemned when they have done something that they know was not wrong. Their reason tells them that it was not wrong. The Bible does not condemn it, and yet somehow, somehow, they feel condemned over it. The adversary delights to take advantage of us at such times if we will permit him. If we do anything that is wrong, the Spirit of God will show us what we have done that is wrong and why it is wrong. He will not leave us to wonder and question. He will put his finger on the thing and say, "There it is; there is the trouble." God makes things plain to us. The adversary brings confusion. He generally leaves us in uncertainty. He cannot point out anything, or usually does not. The most he can say usually is, "You have done something.

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There is something wrong.” Your feelings are ready to join right in with him and echo the strain. Yes, you have done something, but what? You may argue, “If I were saved, I should not feel this way.” How do you know that you should not? The question is not, How do you *feel*? but, How *are* you? Feelings must give place to reason. Whenever you judge your condition and spiritual standing by your feelings, whether those feelings be good or bad, whether they be in your favor or against you, you are doing a very unwise thing. Base your salvation upon something more substantial than feelings. I have seen more than one sinner so enthused that he could leap and shout and praise the Lord. I have seen more than one good saint crushed down until he could not raise his head.

We cannot tell conditions by feelings. Some very dangerous diseases produce practically no suffering. I have known cases where the danger was very grave and where the patients could not be prevailed upon to think that there was anything seriously wrong with them. Some things that are very painful are not dangerous, and in fact represent disorder of a very minor character. True Christians sometimes have bad feelings when these feelings are no index whatever to their spiritual condition. Read the life of John Bunyan. See the things that he suffered through his sensitive feelings. Sometimes he would feel that he was a great sinner and just ready to drop into hell. He was not such; he was a pious and holy man. Thousands of others have had similar experiences, and the writer is one.

We have always a surer test than feelings. We belong to the Lord so long as we do not in heart turn away from him. So long as we have in our hearts a desire and purpose to serve him, he will not cast us off. Paul says, “Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except that ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5). He

does not say that we know Christ is in us when we feel all right, but in effect he says that we know Christ is in us if we have not turned away from him. What is the underlying purpose of your life? Is it to have your own way, or to please the Lord? Is it to do evil, or to do good? Let us judge ourselves with a righteous judgment.

The reader must not suppose that because I say so much about bad feelings these are the normal and usual feelings of a Christian. The Christian life is, on the whole, a joyous and victorious life. People are not troubled over their good feelings. The more they have of them, the better they like it. It is the other kind of feelings that trouble them; therefore, it is the bad feelings of which I speak, that I may be helpful to those who need help.

The Sequence of Emotions

Different emotions may follow each other in rapid succession. Joy may succeed sorrow, or rejoicing may almost instantly be changed into heaviness. Our feelings often swing to and fro from one extreme to another like the pendulum of a clock. When we children used to grow enthusiastic and hilarious in our play, our folks would remark, "Now look out for a cry next." I observed that the tears usually came before the play was finished. There is nothing stable about our emotions. Like the tumble-weed of the Western prairies, they roll whichever way the wind blows. This play of emotions we see even in Christ. Sometimes he rejoiced in spirit; at another time he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26:38). In Paul's life we find this same alternation of joy and sorrow, or rejoicing and of heaviness. Peter speaks of it thus: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Pet. 1:6). He knew from his own experience that there were times when

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Christians would greatly rejoice and other times, or seasons, as he calls them, when they would be in heaviness. He implies that these seasons of heaviness are a “need be”; he nowhere says the same of the seasons of joy. The “need be” seasons *must* come; the other seasons *may* come. The fact that we enjoy the joy more than the heaviness does not mean that the former is of more value to us or that it is more needful to us.

If children have too much candy, it spoils their digestion and appetite. Some people are blessing-hunters. Their chief prayer is, “O Lord, bless me”; and they count nothing a blessing but joyful emotions. Such emotions stand in the same relation to the soul that candy does to the body. We can easily get along without candy, but our lives depend upon good, nourishing food. We could get along very well without blessings, but we must have those needful things that develop the soul. We could serve God all our days and reach heaven safely in the end if we never in all our lives had a single emotion of joy. Our service could be just as faithful and just as acceptable. Our good feelings do not recommend us to God. They are often a source of weakness to us. Just when emotions subside, we are the least able to meet difficulties. Joyful emotions are delightful, but they do not strengthen. They do not give a finer quality to faith. Sometimes emotions run very high. The soul seems carried out of itself. It rejoices with “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” but right at the end of this rejoicing comes faith’s critical period. Very often we come down off the mountain of transfiguration only to find a devil to be cast out. Very often after a period of rejoicing comes a period of serious testing. The reaction is inevitable. The farther our feelings swing to the one extreme, the farther they will swing to the other when the reaction comes. I have seen people so happy that they could almost imagine themselves in heaven, and a few hours later have seen them in the greatest distress.

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The reaction had come. Their good feelings were gone and they did not know how to meet the situation.

In a meeting which I attended a number of years ago, a young sister sought the Lord for entire sanctification. Whole-hearted and earnest, she sought diligently, and she soon received what she sought. Her emotions were very greatly wrought upon. It seemed as if she would never stop rejoicing. She kept on for a long time, breaking forth again and again with praises to God. She seemed overwhelmed by her emotions. I called my wife's attention to her and said, "You had better go and talk to her presently; for when this joy subsides, something else is going to come." About an hour later my wife went and hunted her up and found her in the deepest gloom. The reaction had come, and she was doubting that God had done a work for her. She was almost ready to give it up entirely. Her faith was rapidly slipping away from her. The needed encouragement and instruction were given, and in a little while she was again believing with a steadfast faith. Years have passed, but she is still sanctified.

Almost always a testing-time comes just after the emotions have been wrought up. It is just at such a juncture that things take hold most upon us, and it is just at such times that we have the greatest difficulty in preserving our equilibrium. Such emotions are not an unmixed blessing. We need to learn this certain reaction and to be prepared to meet it; otherwise our faith is likely to be greatly shaken.

Sometimes we have conflicting emotions. We may have two opposite emotions at the same time, or rapidly changing emotions. We may seem to glide from one to another and have several different sets of them in a single day's time. If we try to test our standing before God by emotions, we are thrown into confusion. Form the habit of judging yourself, not by your emotions, but by your

purposes and intentions. Do not be swerved from that. Feelings will be a source of weakness to you if you do not.

The Powerful Influence of Our Emotions

Our emotions seem so clearly to be the true indication of existing facts that we often have much difficulty in discrediting them, no matter what may be the evidence to the contrary. We can sometimes overlook the most positive evidence easier than we can set aside the testimony of our feelings, especially when we are used to relying upon our feelings. Some become the creatures of their emotions. They never know that they are right except when they have joyous emotions. Just as soon as these subside, such persons begin to question themselves. While they feel all right, they know they are all right; but if the voice of emotion is stilled, they no longer have any evidence of their salvation. As a result, they are often in confusion and are never certain of themselves for more than a short period. They are the slaves of a hard master. When their master smiles, they are elated and confident; when he frowns, they are in despair. Some people seem to live in a dark, deep pit of bad feelings. They manage to climb up now and then so that they can see the sunshine and rejoice in its rays for a time; but soon they lose their hold and fall down into their pit again, there to sit in melancholy shadows and to brood over their sad fate. They could get out of their pit and stay out if they would trust God and his Word instead of their feelings, but they cannot persuade themselves that anything is true that contradicts their feelings. O soul, break away from this bondage and get out in God's sunshine and base your hope on a surer foundation!

Emotions No Basis for a Settled Experience

If our experience is founded on our feelings, it is like a house-boat floating on the water. We are tossed to and fro by every wave and every wind, and drifted by every current or tide. A house built on a good foundation stands firm. It is not moved. God provides a good foundation for everybody. If we will build on that, we may stand, and not be tossed about. That foundation is faith. It is a sure foundation. No one can ever have repose of soul long who judges himself by his feelings. Emotions can never be the basis of a settled experience. The soul who trusts in them will never be sure of himself for more than a short period. He is like a man trying to balance himself on a floating log which rolls now this way, now that way, and which is whirled about by every eddy and turn of the current. We do not have to be spiritual acrobats to serve God. Settled peace comes only from a settled faith. I have seen many souls in trouble who when asked what was the matter could only answer, "Oh, I do not know, only I do not feel right." The more they looked at their feelings, the worse they felt.

One of the greatest evils that can come to any Christian is for him to set up an ideal standard for his feelings and condemn himself or question himself whenever they fall short of his expectations. He soon develops a morbid sensitiveness that leads him into a maze of uncertainties and brings him into distress whenever his emotions fall below the point that he has marked as zero on his spiritual thermometer. Your thermometer of feelings may register only the influences that surround you, and be no true test whatever of your spiritual state. Throw away your home-made thermometers. Take God's tester, which is his Word, and measure your life by it. When you trust in your old feeling-thermometer, if it goes down below your zero-mark you are almost sure to think that you are frozen to death spiritually. You desire a settled experience. Very well. You

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may have it, provided you will go about getting it in the only possible way that it may be attained. It must be based on something more substantial than your emotions. God has a sure foundation. If you will build on that, you may stand secure. Learn to value your emotions at their true worth. At the very best, joyful emotions are only the foam on the waters of salvation. Do not suppose there is no water if there is no foam. Do not judge the depth of the water by the amount of foam. It is usually the case that the more foam there is, the shallower the water is. Enjoy your pleasant emotions when they come; but when they have gone, do not suppose that it is because of a change in your spiritual condition. There will be seasons of joyfulness and seasons of heaviness, but remember that a few bad feelings do not frighten the Holy Spirit away from our hearts.

Our Natural Propensities—Continued

Reaction and Interaction

Man is a trinity of the physical, the mental, and the moral, or spiritual. These are not three separate, distinct, and independent parts. They are united into a mutually dependent whole. Each part is related to and affected by each other part. What affects one part affects the whole. Anything that throws one part out of balance reacts upon the others. Any abnormal state of one part has its reaction on the others and hinders or prevents their normal functioning. Lack of understanding of this has led many persons to judge wrongly themselves and others. Many persons have condemned themselves or others for things which, though they were manifested in the moral, did not have their origin in the moral at all, but were only reactions from the physical or mental. We can never understand either ourselves or others until we learn the facts involved in these relations of the various parts of our being. Everyone who would be a spiritual teacher should carefully inform himself regarding the principles of psychology and physiology. Without this knowledge he will be at a disadvantage in dealing with souls. He will often judge from appearance instead of judging righteous judgment. We all owe it to ourselves to study ourselves till we are able to tell the forces that are producing the spiritual and mental effects by which we usually judge our religious standing. We should study ourselves until we know the causes that produce the

effect that troubles us. If we merely guess at them, we shall often guess wrong. There is always an underlying cause for every effect, but that cause may sometimes be considerably removed from the effect or from the manifestations that it produces.

Effect of the Physical

Our physical being affects very strongly our mental and religious organization. When the physical powers are buoyant and we are full of vitality and animal spirits, the stimulus of this reacts upon the mind and soul so that we may easily be care-free and joyous. At such times we may meet and overcome with ease things that at other times might prove very hard for us. On the contrary, when the physical forces are at a low ebb and the vital energies are tested to overcome disease or weakness, there is an opposite reaction and both mind and spirit feel the effect. Many times people are mentally dull and inactive wholly on account of some physical derangement. The same thing affects them spiritually. Chronic diseases, especially of certain kinds, often react to produce gloom, discouragement, and unrest. Any disease that constantly draws upon the vitality of the system is likely to produce such an effect. Such things naturally discourage and render us despondent. A man once went to a minister and told him a long tale of woe concerning his spiritual troubles. The minister listened patiently, as ministers must listen to such things, and when he had heard the story, he said, "Oh, brother, I'll tell you what's the matter with you: your liver is out of order." That preacher knew the secret of many people's spiritual trouble.

I suppose the majority of the bad feelings that Christians have come from livers or kidneys that do not function properly, indigestion, or some other disorder of the physical functions or

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organs. Dyspepsia almost always reacts upon the mental and spiritual. A dyspeptic does not feel much like smiling, neither does a bilious person. A great many troubles that seem to be spiritual troubles do not indicate anything wrong in the spiritual nature whatever. They are merely reactions from the physical. Many women have their spiritual skies obscured and suffer much from doubts and discouragements simply as a result of reaction from special diseases or weaknesses with which they are afflicted. Do not be too ready to suppose that bad feelings come from a bad condition of the heart. If we are doing what we know to do and serving the Lord to the best of our understanding, we need not suppose that our bad feelings come from our hearts' being wrong. We may look somewhere else for the cause. We are all aware of the effect of a heavy cold or of a toothache or something else that causes severe suffering or acute derangement of any part. It is often very difficult to pray or to have faith when we are suffering. Many times we cannot think with clearness. The mental and the spiritual are both strongly affected by the reaction from the physical. The reaction from chronic diseases is no less certain, though it may manifest itself in a somewhat different way. Whatever affects the physical, whether it be disease or something else, affects also, by its reaction, the mental and the spiritual. A striking example of such reactions is the experience of an old-time New England circuit-rider, who made the following entries in his diary:

“Wed. eve. Arrived at the home of Bro. Brown late this evening, hungry and tired after a long day in the saddle. Had a bountiful supper of cold pork and beans, warm bread, bacon and eggs, coffee and rich pastry. I go to rest feeling that my witness is clear; the future is bright; I feel called to a great and glorious work at this place. Bro. Brown's family are godly people.”

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The next entry was as follows:

“Thurs. morn. Awakened late this morning after a troubled night. I am very much depressed in soul; the way looks dark; far from feeling called to work among this people, I am beginning to doubt the safety of my own soul. I am afraid the desires of Bro. Brown and his family are set too much on carnal things.”

His whole outlook was changed, and, not understanding his trouble, he, like many another, thought his trouble was in his heart, whereas it was really in his stomach.

Overeating often renders us dull, so that we find it very difficult to concentrate our minds on anything. At such times we cannot pray with the same earnestness and grasp of faith as at other times. We cannot feel the same interest in spiritual or mental things. Overwork often produces similar results. After a hard day's work we cannot read with the same mental grasp or attention that we can at other times, and we cannot pray as we are used to doing at other times. The man who comes in after a hard day's work and picks up his Bible and tries to read it, often finds his mind wandering to other things, or he finds himself sleeping and unable to get any satisfaction out of what he reads. He may find little delight in family worship. His prayer may seem dull and dry and meaningless, and he may become greatly tried because of this. The trouble is he has used up his energy in the day's work. He is weary in soul and in mind as well as in body. What he needs to restore him is a good rest. When the physical forces are restored, he will find that his spiritual and mental tone is also restored. A generally worn-out physical state is bound to react on the spiritual. That is why many people find themselves seemingly so much less spiritual in the summer-time than in the winter. It is because their forces are used up in physical labors, and, having only about so much force to expend, they find themselves

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subnormal spiritually. If we want to prosper spiritually, therefore, we must not overwork, but leave ourselves with sufficient energy for our spiritual duties. If we seem to be compelled to overwork, we should arrange circumstances so that we shall not be, if that is at all possible; but if we cannot, we ought to take this into consideration and not blame ourselves for not being as spiritual as we ought to be, when it is merely a lack of the necessary energy.

People who are in a highly nervous state will have more or less spiritual trouble on account of it. They will have many trials that others do not have. They are likely to be filled with apprehensions and melancholy. They are apt to be tried when in such a state by things that would not trouble them at all if they were in a normal condition. We ought to take all these reactions into consideration, and, in judging our spiritual condition, we must do this, or else we shall have continual trouble.

Any functional desire of the physical when excited has a corresponding mental effect. When we are hungry, we naturally think of food and of meal-time. How slow the time seems to go when we are waiting for a meal! and the hungrier we are, the slower it seems to go. All our functional desires act in the same way, directing our thoughts to the means of their gratification. We may turn our minds away from them, but the tendency is for our thoughts to come right back to the same subject again. Persons are sometimes very much troubled about this, in regard to certain functions. They need not be, however; it is the natural physical results. It is only nature's way of looking out for herself.

Effect of the Mental

The effect of the mind upon the body is often very powerful. This is illustrated in the cases of stigmata which are on record.

People of certain temperaments have thought about the wounds of Christ until there have appeared upon their own bodies marks in the places where they suppose the marks were upon his body. There are several such cases upon record. Not long ago there was reported in the press the case of a man who attempted to commit suicide, but failed without doing himself any physical injury. Two hours later he died. The coroner's verdict was "mental suicide." The reaction of the unfortunate man's thoughts upon his physical being was such as to destroy his physical life. Many physical derangements come from worry and fear. On the other hand, opposite emotions produce opposite effects upon the physical. The Wise Man said, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a broken spirit drieth up the bones" (Prov. 17:22, A.S.V.). This is why doctors always want their patients encouraged. A gloomy face or a gloomy voice in the sick-room is a great hindrance to the sick person. The effect of the mental reacting upon the spiritual is just as real and powerful as upon the physical.

Effect of Conscious Mental Action

We may say that the human mind is divided into two different parts—that of conscious mind and that of subconscious mind. We are conscious of the working of the first, but the second works without our knowledge, and we become conscious of its action only through the finished results. Life has its bright side and its dark side. We may look upon whichever side we will. If we let our minds look upon dark and gloomy things, if we let ourselves be harassed by worry and fear, we have no one to blame but ourselves. If we give our minds over to such things, we may discourage ourselves and in that discouragement only be reaping what we have sown. If we burn our fingers, we must endure the pain; likewise, if we let our minds run on gloomy things, we must bear the soul-pain that follows. The greater part of our troubles are home-made, and this is true of

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spiritual troubles as well as of any other kind. They are only the reaction of our wrong mental habits. If you wish to be joyful and victorious, keep your mind upon the things that will tend to make you so. Look away from that which is dark and gloomy. Look to that which will arouse different emotions. Never harbor gloomy thoughts; banish them from your mind. You can be cheerful if you will. You may not be able to correct bad mental habits at once; but if you set yourself resolutely to the task, you can break yourself of them and establish right habits of thought, and this will go far toward bringing spiritual serenity.

Sometimes people are troubled over bad dreams. They dream of things that are evil, and sometimes take this as an indication that they are not right in their souls. They think that if they were pure they would not have dreams of impure or evil things. Such dreams are no indication of the soul's condition, any more than a good dream is an indication that one is saved. Many dreams come from physical causes, and we should not count them as having any moral quality.

Although we have no control over our dreams, we do have control over our waking thoughts, at least to a great extent; and we can turn them into right channels till by habit they run there naturally. Sometimes there come to the mind thoughts that are undesirable. We put them away from us, but they return almost immediately. They persist in doing this notwithstanding all our efforts to banish them. The only thing that we can do in such a case is to keep banishing them from our minds as much as possible until they run their course and we can thus get entirely rid of them. We ought not to condemn ourselves for our inability to shut out such thoughts from our minds, for the ability to shut them out does not always depend upon our will. They come and go, and we hardly

know why nor whence. It is only when we welcome them and indulge them that they work evil with the soul.

Subconscious Mental Effect

The subconscious mind is that part of the mind that works without our knowing it, or being conscious of its activity. It is the subconscious mind that works out most of the problems of life for us. Our minds may be likened to a factory of two rooms. In one we stand and look about and see what is going on, but we know nothing of what is going on in the other, until a truck load of the finished product is run out into our sight. Many of the thoughts that seem to come to our minds from nowhere in particular come from the subconscious mind. They are projected into the conscious mind from it, and it seems as though they just struck our minds somehow, and we know not their source, unless we know of the subconscious action of our minds. Sometimes we get to thinking over a subject, and then our attention is called away, and we forget it. A few days later the thought all worked out to a conclusion presents itself to our minds. The subconscious mind has seized upon the thought that was in the conscious mind and has kept working upon it until it has solved it to its satisfaction, and then it presents the result of its action to the conscious mind.

Sometimes our minds are suddenly filled with thoughts that bring joy and an uplift to the soul. These often result from something that has been taken into the subconscious mind and there wrought upon and finally turned back suddenly into the conscious mind. The opposite also is true. Oftentimes gloomy thoughts and feelings suddenly come upon us and we have no idea whence they come, when, in reality, some thought that was in our mind days or weeks before went into the subconscious mind and there worked, and now

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it comes out in a flood of gloom. Many seasons of gloominess and trial have their development in the subconscious mind, and the spiritual effect is only the reaction from the subconscious mind. Every time you allow yourself to think over dark and discouraging things, you are in danger of the thoughts sinking into your subconscious mind and coming out later on in a flood of discouragement. It is probable that the greater part of our spiritual trouble comes from either physical or spiritual reaction, Satan having nothing whatever to do with it. If we know of these reactions and treat them as reactions, we shall not feel that there is something wrong in our souls when we feel bad spiritually.

External Influences

We are often strongly influenced by the persons around us. We may be either encouraged or discouraged by them. We sometimes come into contact with those who are melancholy or under deep trial or discouragement, and their feelings react on us to produce unpleasant results. We feel ourselves depressed in spirit, or we may become deeply tried by partaking of the influence resting on them, in just the same way as we become uplifted and encouraged by a person who is full of sunshine and good cheer. We need to recognize the probability of this influence of others working upon us. We need to guard ourselves against yielding to such influence, except where the influence is good, any more than it is possible to avoid.

Natural conditions, such as the weather, climate, scenery, etc., often affect our feelings very strongly. Bright, sunny weather often reacts upon us to make us cheerful and happy; dark, gloomy weather has a tendency to depress our spirits. Unpleasant surroundings or uncongenial employment often affects us for ill, causing homesickness, gloominess, and like feelings.

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Besides those influences already mentioned, there are direct spiritual influences that work upon us. God, by his Spirit, often strongly influences us. His influence is always for good; it always uplifts and helps and brightens. He often manifests himself to us when we are not expecting it. Sometimes during physical suffering or other distress he comes to us with such sweetness and blessedness that we are quite lifted above our affliction. He can make us joyful in all our tribulations. Just in our time of need his Spirit is with us. He comforts and helps and cheers; in fact, he is all and in all to us.

We are also subject to other spiritual influences. Evil spirits abound. Sometimes heavy depressions suddenly settle down upon us; heavy clouds obscure our sky, and we know no reason why they should. Fiery and unexpected temptations come upon us. Sometimes we are conscious that such are the direct influence of evil agents. These experiences are not indications that we are not right in our souls, and we should not question ourselves wrongly at such times. We may feel these influences very keenly. We may have hand-to-hand combat with demons in the spiritual element. We may sometimes be hard pressed. At such times we should resist steadfastly in the faith. We should hold fast our confidence in ourselves and in God, and expect to have power from God to overcome. Satan has power to affect our feelings very strongly, and also power to put thoughts into our minds; and he often takes advantage of this power. Sometimes we realize that we have two kinds of feelings simultaneously, one superficial and the other deeper, and that there is a conflict between these feelings. Sometimes profane or impure thoughts will be impressed upon our minds, and if we do not understand their source, we may be greatly troubled over them. There may sometimes be feelings of resentment toward God or a feeling of purposes that are quite out of harmony with the Christian life or experience. Sometimes souls having this

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experience are horrified and think themselves in a deplorable condition; when, in reality, these things come directly from Satan, and not from themselves at all. They do not spring from the heart, but are from an external influence. Underneath these feelings are the true feelings and purposes of the soul. These deeper and better feelings show the real state and condition of the heart. We should not condemn ourselves because Satan imposes such feelings or thoughts upon us. If we will simply resist them and assert in our souls that we will not accept them nor have anything to do with them, we may overcome them and be none the worse for them, although the experience may be rather trying to our souls while we are passing through it.

Being subject, as we are, to all these influences, we ought not to suppose that all our difficulties are soul difficulties. The thing to do is to keep our hearts open before God; to keep our purposes and lives pure; to live by faith, not by our feelings; to judge ourselves, not by our emotions or the influences brought to bear upon us, but by the inmost purposes of our hearts. If the reader will carefully study the facts already enumerated and get hold of them until he understands them for himself, they will be of the greatest value to him in the Christian life.

Meddling with the Scales

No matter how accurate and reliable a set of scales may be, if they are meddled with they may be made inaccurate and undependable. If we were weighing coal and the scales were out of balance a few pounds, it would not matter so much; but if we were weighing diamonds or gold, a very little variation would amount to a great deal. The more valuable that which we weigh, the more necessary it is that the scales be properly adjusted and accurate to a high degree. When it comes to a standard of weighing the human soul, that should be the most accurate of all standards. When it comes to judging ourselves, it is important that we have a right standard of judgment. That right standard God furnishes in his Word. It will weigh us accurately if we take it as it is; but if we misinterpret it or turn it out of its natural course and meaning, we may judge ourselves very wrongly by it. What we need to do is to be absolutely fair with ourselves. We must not allow ourselves to be prejudiced either in our favor or against ourselves. If our standard of judgment is so low that it permits us to be impure in heart and purposes and to do things that are wrong in the sight of God, that standard is evil for us, and we are not just to ourselves. If we have too high a standard and require more of ourselves than is just and right, again we do ourselves an injury.

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We must learn to be fair to ourselves. We must require of ourselves all that we ought to require, but nothing more than that. In many lives the ideal is far too low, and consequently the life is too low. In other cases, the ideal is too high and is entirely out of reach and can never be attained. We should have high ideals, but these ideals should be practicable and should not overlook the facts of human life. They should always be balanced by common sense. We should not live in a spiritual dreamland; for in practice we shall ever have to face the cold facts of life. These facts, not our dreams and imaginations, are what we must adjust ourselves to. If we have too high a standard, we shall always be coming short of it and condemning ourselves. A high ideal, if not too high, is a strong incentive to progress; but when it is made the standard by which we judge our present attainment, it tends to discourage us and becomes a real barrier to our progress. We can never attain to our ideals because they will ever grow as we grow, and they will continue to be in advance of us no matter how fast we grow. We must have a practicable, not an ideal, standard of judgment.

Making someone else our standard has its dangers. We cannot see another's inner life. We know nothing of his conflicts or his secret faults. We can see only the external manifestations. We do know our own inner life but we can know theirs only as we judge it from outward appearance. God wants each of us to judge himself by His Word, not by any other standard, and he does not want us to judge ourselves by an ideal beyond our reach.

People often make a serious mistake in comparing themselves with someone of a different temperament. It is very common to suppose that if a person makes many demonstrations in religion, he has a great deal of religion, and that if he is very quiet, he has no religion to speak of. I traveled for a number of years in the gospel

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work with a minister whose temperament was decidedly emotional and who would sometimes become very demonstrative, leaping and shouting, and manifesting his feelings very plainly. I was of a rather unemotional temperament. I had powerful emotions sometimes, but it was not my disposition to give vent to them. People therefore judged that he had a much better experience than I had, and oftentimes I heard people remark that they wished that they had an experience like his. No one ever seemed to wish that about me. No one seemed to covet in the least an experience like mine. They all wanted one like his, because they thought he was so happy. We both had the same salvation and served the same God. The difference was a difference of temperament.

Salvation is not a thing of temperament, though manifestation is. To make our feelings and emotions a standard, is to make our temperament the standard. Those of other temperaments will differ from us. They cannot and will not have the same experience so far as feelings and emotions are concerned. Great havoc has been caused by unwise preaching on these points. Preachers often relate their experiences, telling how happy they were and what wonderful emotions they had when they were converted. Others, hearing them, are led to suppose that if they too obtain salvation they will have these same emotions; so when they seek salvation, they seek these emotions. If they are of a different temperament, they do not experience them, and as a result they find it very difficult to suppose that they are saved at all. The preaching that emotion is ever a sign of salvation, in the sense that we can base our hope of God's favor and heaven upon it, is a serious error. Faith is the fundamental. Believing in God is what counts. Emotion is a superficial thing. It is not a reliable evidence, and when people are taught to look upon their feelings as evidences, they do not get a settled experience, an experience that will take them through hard places when their

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feelings subside. A man's religion does not consist in the joy that he has nor in the amount of noise he makes, but in the attitude of his heart toward God.

Preaching should never go beyond the bounds of common sense. We should never let our enthusiasm run away with our judgment. When feelings are preached, the strong-nerved preacher will preach a strong-nerved gospel, and the weak-nerved one will preach a weak-nerved gospel. The first will make no allowance for those who have weak nerves and who suffer the trials incident to their nervous condition; so he is likely to be the cause of bringing them into severe trials and conflicts. He has no idea of how things look and are to them. The other makes allowance for the infirmities of the weak and preaches his own experience. The strong-nerved persons who hear him know that his experience is not like theirs, and they think that he is lowering the standard. The thing to do is to preach the Word. We may use our experiences to illustrate the things that we preach, but we ought to make it clear that experiences differ widely in many respects and that we should never judge one another by our experiences, nor should we expect our experiences to correspond fully with that of someone else.

The effect of too high a standard is always to discourage. We should have a proper standard, but not an ideal standard. We ought to require nothing of ourselves or others beyond a practical and common-sense Christian life. Sometimes the standard of a sanctified life is placed altogether too high, being out of reach. I once heard a sermon that left the impression on me that the preacher felt thus: "I am up here and a few others are up here, but the most of you are down there, and you know that you are down there, and you are going to have a very hard time to get up here if you ever do succeed." The effect of that sermon was very discouraging, but it is far from

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the only one of the sort that has been preached. Many souls have been crushed by such preaching.

Many times I have heard the experience of sanctification described as such an ideal state that I knew the preacher himself nor anyone else had ever attained to such a state and never would in this life. Sanctification means the purification of our natures, but it does not mean the perfecting of our human faculties. It does not mean that we are automatically perfect in patience or kindness nor that we are in a state where our emotions will always be sweet and ideal. It does not mean that we shall never have a feeling of impatience or anger. Anger comes from the violation of our sense of justice. There are two forms of anger. One is vindictive anger, which causes one to have feelings of resentment and vengeance, and which would feel pleased at the suffering of the offender. This is sinful anger. The other is that indignation which arises from a sense of the evil nature of the act or thing, and which does not excite vindictive feelings toward the object. Christ was angry when he reproved the Pharisees (Mark 3:5), and justly so, for their wicked conduct was such as could not but excite his indignation. The Bible speaks of God's indignation, his anger, his wrath, his fury, etc., but we know that nevertheless he is holy. In fact, it was this very quality of holiness that caused him to be angry with wickedness. The stronger our sense of justice and our love of holiness, the stronger will be the sense of disapprobation that evil-doing will excite in us.

The Bible nowhere teaches us that a sanctified man will never be angry. Instead it teaches what he should do when angry. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26). One of the requirements of a bishop is that he should be holy, and another is that he should not be "soon angry" (Tit. 1:7), that is, he was to be a man who possessed proper self-control. I am not

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arguing in favor of getting angry, but simply to show that if a person does become angry, it does not necessarily prove that his heart is impure.

We need to guard very carefully all our natural faculties and control them so that they do not lead us into sin. Sanctification makes us much more equable in temper than we were before, so that many things that angered us before do not have that effect upon us now.

That anger which comes from an ugly temper or from wounded pride is not a mark of the Christian. This sort of thing and the love of God will not abide in the same heart. When the grace of God comes in, that kind of anger goes out to stay. The love of God softens our hearts and our natures, and the more of his love and power there is in us, the more kind and tender and affectionate we are. When we are filled with the fullness of God in entire sanctification, it brings to us a calmness and quietness and self-control that helps us to preserve moderation in all our ways. The mere feeling of displeasure or anger that now arises in the modified form that it does manifest itself in the Christian, is not sinful in its nature. Sometimes people say they are tempted to be angry. They might as well say they are tempted to be joyful or sad or thankful. Anger is an involuntary emotion. We cannot be tempted to be angry, but the temptation is to *do* or *say* something wrong when we are angry.

Do not condemn yourself as not being sanctified just because you sometimes feel these emotions that some idealists say that you will not feel. Judge yourself by the Bible and common sense. Some say that anger comes from depravity. If so, from whence does it come in the animal? Depravity in man affects it to make it vindictive. Then, and not until then, does it become sinful. The more

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of God we have in us, the more like God we shall be in these feelings and the more perfect will be both our temper and our conduct.

We ought to have the tame standard of judgment for ourselves that we have for others. There are those who have a lower standard for themselves and excuse in themselves that which they could not and would not excuse in someone else. They are ready to condemn others for doing the very same things that they themselves do or things that involve the same principle. They find no excuse for others, but only condemnation, but they have a ready excuse for themselves whenever they are guilty of a like thing. Others go to the opposite extreme. They have a higher standard for themselves than they have for anyone else. They can excuse others for doing what they themselves would not feel clear in doing. They condemn themselves for things that they would not condemn others for. They can find excuses for others, but none for themselves. By adopting either of these courses, we do wrong to ourselves. God has the same standard for judging all people, and he desires that we have the same standard for judging ourselves. The standard we set for others is more likely to be correct than the one we set for ourselves. If the standard we set for ourselves is not a proper standard by which to judge others, it is not the proper one by which to judge ourselves. There is a true and just standard. Let us seek that and apply it to our own lives and the lives of others. The true standard is neither too high nor too low.

The standard by which God judges us is flexible, that is, he holds us responsible only for what we know; hence the greater the light, the greater the responsibility of the person. Others will never be judged by our light nor we by theirs. It is only when persons have the same degree of light and when the circumstances are alike that the same standard is applicable to two or more individuals. But

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where light and circumstances are the same on any point, all must be judged by the same rule; and what is right for one is right for all, and what is wrong for one is wrong for all.

Sometimes people act as prosecutors, witnesses, judge, and jury to secure their own condemnation. Their consciences are so sensitive that they are ready to condemn themselves for various slight and trivial things—things that God pays no attention to at all and that they should not trouble themselves about. It is unwise to be always questioning our lives down to the minutest details. If our purpose is to serve God and we act upon that purpose, we need not watch ourselves so closely. It will be natural for us to do right. We shall feel disposed to do right, shall want to do right, and will do right. We need not spy upon ourselves and play the detective upon ourselves all the time. The Christian life is a natural life. Just live naturally. Do not feel all the time as though you were going to do something wrong. Do not treat yourself like a suspected criminal. God wants you free from all this care. He wants you free from all such fear. He wants you to have confidence that you are going to please him, and to act with the assurance that confidence brings. Get away from the idea that you must watch yourself so closely to prevent yourself from doing wrong. We must, of course, watch our conduct and not be careless and indifferent, but living the Christian life is not like trying to walk on a wire. It does not require any strain or struggle to keep balanced. No, the Christian path is broad enough for us to set our feet down squarely and to walk with ease and comfort. If Christ lives in us, will he not live out his life in us as naturally as he lived it out in his own fleshly body here in this world. Trust yourself to him and have confidence that he will work out in you the things that are well pleasing in his sight. Someone has said, “Do your best and trust the rest.” There is much wisdom in that saying. Think it over until you get what it means and then put it in

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practice in your life. Do not all the time be trying to do what you cannot do and what you have never succeeded in doing and never will succeed in doing. “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”; therefore just let him will and do in your life and trust him to do it.

Overvaluing or depreciating ourselves and our work is another unwise thing. Whichever we do will turn out bad. It is not true humility to be always criticizing and undervaluing ourselves. If we do a thing, it is neither better nor worse than if someone else had done it, and we should not so regard it. Let us not have a double standard, one for ourselves and one for others, but let us have the same standard for all, and let that be a just and right standard, one that God’s approval will rest upon. Then we may live satisfactory lives and have the blessing and approval of God upon us. The Bible and good common sense—that is the true and only standard by which we must be judged.

Acceptable Service

We read in the Bible of the form and the power of godliness, and when we look about us in the world, we see more of the form than we do of the power. There seems to be so many people who are merely playing religion. They attend services and go through the form of worship. They are sometimes very strongly devoted to their creed and greatly attached to the organization of which they are members; but when you look for the power of godliness in their lives and the power to render acceptable service to God, you do not find it. This make-believe religion will do very well sometimes, if it is not considered a matter of very much importance. It may sometimes ease the conscience for a time, but it will not bring us into a position where we can render acceptable service to God and where our own souls will be satisfied to their depths. People may manage to get along with such a religion in this world, but it will not stand the test of eternity. Of course, it will not stand the real test for this life. The soul who has the form without the power of religion can never have that satisfaction and peace that true religion gives.

There are many people who go through the forms of religion and try to serve the Lord, but who never know whether their service is acceptable or not. I was once talking with a lady who had professed to be a Christian for many years and had prayed often.

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Speaking to me on the subject of prayer, she said, "I cannot say that God has ever answered my prayers." Think of it! Twenty years of praying and never a prayer answered! Still, there are many who would have the same confession if they would open their hearts. Their religion has so little of reality in it that it seems almost nothing to them. It is natural for such Christians to testify that they "make many crooked paths for their feet" and that they "serve God in their weak way and manner." Such persons are not usually weak when it comes to serving self and the world.

The religion of too many people is like that of a man whom I once knew. Two religious parties had been holding their regular services in the same house. At last a strife arose among them as to which should have complete control of the house. This man who was leader of one faction told me that when they came together one day for a final decision of the case, he took off his coat, threw it down upon the seat, and said, "You lie there and my religion with you till I whip out these people." Religion that can be put on with the Sunday clothes and taken off as easily never goes very deep into the heart or life. The service of such persons is always weak, because there is no heart in it. While they profess to worship God, their hearts are far from him.

A certain religious professor went to work with a gang of men upon a public contract. He worked with them several weeks and then came home. A friend asked him, "How did you get along working with that gang of wicked men up there? What did they have to say about your religion?" "Oh," replied the other, "they didn't find out anything about it. I didn't tell them." It is just that way with many people. You would never find out anything about their religion if they did not tell you about it. There is no manifestation of it in their lives or characters. It does not show out in their words nor deeds; in

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fact, you would never suspect they had any if you did not go to church and hear them testify. Sometimes people will rise in testimony-meetings and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." In this they often turn the truth into a lie, for they do not know that their Redeemer liveth, for they are not redeemed. They are the same old creatures that they have always been. They have no personal knowledge of God whatever, unless it be of his condemnation resting upon them. Ezekiel speaks of this class of people and says of them, "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezek. 33:31). Isaiah, as quoted by Jesus, says of the same class, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8). Of what religion they have Jesus says, "In vain do they worship me" (verse 9).

Acceptable service to God can never be rendered with the lips alone. It must come from the heart. It is the condition and attitude of the heart that counts most in everything. If our hearts are not in the service, then our service is vain. Service to God, to be acceptable, must be the most real of all things. It must be the great outstanding fact of life. God hates mere form. It is an insult to him. He knows whether we are in earnest or not, whether our service is just form or means all to us. Modern ritualism is a curse to the world. A true Christian heart needs no such form. When we draw nigh to God with our hearts, the Spirit within us makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. It is from a heart thus in earnest that true worship and devotion comes. It is forth from such a heart that true service flows.

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Acceptable service can come only from a holy heart. God's standard for his worshipers is "that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God" (Phil. 2:15). Sinners cannot do that which is pleasing in the sight of God. Repentance is the one thing upon which God centers their attention. To repent is the first thing for them to do. God loves to receive the service of the holy. We may be weak and faltering, but our service is acceptable to God none the less if our hearts are right in his sight. As long as we are living in known disobedience to God, however, we might as well not try to serve him. That disobedience will stand between us and God as a barrier, and he cannot count anything that we do, no matter what it is, as being a righteous thing. Our hearts must first be righteous before our lives can be so.

Service, to be acceptable, must always be willing service. God forces no one to serve him. He lays down the principle that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath" (2 Cor. 8:12). Our service is not judged by our ability to do great things. A child can serve as acceptably as a man; the ignorant as well as the learned. The soul who serves willingly, takes God's way gladly. He does not ask to choose for himself; he only asks what will please the Lord, and, once knowing that, he gladly does it. Paul said of preaching the gospel that if he did it willingly he had a reward. It is only the willing service that has the reward. Willing service does have both a present and a future reward. Oh, for more willing workers who will not choose their own way or their own place or their own time, but who will give themselves into the hands of God and let his will be that which guides them from day to day, and thus find their pleasure in doing what is acceptable in his sight. God finds his pleasure in the willingness of the heart.

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To be acceptable, our service must be sincere. Sincerity is the foundation of Christian character. Hypocrisy in anything is an abomination to the Lord. Deep sincerity and earnestness characterize every true Christian. Without these there can be no true Christian character and no Christian service. Many people are not sincere with themselves, with others, nor with God. They are not satisfied with their lives, and they know that God is not, and yet they go on professing to be what they ought to be. They try to appear outwardly what they really know they are not. They desire the world to believe them to be something that they know they are not in reality. The people around us who gaze upon our lives, who listen to our words, and who see the play of emotions upon our faces know whether we are the true metal or not. God, who looks down from heaven and reads the very secrets of our hearts, knows also. God wants us to serve him with a true heart or make no pretense of serving him.

It must be a reverent service. The Psalmist says, “Stand in awe, and sin not” (Psa. 4:4). Heb. 12:28 says, “Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” When our souls sense the greatness of God, we are then filled with a feeling of reverence toward him, and it is only when we have this feeling of reverence that our service comes to have the quality of acceptable service. We cannot treat the service of God with careless indifference and have this reverence for him. We must feel this before we can truly worship him—before our worship will have that quality of genuine adoration that makes it worth while. If his fear is upon our hearts, we shall be very careful about our conduct. The question will be, not “Does this please me?” but “Will it please God?”

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It must be an unostentatious service. Service that springs from true love never desires to display itself. What it does is not done for the eyes of men to behold; it is done as a loving tribute to the object of its love. Christ drew a contrast between the kind of service that is acceptable and the kind that is not. In Matt. 6:1, 2, he says: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." The principle here set forth is that what is done with the purpose of being seen of men brings only the reward that men give; in other words, it is not accepted by the Lord as service to him. Judged by this rule, much of the service of some so-called Christians is never, I fear, recognized in heaven at all. Our good deeds are to be done, not that men may see, but that God, who seeth in secret, may see, and reward according to his own will, and that he may regard them as service done to himself and not for the reward of men's praise. It is simple, single-hearted service that pleases the Lord. Paul tells us the kind of life and service that pleases God: "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" (1 Tim. 2:2, 3).

We are told that a meek and quiet spirit is a thing of great price in the eyes of the Lord. Loud and boisterous conduct is not in harmony with the Spirit of Christ nor with true Christian character. Paul said, "Study to be quiet, and do your own business" (1 Thess. 4:11). There is a quiet dignity about the work of the Holy Spirit, and if we are dwelt in and operated by the Holy Spirit, there will be a quiet dignity in our lives that will count vastly more than any self-assertiveness. It is not the showy bird that sings the sweet song. It is

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not the noisy and showy man that makes his mark for God. The man who is truly godlike has no desire to put himself upon exhibition. He thinks, "Not I, but Christ," and not only thinks it, but feels it in the depths of his heart.

Another thing contained in the text quoted above is that we should not meddle in other people's business. We are commanded not to be busybodies (1 Tim. 5:13). Speaking of certain religious persons, Paul says, "Withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." Such things are no mark of the Christian. It shows a serious defect of character. Unless we take heed to this, we cannot be God's nor truly represent him before the world. If you are going to please the Lord, you must not be a tattler nor a busybody. Your religion must get into your talk as well as into your heart, and if it gets really into your heart, it will manifest itself through your tongue.

Paul says also that we must be peaceable. We cannot be peaceful without being peaceable. Inward content comes only from a quiet and peaceable spirit, and, having such a spirit, we shall manifest it toward those around us. We are told that as far as lieth in us we should live peaceably with all men. We are also told that we should be no brawlers. A Christian will not stir up strife in his community. We are told that God is not the author of confusion but of peace. It is not strange, therefore, that his Spirit in us should be a peaceable Spirit and should make us peaceable to those around us. The command is, "Live in peace," and the promise is, "And the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9). The strife and the contention sometimes seen among those who profess to be God's do not come from the Spirit of Christ, neither do they spring from a Christian character, but from an evil principle in the heart, from a lack of

godliness instead of from the presence of it. A true Christian spirit is one of kindness, gentleness, meekness, forbearance, and mercy, manifested toward all.

Service, to be acceptable, must be honest. Rugged honesty is a characteristic of true Christian character. We must be honest with ourselves, with God, and with others. We must be honest in our business and in all the details of our lives. The kind of honesty required does not admit of any questionable practices—no short weights or measures, no misrepresentations of goods or stock, no putting up of prices just to advertise cut prices. Christianity bears just as real fruit in business as it does in worship. The man who leaves his religion at home when he starts to business would hardly miss it if it was gone when he came back. The true Christian has a conscience toward God in his business. He speaks the truth; he is honest; he does that which he ought to do; he does not stoop to sharp practices; he does not take advantage of those with whom he has business dealings. He is a God-man in his business as well as in his profession. True Christianity knows nothing of the days of the week: it is just as good on Monday or on Friday as it is on Sunday. It will stand the test of the store, the bank; the farm; and all of everyday life any time and anywhere. If the religion we have will not stand that test; it will not stand the test of the judgment.

The sincerity of a true Christian is manifested in truthfulness. He speaks the truth in love. Sometimes people speak unpleasant truths in a malicious and vindictive way. As the Christian feels neither malice nor vindictiveness; he does not speak in that way. We are told that we must give an account of our words at the judgment-seat of God. We cannot serve God with an untruthful tongue. We cannot serve God by practicing deceit. We are to commend ourselves to every man's conscience by manifestations of the truth

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(2 Cor. 4:2). The Bible is truth. God is truth; there is no lie in him. If we partake of the nature of God and the Bible, we are truthful, and there are no lies in us; we do not speak lies nor act out lies.

Another thing every Christian ought to learn is to be silent when he ought to be so. Silence often counts more than speech. Silence is golden; but it is the wise man who knows how to get this gold.

The quality of our service is rated by the amount of love we put into it. It is not so much the acts that we do nor the consequences that flow from them, but the amount of love there is in the service. Love is what renders it acceptable to God; that is what makes it precious in his sight. It is the love of our hearts poured out to him in service that he counts worth while; therefore, the more we love him, the more acceptable and pleasing our service will be in his sight. If we serve him well, he will not let us be in ignorance of it. He will give us the testimony of a good conscience. Enoch had “this testimony, that he pleased God,” and we also may have it if we do please him. God is not slow to recognize what we do for him when it is prompted by right motives and pure purposes. Let us, therefore, walk humbly before God and serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

Providences and Circumstances

Life is often an enigma. It brings to us many things that we cannot understand. How blessed it is at such times to realize that there is One wiser than we who has our lives in his care and who sees all and understands all! God is our father, and we are the children of his love. He has our welfare at heart. He is interested in all that concerns us. He watches over all our lives, and nothing that comes can come without his knowledge. Whatever comes, he knows full well its effect upon us, and his loving hand is ever ready to protect and help his children. He could, if he chose, lead us in a pleasant and easy path through life, but he knows that a pleasant and easy path would not develop in us that strong and hardy Christian character so essential for us. Neither would it give him an opportunity to reveal the riches of his grace or his tender care. He knows that we must taste the bitter before we can appreciate the sweet. He knows that we must feel life's sorrows before we can value its joys. Suffering more than anything else develops us in the things of God. He will presently take us to be forever with him in his heaven of peace and glory, and he wants us to be able to enjoy it to the fullest; so he would in this life develop as fully as he may our possibilities. It is for this purpose that he sometimes leads us by ways that we know not and lets his providences be dark and mysterious; but throughout our lives, if we are his, "all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28). Many times, if we knew what was

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coming, the joy that it would bring would be lessened. He delights to surprise us, many times because by a surprise he increases our joy and appreciation. When difficulties arise through which we can see no way and he makes a way of which we had never thought—it is then that our hearts are made to wonder at his wisdom and are melted with gratitude.

His ways are not our ways. They are higher and better than our ways. If we were wise enough, we should always choose for ourselves that which he chooses for us. Alas! how often when we choose for ourselves, we choose that which is least wise! We must often deny ourselves. Sometimes it is hard to give up what we have chosen, as it seems desirable and exactly what we need. But God often denies us the seeming good that a greater good may come. If we submit and trust, that greater good will surely come; but if we rebel and clamor for what we have chosen, God may be compelled to hold back that greater good, and if we have our way, it may in the end prove to be a bitter way. What God gives is ever the best that we are willing to receive. We should often have better if we would trust God's wisdom and take gladly what he gives. Whenever we choose for ourselves and limit God to that which we have chosen, we deny ourselves of the better choice of his wisdom. The trouble so often is that we fail to trust him. We know that if he chooses he will choose well for us, but perhaps he may forget us. May not the thing that comes escape his notice, or may he not grow careless? Sometimes we cannot feel that what is coming is his choice for us. We fear and tremble and wonder. We try to escape it, but still it comes, and in the future days we often look back upon this very thing as one of God's greater blessings to us because of what it wrought for us and in us.

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God sometimes places a wall before us that we may stop and consider. We may come face to face with this obstacle across our path. We see no way by which we can surmount it; we see no way to go around it. Sometimes it fills us with foreboding. We question, “What will be the result? What shall we do?” Sometimes we grow very much troubled over it, but it is through this very thing that God can get us to do the serious thinking that he desires us to do and that it is necessary for us to do. He does not put a wall before us just to hinder our progress. He has some other purpose in it always, and when he has worked out that purpose, he will either take the wall out of the way, show us a way to surmount it, or lift us completely over it and set our feet again triumphant in the way.

He sometimes places a mountain of difficulty before us that we may climb to higher altitudes and that in the climbing we may develop spiritual strength. A rugged mountain before us may be hard to climb. Its difficulties may discourage us; but if we will gather up our courage and surmount it, no matter what effort may be necessary, we shall find that we have realized true benefits. We now stand on a higher altitude with a broader outlook, and instead of our being weakened by these difficulties, they have been the very source of our strength. Every difficulty that we conquer by placing it under our feet raises us higher in the Christian life. This is the purpose of these difficulties. God is not desirous that we have the difficulty, but he must let us have the difficulty if he is to raise us to the higher altitude, and he desires us to have the higher position. He never lets the way be too steep before us. He never lets the difficulties be too great. He knows that we can surmount them if we will. If he did not know this, he would not let them be placed in our way.

He sometimes sends sorrow to soften us and make us hungry for his comfort. We may become too satisfied with earthly things. We

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may draw too much of our joy from them. He delights to have us draw our joy and our comfort from him; therefore, he must take away from us the toys which have been occupying our time, that our souls may yearn for the comfort and blessedness that only he can give. He knows that nothing softens us like sorrow. So he gives to us the cup of sorrow to drink to the dregs, and oh, what tenderness and blessedness come into our lives when we drink submissively of that cup, no matter how bitter it may be to our taste! He sometimes takes away the staff upon which we lean, that we may learn to lean upon him. He sometimes takes away that in which we trust, that we may learn the better to trust in him. He may sometimes take away our strength, that he may be our strength and that his strength may be made perfect in our weakness. He sometimes takes away our company that we may desire his company the more. All these happenings may seem dark and mysterious to us; they may seem the very things that are the worst for us, but they are not. They are but the manifestations of his kindly wisdom and his fatherly tenderness. Sometimes behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face. We often see only the frown of the providence, and that frown looks very threatening; but if we will look away from that frowning providence to the smiling face of God, we shall see that which will uplift us and strengthen us and enable us to bear whatever stroke of providence may come.

O soul, trust him. He knows the way that you take. He knows the things that are in your soul and he knows just what is needful for you. So bear with patience and endure with meekness and do not question his wisdom or love. It will all come out for the very best in the end. Here is a little verse that speaks out a great truth:

“With patient mind thy course of duty run;
God nothing does or suffers to be done

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But thou wouldst do thyself if thou couldst see
The end of all events as well as he.”

You will do well to memorize these lines and when things happen that you cannot understand, repeat them over to yourself until their truth enters your heart and becomes real to you. It will help you to trust; it will help you to bear; it will help you to be strong. Learn to look at things just that way, for such they are in reality. If you will count them so, it will often help you.

It will make the hard places easy; it will make the tiresome places less tiresome.

But many things that come in life are not of God’s sending. They are the result of natural happenings, and God would have to work a miracle to prevent their coming. Christians are under natural law the same as sinners. The natural forces, therefore, will work upon us the same as upon others. Many things that come upon us are the portion of all men and are incident to our life in the body of flesh. As long as we are in the flesh, natural forces will work upon us according to natural law. God often chooses to help us bear these things rather than to change them. He can and sometimes does overrule these natural forces in their action, but not ordinarily.

When you are tried, you should think, “Should I not have these same things to bear if I were not a Christian? and should I not have to bear them without the grace of God to help me?” Sinners have to endure trials through their own resolution. You and I have that same natural power, with the grace of God added; therefore, we ought to bear trials easier than sinners. Too many people are looking for an easy way, and when they find a little hardship somewhere, something that requires a little endurance, they are ready to look for some other way. Some people think that Christians ought not to have these things to bear, but God sees otherwise. These things will come

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and must come. Giving up our hold on God will make it harder instead of easier for us to bear them. We shall not get rid of them. We shall have to pass through them, no matter what we do; so we might as well bravely face them and trust God to take us through.

In wars and other calamities, the innocent suffer with the guilty. Some people blame God for all calamities. If lightning strikes a church or the wind destroys the home of a poor Christian, they blame God. If there is an earthquake or a flood, the blame is placed the same. These things are very rarely providential in their nature. They come through natural forces. God has not promised to make us immune from the action of these natural forces nor from the action of evil men. He warns us not to trust in riches nor to rely on the things of earth, but upon those higher things that cannot be stolen nor burned nor destroyed.

Sometimes it is said that God takes away our loved ones. It may be thus sometimes, but, as a rule, death comes as a result of natural causes. God has no certain time for people to die. The day of death is not decreed. We die when the natural forces of life are overcome by disease or accident or some other cause so that the body can no longer function. Moses makes it plain in the ninetieth psalm when he says: "The days of our years are three score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four score, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (verse 10). Here he attributes the extra years, not to something decreed by God, but to the result of natural strength. We die only when our vitality is destroyed or our natural forces used up. Christians have no preeminence over others in this respect, except that God is often pleased to restore their natural forces through his healing power and so prolongs their lives beyond what they would have been prolonged otherwise. If our loved ones die, we should never charge God with

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injustice; instead we should turn to him for help and comfort. Some grow bitter instead of being softened and ennobled by their sorrow. If God ever does by his own act take a loved one, it is because it is better so.

If we look upon everything as God's providence, we shall often blame him for things with which he has nothing to do. We ought to discriminate between natural happenings and those things which are really the work of God. Sometimes we cannot distinguish; we cannot always be sure; but if we trust God, he will cause all things to work together for our good, whether by his own direct acts through his providence, or by keeping us in those natural things that we meet. The thing to do is to meet courageously whatever comes. It is safe to rely upon his wisdom, and his love will never fail us.

Remaking Ourselves

By inheritance, by the influence of environment, and by the effect of our own habits, we are weak, undeveloped, or abnormal in many of the human traits and faculties which grace either leaves untouched or only partly affects and which we need to set ourselves about correcting, improving, or developing. In many things we are the product of our own efforts. Grace does much, but grace can never take the place of our own efforts in self-development. Sin often weakens the will until it loses its original power of control over desire. When we let desire become master, we destroy the balance of our forces. The will must rule over desire if we are to be righteous; so if the will is weak, we need to set about the task of strengthening it. To do this we must lay out for ourselves a definite course of action, and then, knowing what we ought to do, not let ourselves be turned away from that, no matter what natural desire may suggest. Form the habit of carrying out what you start to do in spite of obstacles, in spite of fluctuation of desire and the inclination to stop instead of going forward. Carry out your purposes. Never be hasty in deciding to do a thing; but when you have once decided, carry out that decision fully unless you discover some good reason why you should not do so. If you begin things and do not finish them, but grow weary and let them go or let yourself be turned aside to something else, you weaken your will each time. It is better to complete a few things than to begin many and finish none. One thing

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carried resolutely through strengthens you and makes success easier next time. By this means a weak will can often be greatly strengthened in a short time. When you say no, stick to it unless you see you are wrong. Do not let your refusal become a yielding later. If you ought to say no at the first, it ought to be no to the end. If one no to temptation is not enough, say it again and again. Either you or temptation must lose. You have the power to make your first no a final no if you hold your ground.

We may have cultivated self-will until submission to any other will is hard. We love our own way. We find it hard to submit to God, to our brethren, or to circumstances. To be successful Christians we must conquer this self-will. We must compel ourselves to yield against our natural inclinations until we form the habit of submission to the extent that we should submit. Some never conquer themselves sufficiently to yield gracefully, nor to yield at all until circumstances force them to do so. They lose many of the sweetest things of life because of this self-will. They often feel that their rights are being trespassed on; in fact, whenever you find a person who is always standing up for his rights, you find one of those self-willed individuals. Such persons never progress very deeply into the grace of God, since they are never willing to make the surrender necessary to give God the chance to make them spiritual. Conquer your self-will; cultivate submissiveness. It is the only way to true happiness.

Another thing that we need to cultivate is courage. The world hates a coward, and the devil too, I think, has little respect for him. The man who would be a successful Christian needs courage. Life is a battle, and it takes courage to win it. You can be brave just as well as anyone else. Start in to face your foes just as if you were brave, no matter how little courage you have nor how much you tremble. If you act as if you were brave, it will produce the same

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results upon your foe as if you were brave; and if you act bravely, you will soon come to feel brave. If for a time you act more bravely than you feel, that action will win, and the victory won will produce confidence, which is the foundation of courage. You will either cultivate courage by meeting your foes and obstacles and overcoming them, or you will increase your fears by yielding to them. Remember this: you may be courageous if you will. You may become fearless if you will, no matter how timid you are now. Set yourself the task of being a bold soldier for Christ. You may be such if you will.

Some have cultivated gloominess and despondency in their sinful days by looking on the dark side of things until they are discouraged most of the time. If you have formed this habit, set about breaking yourself of it. There is just as much sunshine in the world for you as for anyone else if you will come out of your cavern of gloom. Cultivate hope. God is on your side. Read his promises and believe they are for you and begin to act in conformity with your faith. So many people are always looking at their trials and their failures, and consequently they see but little else in their lives. This is always discouraging. If you want to see something worth while, look at “the pit from whence you were digged.” Look at the things in which you are different from what you used to be. “Behold what God hath wrought.” Make yourself look away from the dark picture. There is something better than this to look at. Form the habit of right thinking, overcome your morbidness. God wills that you be happy, and there are enough good things around you to make you happy if you will give them your attention.

Wherever you find yourself weak or undeveloped, set yourself the task of making yourself what you ought to be. God will help you, but he cannot accomplish the desired result alone. You must do your

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part. Grace has its part, but only a part. Train your own faculties, develop your own powers. Do not be content to be a weakling. Be a real man for God. Do not be satisfied to be less than your best. Do not fold your arms and lament because you are what you are. This will not make things better. Get into the harness and go to work. Many people never develop their resources. Their lives might count twenty-fold more if they would have it so. You can make of yourself more than you have ever hoped to be if you will set resolutely about the task in an intelligent way. Be your very best if it does cost earnest effort. You will not regret the effort when you see the results.

Faith

In preceding chapters we have considered the subject of faith so far as it relates to the receiving of God's cleansing work in the soul; it remains now to consider the general subject as it relates to the Christian life. The word is often applied to a system of belief or teaching, as "the faith of the gospel." This use of the word calls for no notice here. Faith in this work means the faculty of the human soul by which we lay hold upon God and are brought into intimate contact with him, and through which we receive things from him. All have the power to believe. Evangelical faith is believing 'that God is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him' (Heb. 11:6). It is believing that God is what the Bible says he is and that he will do what the Bible says he will do. It is a confident and implicit relying upon him. It is counting him true and his word true, and putting that confidence into action in our lives.

In Gal. 5:22 faith is said to be one of the fruits of the Spirit. We have a natural faculty of faith, or the power to believe, and the Spirit of God, working upon this natural power, quickens our faith and turns it into channels that lead Godward, and thus God becomes the object of our faith. Faith being a fruit of the Spirit, it naturally follows that the more spiritual we become the stronger will be our faith and the more effective it will be in its action. Like other natural qualities, it is more highly developed in some persons than in others,

but there are none but can have faith in God sufficient for their own salvation and sufficient to enable them to live a godly and true life. Faith is also capable of great development. As we advance from one experience to another in the Christian life and see how God has blessed us and led us on and helped us, that increases our faith, adding to it from day to day. It is God's will that everyone of his children have sufficient faith to make them overcomers in this world, so that they may live a life to please God in all things.

Qualities of Faith

Faith is not as blind Credulity. Faith has keen eyes, and she looks forth with unfaltering gaze. She knows full well that she need not close her eyes to any fact. She knows that the whole realm of truth is hers. She gazes at all the facts in the quiver of Reason and fears none of them. She sees in and beyond these truths a mighty God, the object of her confidence. Credulity fears truth, but Faith rejoices in it, for in every truth she sees the revelation of her Beloved. Her eyes are quickened by love, so that she sees where other eyes cannot see. She sees the unseen and beholds the invisible. Her vision pierces the dark and threatening clouds of earthly circumstances and beholds God still upon his throne and still her helper.

Faith is courageous. She does not triumph because her enemies are weak, but because she is strong, and difficulties only make her stronger. She faces her foes with confidence, for she knows Him in whom she trusts. She is bold with the boldness that comes from strength, for she knows that she has access to all the strength of God. Why should she be timid or shrinking? is not her God greater than all? is he not with her? She is hopeful even in the darkest hour. She can always see something in which to rejoice. Dark skies do not

appall her. The keen winds of persecution and the beating waves of trouble cannot silence her song of rejoicing. She knows in whom she trusts. She knows that the end will be victory, and so she goes upon her way confident, courageous, and hopeful.

The Foundation of Faith

Paul told the Corinthians that his preaching to them was not with ‘enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God’ (1 Cor. 2:4). Faith has a more sure foundation than the wisdom of man. It is based upon the character and promises of God. When we come to know the character of God, through the revelation of himself in the Bible and through what we learn of him by our own experience, it affords us a certain foundation for faith. We learn his truthfulness; therefore, we know his promises are true. We learn of his faithfulness; therefore, we know that his promises will be fulfilled. We learn of his kindness, and we know that he will be kind to us. We learn of his love, and we know that he will manifest that love to us in helping us. God has spoken many gracious promises to us. He cannot lie. These promises were made to be fulfilled and not to be broken. They are “yea and amen” to everyone that believes. God never tries to find a way to excuse himself in not fulfilling his promises. He never desires not to fulfil them. He does not have to be forced to fulfil them. He has never made to us a single promise that it is not his delight to carry out for us. He stands behind them all to make them good, not simply because his faithfulness and truthfulness are at stake, but because what he has promised is the natural fruitage of his love toward us.

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In these things faith has a foundation that can never fail her. Upon it she can confidently stand. This is the only sure foundation that she can have. Any other will give way beneath her feet. God's character will never change, and so his promises will never fail. If you would have faith, look at the promises of God and then look behind the promises at God himself. Look at his character. Contemplate its beauty and strength until your heart becomes enraptured. Behold his perfection until your heart is warmed with adoration. Many are weak indeed because they do not really know God. They have never really studied his character. They are unaware of his perfection. They are unaware of his interest in them. They do not know the strength and richness of his love. They might know these things if they would read of him in the Bible as they ought and if they would spend the proper time in meditating over what they read. Reader, if you have never given sufficient time to the study of the character of God, you ought to take that time now. You can spend profitably many days and months therein. Do not be afraid that you will exhaust the subject, for God is infinite. Too many Christians never become acquainted with God further than to be on just common speaking terms with him. They never attain to that intimate knowledge of him, that intimate relation with him, that it is their privilege to enjoy. The more perfectly we know him and the closer we come to him, the more certain we shall feel that our faith stands upon a solid foundation, one that will never yield under any circumstances.

Based on anything else than the character and promises of God, faith must ever be weak and wavering. Some base their faith on their experience. As long as they have full confidence in their experience, they think that they can ask God for things and obtain them because of what they are. It is very good to have confidence in our experience, but to base our confidence and our faith on our

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experience is a very unwise thing. If we do this, anything that makes us doubt our experience in any degree will hinder our faith just when an active, vigorous faith is needful. Many times people base their faith upon their emotions. If our feelings are the foundation for our faith, we shall apparently be very strong in faith when we are joyful; but when emotions subside, our faith is gone. Faith must have a substantial grounding, or it will fail just when most needed. To stand, it must be based upon things that are immutable. If we anchor our boat to a floating log, we shall drift with its motions. Our emotions rise and fall as the tide. If we make them the basis for faith, we shall never be able to stand.

Emotion is often a false witness, while faith's witness is always true. Emotion says that we are strong when we are joyful, and weak when we are in heaviness. Its witness is not true. Our real strength is practically the same in both instances, only we are more encouraged and inclined to use our strength when emotions run high. Joyful emotions stimulate faith, hope, and courage, and render them active; while opposite emotions depress and hinder them. The operation of faith is normal and undisturbed only when emotion is neutral or when it is fully separated in action from faith, and our faith in nowise depends upon it. Just as long as we base our faith upon our feelings, it will rise and fall as our feelings do. We shall be now strong, now weak; now certain, now uncertain; now confident, now fearful. Get your faith and your feelings separated. It is only by so doing that your faith will hold fast in the times when you need it.

When your emotions run high, you have need of little faith, for the strength of your emotions will carry you through; but when emotion subsides and you are left without the stimulus that it gives, it is then that you need faith, and it is then that you must have it in order to keep from being tossed about. Right here is the difficulty

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with a multitude of Christians. Their faith is based upon their emotions, not upon the Word of God; therefore so long as they feel all right, their faith is steady, but as soon as their feelings subside or as soon as bad feelings begin to come, their faith wavers and shrinks, and they are ready to give up in despair. This is child's play, and you will never be more than a child in faith so long as you base your faith upon your emotions. God wants you to be man-sized and man-strong. He does not want you to be the creature of your emotions. He wants you to stand by faith, by a faith anchored to his immutable promises. When faith is so anchored, waves of feeling may rise and fall, the wind may blow this way or that, but the man stands firm. He is saved whether he feels good or feels bad, whether he is joyful or sorrowful, whether his heart is overflowing with thankfulness or his emotions are perfectly neutral. Faith must be based on something outside ourselves if it shall ever have a healthy growth and strong development.

Some people base their faith largely upon what other people think of them. They can feel that they are saved so long as certain ones seem to have confidence in them and are manifesting that confidence at every opportunity. It is all right to appreciate the confidence of our brethren and the manifestation of that confidence, but we should not base our hopes of heaven and our confidence in ourselves on such manifestations of approval. We must stand for ourselves. We must know ourselves and our own relations with God; we must not depend upon others to know for us. Get close enough to God so that nobody else can know your state as well as you yourself. Let no one be intermediate between you and God. He has promised that you should know him for yourself and that you should know yourself and your standing before him. Seek this close relation with God. The door is wide open; you may enter into it if you will. God will see that you find the way if you really try. When once your

faith is anchored on the solid foundation that he furnishes for you, the accusation of men and devils will not affright you nor make you give up your confidence in God.

The Effect of Faith

Paul says, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22). There are those who tell us that we can never know that we are saved, or in fact ever be very sure of anything in regard to our relations with God. Nothing could be more contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures. Faith brings knowledge. There is never a completed action by faith but there is an assurance that follows that action. It is the natural fruit of that action. Faith works with assurance. He who has faith draws nigh to God with expectation. He knows that God is true and that His promise is for him. He lays hold upon the promise because the promise belongs to him and because God is pleased to have him claim his rights in the promise. When he takes hold upon the promise, he is sure of the result. Sometimes people speak of “taking things by faith” when they rather mean claiming them without faith, for it is evident that they do not have the faith they are claiming. The only way to obtain a thing from God is through faith, speaking of those things which come to us through prayer. So whatever of this nature we get from him, we must take by faith, but when we take it by faith, we have it. When faith once gets her hands on a thing, it is hers, but it is not hers until she has hold upon it, and when she has gotten hold of it, she has the consciousness of having it in her grasp, the same as we have the consciousness of having in our hands that which we have grasped.

Doubts may come from various sources. One source is a lack of knowledge of God’s will. As long as we hold in question whether it

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is God's will to do a thing for us, our faith cannot be active and strong in its grasp. There will be an uncertainty about it all. We need to get this question of God's will settled first. Sometimes this is very hard for us to decide, but of one thing we may always be sure—that it is God's will to give us what we need and what we must have in order to serve him successfully. God is willing to give. He does not have to be forced to give because he has promised. He does not have to be coaxed to give it nor wheedled into granting our request. He stands ready to fulfil his promises. Ordinarily, therefore, when a need is presented to us, we can take it for granted that it is God's will to supply that need, though he must choose the way in which he will supply it.

Doubts often come because we feel unworthy. We need something, and we desire it very much. We do not doubt that God would give it if we were more worthy to receive it. We could readily believe that he would give it to somebody else, but will he give it to us? If what we receive depended upon our worthiness to receive, we should certainly never receive very much from God, but it does not depend upon our worthiness. It depends upon his graciousness and upon his mercy and upon his kindness and upon his love. If we must wait until we are worthy of his blessings, we shall never receive them. It is often true that the most worthy Christians, or those who are most godlike in their lives, are the very ones who feel most unworthy. This is so because they understand better and see more clearly the perfections of God. There are, of course, those whose lives are unworthy before God and who for that reason cannot have faith to receive, because their consciences trouble them. These must needs get a clear conscience before faith will take hold for other things. But those true Christians who seek things of God never have a strong feeling of their worthiness. It is true that they can often say, like Hezekiah, that they have lived perfect before the Lord up to all

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their understanding; but notwithstanding that, there is a sense of unworthiness before God, so that they do not base their faith upon their worthiness but upon the great loving-kindness of God.

In order for us to have the assurance of faith, the promises must come to mean *us* and mean us *now*. In approaching God for something, you ought to come to him as though you were the only person in the world and that the promise was especially made for you. You should treat the promise just as though nobody else had a share in it. The promises that cover your needs are to you. They are to you and for you just as much as though God had spoken them directly to you personally and had included no one else. Look upon them in this way. Treat them this way, always bearing in mind that he must choose his manner of fulfilling them.

Assurance is not emotion. You may be sure that you own a farm. You may have a deed for it, properly recorded. There may be no claims of any sort against the farm. But though you know all these facts, such knowledge may not excite any emotion at all in you. You may be ever so sure of it, not question it in the least, and at the same time be perfectly unemotional about it. The same is true many times with the Christian experience. We may be perfectly sure about it and yet not be able to tell a thing about it from our emotions. The promises of God are true whether they excite in us any emotion or not. He has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). This is true, no matter how lonely or deserted we feel, so long as we trust. Your part is to trust and obey. The rest belongs to God. Be concerned about doing your part, but throw all the responsibility for his part upon him. Do not try to bear one bit of it yourself. Never try to help God. He is able to do his own part. Never worry and strain yourself trying to have faith. Just be easy and comfortable about things. When the responsibility of anything is thrown upon God, he

will not shrink from that responsibility, neither will he fail to bear it properly.

A little incident from my own experience may help the reader to understand what I mean. I was once traveling in the evangelistic work with two helpers. We had arranged to go on Monday morning to a certain town some distance away to begin a meeting. We did not have the money to pay our railroad fare. On Saturday we made our arrangements to go and prayed the Lord to furnish the means which we needed. On Sunday morning we went to meeting and had a glorious service. I forgot all about money. On Saturday I had taken it for granted that the Lord would supply our needs at that meeting, but on the way home from the meeting, something seemed to say to me, "Where is your money?" and I suddenly remembered that I had received nothing at all. I had asked the Lord for it and had expected it to come, but it had not come as I had expected. For a moment I did not know what to say. Then I answered: "Well, Lord, you will have to look after that. We are going to do our part." We went on a number of miles to stay all night and found that a meeting had been arranged for at that place; so I took it for granted that our needs would be supplied here. We had another very precious meeting, but it closed and the people went home. I was detained a little, but presently started for my stopping-place through the darkness. A voice seemed to say to me, "Where is your money?" Here it was late at night, and we were to start early the next morning. But my confidence was in God, and I threw the responsibility on him, saying: "That is your business, Lord. We are doing our part, and we expect you to do yours." I went on my way not concerned over the matter, when shortly I heard a voice calling after me. I answered, and a man came running and put something into my hand. When I reached my lodging-place, I found that it was a bill sufficient to pay all the expenses of our trip.

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Do your part, be sure you have done it, and then you can throw the responsibility upon God. You need not worry, you need not fear. He will not fail you. Cast all your cares upon him, for he careth for you. Do not think that God will not attend to his business. Does he let the planets get out of their orbits? Does he let the sun cease to shine? Does he fail to bring spring after the winter? Does he fail to give seedtime and harvest? Be not fearful, but believing. He has said that heaven and earth should pass away, but that his word should never pass away; that is, it is the most certain thing in existence. Plant your feet firmly on the promise. Count it yours. Rejoice in it.

The Relation of Works to Faith

All Catholics and most Protestants trust in their good works more than in God for salvation. This may seem a strong statement, but many years of experience in dealing with souls have brought me to that conclusion. No matter how much the efficacy of faith is preached, when it comes to the matter of practical Christian living, most people trust more or less in their works to make them acceptable before God. They try to do something to merit salvation, and after they are saved they try to do something to merit God's approval. The ineffectiveness of such efforts is made very plain by Paul. He says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). There is absolutely no saving merit in works. Salvation is a gift from God. Anything that is purchased is not a gift. Anything that is ours by right cannot be a gift to us. Salvation is called the "free gift." It can never, therefore, in any degree rest on our good works. Evil works cut us off from God and grace, and so God requires us to shut evil works out of our lives, but simply shutting these evil works out of our lives does not win for us salvation.

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“I do right, therefore I am right,” is the usual formula. This makes works precede faith, and makes faith dependent on works. Those who base their standing before God on their good works instead of upon his grace, must continually question themselves whether their good works are sufficiently good to recommend them to God. If we could be saved in that manner, we would be saved by faith in ourselves, and not by faith in God. The true formula is, “I am right, therefore I do right.” Acts get their quality from intent, and intent comes from the state of the heart. There can be no evil intent in a righteous heart, and hence no evil act in the life. If the fountain is clean, so is the stream; but if the fountain is unclean, nothing that we can do to the stream will cleanse the fountain. In Gal. 5:6 we read of “faith which worketh by love.” Faith is therefore a motive power; and if there is true faith abiding in us, it will work out in deeds of love and kindness, of mercy, holiness, and truth.

We should remember, however, that it is not these deeds that make the faith nor preserve it, but it is the faith that makes the deed. James makes works the evidence of faith; that is, faith is the tree and works are the fruit. It is quite true that the fruit is of the same character as the tree, but the fruit upon a good tree is often marred by insects or drought or damaged by the weather. The fact that damaged or imperfect fruit is taken from a tree does not prove that the tree is not all right. It may only prove that circumstances prevented the proper development of the fruit. So the fruit of our faith may not always be perfect. We may now and then come short of our expectations. There may be things in our lives that we should like to see better. We may be prevented by circumstances from reaching the full development of our lives and fruits as we should like to have them developed. But nevertheless if we are God's, the true life-power is working in us. Judging ourselves solely by the fruit that we bear under unfavorable circumstances is no more fair than

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judging the tree by the imperfect fruit that may grow upon it. I am not arguing in favor of wrongdoing. By no means. If God is in us, our lives will be pure and our deeds will be pure. The point that I wish to emphasize here is that our faith should be in God and not in our works. He who trusts in his works may have righteousness, but it is wholly a self-righteousness; but he who trusts in the righteousness of Christ imparted to him by the Holy Spirit has the righteousness of God, which is the “righteousness of faith.” We are righteous because God makes us righteous. We remain righteous because he keeps us righteous. Oh, that men would trust him to be their righteousness instead of going about to establish their own righteousness!

Faith—Continued

Living by Faith

“The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17). The Christian graces flourish only in the soil of faith. Under the influence of doubt they droop and die. As already stated, we should never try to trust in works in order to maintain our righteousness. “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). That inward, conscious, satisfying knowledge of being right with God can come only by faith. Some people are always questioning their experiences. They remind me of a man hiring out to work for another man through harvest. All goes well the first day, but the second morning when he rises he feels tired and sore from the work and probably does not feel at all inclined to begin another day’s labor. So he walks off to the field and sits down upon a stump while the rest of the laborers go to work. Presently one comes up to him and says, “What is the matter, John?” He looks gloomy and says: “Oh, I don’t feel well this morning. I think I’ve lost my job.” He is finally convinced that he has not lost his job, and is persuaded to go to work, and he gets along pretty well during the day. The next morning it is cloudy, and he walks out to the field again and sits down. Again he is asked what is the matter, and his reply is: “Oh, it’s so cloudy and threatening this morning. I think I have lost my job.” What do you suppose his employer would say? Would it be, “I am sorry for you; I think you had better go home”? No, it would be, “Get busy there. We need your help.”

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Some Christians are all the time troubling themselves about having lost their job of serving the Lord. Whenever things are not just as favorable as such Christians think they ought to be, they begin to question themselves. The Scripture says, “Know ye not . . . that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13:5). He will not cast you off unless you turn away from him. You will not lose your job of serving him, unless you want to lose it. If you do something that causes him to discharge you, he will tell you plainly what it is. He will not leave you to guess and wonder. Obey him and trust him, and you will be his.

He who has faith has both arms and armor. It is a defensive armor to shield us against our foe. In 1 Thess. 5:8 Paul calls it a breastplate. In Eph. 6:16 he says, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” By this he means that faith is our principal protection. With his shield the ancient soldier stopped the arrows of his adversary, and with the shield of faith we may quench all the fiery darts that are shot at our souls and turn aside all the other things that would wound us. This is how we should use it for defense: Disbelieve all that contradicts God—circumstances, people, feeling, or whatever it may be. God is true no matter who or what may testify to the contrary nor how strong that testimony. If God is true, that which is contrary to that which he says is false, and we should treat it as being false. It is by faith that we stand (Rom. 11:20). We may be sure of one thing; that is, that we shall never fall by faith. We may fall by unbelief, but never by faith. No soul ever went down trusting. Take God at his word. You need not worry about falling. Just believe. God has promised to protect you. If you will build a form about you with your faith, God will pour in the concrete until he has made a solid, impenetrable wall all around you.

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Faith is not only our armor, but also our weapons of offense. John said, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4, 5). In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we find a list of some of the wonderful things wrought through faith. Through it armies were put to flight, the dead brought to life, and great obstacles overcome. It is our surest weapon. Let us arm ourselves with it and go forward to victory.

There is one foundation upon which we can build which will never yield. Jude speaks of it thus: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith” (verse 20). All other virtues must be built upon this foundation. It is the only foundation for Christian character or Christian attainment. There is no solid foundation but this. It alone will stand the tests of life’s storms. Do you want to live a victorious life? Faith is the victory. As long as you have faith, you have victory, and you will keep the victory until you surrender your faith. Therefore, hold fast your faith and confidence in God and in yourself.

There are hindrances to faith. We may either hinder or help our faith. One way in which it is often hindered is by making the promise mean someone else instead of us. It is often easier to have faith for others than for ourselves, or it seems to be easier. It looks very reasonable that God would answer the prayers of others. The promise means others; of course it does. But it means us just as well. We should not think that it is easier for others to have faith than it is for us. We should not think that God is more likely to answer others than he is to answer us. God wants us to have confidence in our own prayers. He wants us to believe that he will do as much for us as for others, and that his promise means us just as well as anyone else. His promise does mean us. God is no respecter of persons. If our

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hearts are true to him, he will hear us just as quickly as he will hear anyone else. Do not let yourself get the idea that your prayers will not be heard as surely as the prayers of others. If you do, it will be a hindrance to your faith. It is not true. God gives the promise to us as well as to anyone else, and he wants us to look upon it that way, and act upon it that way. Your prayers are just as acceptable as the prayers of any other of God's children. He will be as true to his word in your case as in theirs. He will do for you what he will do for them, if you believe. God makes no difference between his children. He treats them all alike if they believe him alike and obey him alike.

Another hindrance to faith is the idea that some people have, that they must work themselves up to some emotional state or have some particular feeling, in order to be heard. There is a great difference between faith and emotion. It is faith that brings the answer. God's promises are true no matter how we feel about them. They are true absolutely and always, and they will be made effectual for us according to our needs if we will rely upon them. But God fulfils his promises in his own way. We must leave the choosing to him. But if we ask in a submissive way, he always answers more wisely than we ask. We must remember this one fact: that God will not take dictation from us as to how he shall answer. If we try to dictate to him, we only put a barrier in the way of his answering us. Therefore, when you pray, pray submissively, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Many people limit God in his answering, because they are so sure just how it ought to be that God must answer their way or not at all. Is our wisdom greater than God's? Do we know what ought to be better than he knows? Sometimes people will accept an answer only in the way that they want it. God sees that they are self-willed, and so he must deny them. We cannot make God work according to

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our plan; we must work according to his. When we pray without submitting to his will, or give him the privilege of answering in his own way, we are wasting our time. Not only so, but we are developing rebellion in our hearts against God. He hates self-will and stubbornness. It shows that we have more confidence in ourselves than in him.

Confidence is the basis of faith. John says: “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 John 3:21, 22). We cannot have faith over sin in the heart. Sin is a barrier to faith unless there is repentance. The heart must be right or seeking to be right before faith can be effectual. Any unwillingness in our hearts to do all we know of the will of God or any drawing back from his commandments will act as a barrier to our faith. If our hearts bear us witness that we are doing the will of God so far as we know it, this will bring to us confidence. In this confidence we can approach God, knowing that he will hear us. Disobedience, or rebellion against anything that we know to be the will of God, is ruinous to faith, so that she cannot soar upward. Hezekiah could pray to God with faith for his healing, only because of the fact that his heart testified to his uprightness of character and his whole-hearted obedience.

Sometimes there are other things besides sin that hinder our confidence in ourselves before the Lord. Doubt, or anything that makes us question our standing, will hinder our faith. When anything comes up that makes us question ourselves, we ought to have it settled immediately, and not let it drag along to trouble us. It is our privilege to have such things settled without delay. When our good judgment tells us that we have not sinned against the Lord, we

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ought not to let ourselves be troubled about other things. If God, for our profit, has chastised us, or Satan has brought a feeling of condemnation upon us, or whatever it may be that troubles us, it is our privilege to look to God through it all and count ourselves victorious. Such things need not be a hindrance to us if we will keep our confidence and our integrity steadfast.

We also must have confidence in God. We may know from a reasonable standpoint that all God's promises are true and true for us, and still we may not have that assurance and that confidence in him which enables us to lay hold upon his promise and make it ours. Sometimes we cannot bring ourselves to feel the reality of his promises. This does not change them nor render them untrue. The question is not whether we feel that his promises are true, but whether we will believe they are true and appropriate them for ourselves.

Looking at ourselves or our failures is also a great hindrance. There is a reason for every failure, but some things that are called failures are not failures at all. It is only God answering in a different way. There are many failures because people give up too soon. They are too quick to think that if others have failed they also are sure to fail. If you have failed in the past, it is not proof that you will do so now. If you know a reason for failure, get that reason out of the way; if you can find no reason for failure, press right on till you get what you desire.

Another hindrance is trying to force faith. When we try to force it beyond its natural limit, we weaken it. We do not need to nerve ourselves up to the highest pitch in order to have faith. In fact, that has nothing to do with faith. When faith works at all, it works easily and naturally, without any straining or forcing. God is true, he has promised, and we simply take it for granted that he will do as he has

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promised, and rely upon that. That is faith; that is a natural operation of faith; that is the way faith reaches results. We have to develop faith. Faith is not accidental. The conditions favorable or unfavorable to it are often of our own making. Spirituality is one necessary condition. A careless life is poor soil in which to develop faith. Anything that we can do to develop our spirituality and draw nearer to God will make faith work more naturally and will make it stronger and more effectual. Carelessness in our living, neglect of prayer, and various other means by which we are made less spiritual will react upon our faith. We may build a good foundation for future action of faith by reading the Scriptures and impressing forcibly upon our minds that "this promise is true." Whenever a doubt comes to your mind, challenge it and overbalance it with the assertion that "God is true and his Word is true." This is the way to cure your doubts. You know that God is true. Meet every doubt with a positive assertion of his trueness. Make this your daily habit. Whenever the Word of God comes to your mind, refresh yourself with the thought of its absolute truthfulness. God is true, and God is true to you. Never give place to a suggestion to the contrary, for it is not, and cannot be, the truth. Follow out this plan of impressing upon your heart and mind that God is true and that his Word is true, and you will find him becoming more and more real to you.

Seeking should always be definite and persistent, and always with a definite goal. To seek for a little while and then without an answer to give up seeking, weakens faith. Do not pray haphazardly, just saying words to fill space. We can commune with God, speaking out to him all that is in our hearts; but when it comes to the concentration of faith on some particular point to bring results, there must be earnest and definite action. The best way I know to increase faith is this: When you feel anything to be necessary or to be the will of God for you to have, go to asking him and keep right on till you

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get an answer. One answered prayer is worth more than a thousand prayers unanswered. Do not pray at random; always make your prayers definite. Put faith into them. Many prayers are prayed that people do not expect any answer to. They would be very much surprised at getting an answer. Why do they pray such prayers? Are not such prayers an insult to God? Do not play the fool with God. Do not ask a thing unless you mean it and want it and are willing to throw your faith into the seeking to get it. If you do not mean business, you had better keep quiet; and if you do mean business, keep on till you accomplish what you set out to do, or find a good reason for not doing so. If God shows that it is his will not to grant what you ask, that is reason enough; but get an answer of some kind.

Some get into trouble, and their faith fails, and they wonder why, when the real secret lies in their careless habits of prayer. They have formed a habit of praying for things a while and then giving up without an answer, and when they come to a place of real need, the habit of giving up asserts itself and faith fails. Continuity is a necessary quality of the faith that wins; continuity can be developed only by continual practice. Do not expect to develop faith in a crisis of need. God is often pleased to give us special faith for a special need; but in general he expects us to develop the faith we need through the daily use of what we already have. Do not look upon strong faith as a thing that is to you unattainable. It is unattainable only to those who are too indolent or too careless to do what is necessary to attain it. You will never find faith as you might find someone's lost purse. It will never come to you by accident. It is a thing that must be developed, and we must work with God to bring about that development.

There are some people who were naturally strong in faith, but who in some way have become baffled in their faith. A reaction of

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some sort appears to have come upon them. They seem unable to rely upon the promises of God as they formerly did. In a way, they believe them just as much as they ever did, but they seem to have lost the power to grasp them and make them their own. Whatever may have been the cause of the weakening of their faith, the important thing now is the restoration of that faith. This is sometimes very difficult. People in this condition ought to be treated with the greatest care and consideration. Condemning them or blaming them will never help them out. The important thing is to find where the trouble is and to help them build up their faith again. I know something of this relaxation of faith by personal experience, and I know that it cannot be regained by radical action. As a rule, the recovery is gradual. People in this relaxed condition need our sympathy and our help rather than our condemnation. Their faith needs encouragement, and it is only through this that it can overcome and rise to the normal again.

There are two ways in which God answers prayer. One is that he hears our requests and gives immediately that which we desire. The other is that he grants our request and gives us the consciousness of such granting, but does not bestow the thing asked until a later time. To illustrate: A boy comes to his father and asks, "Father, will you let me have your knife?" The father says, "Yes, my son," and takes it from his pocket and gives it to him at once. Another child comes up to him and says, "Papa, will you get me a new hat?" He says, "Yes, my son," but perhaps he does not purchase the new hat for a week or two. In both cases the request is granted, but in one instance the asker gains immediate possession of the object desired, while in the other the asker does not receive the desired object at once. So sometimes when we come to God, he gives us immediately what we ask of him; we obtain possession of it at once. At other times we have the consciousness that he has granted our petition,

but possibly we may have to wait some little time before the thing wanted actually comes into our possession. When it is granted, it is ours, in one respect, just as much as though we had it, but we do not have the joy of possession nor the use of the object until it is actually bestowed upon us. It is at this time—when we realize that our petition is granted and still we do not possess that which we desire—that we ‘have need of patience . . . that we might receive the promise.’ Sometimes in praying for healing there is the assurance that God hears, that he is pleased to heal, and a consciousness that he is granting our request; but at the same time there may be no manifestation of the healing power in our bodies. At such times we can confidently wait, looking forward to the coming of the healing. Of course, we do not have the healing in our possession until the work is wrought in our bodies, but the answer to our prayer may be granted. At such times we need only to have faith, and God will manifest himself in power to us when it is his good pleasure to do so.

Faith and Testimony

Overlooking the fact just stated, people sometimes get the evidence or assurance of their healing and testify that they are healed when, in reality, there has been no change in their bodies. People look upon them and perceive no difference. They seem to be exactly as they were before, and they act the same as they did before, and still they claim to be healed. We are not really healed until the work is done in our bodies, though if God has answered our prayer, we are just as sure of the healing as if the work were already done. We ought, however, to be wise in our testimony. If God has given us the assurance of healing, let us testify to that assurance. We can testify to what we have, and look with confidence and expectation to the coming of the healing power. We ought, however, to be careful as

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to the extent of our testimony, and not let it go beyond the mark. When God says yes to our prayers, we can rejoice in that, just as the little boy could rejoice at his father's promise to buy him a new hat; but he could not rejoice in its possession, and neither can we rejoice in possession until the thing desired is actually bestowed.

Spiritual Retrogression

That we are spiritual at one time does not guarantee that we shall always remain so. There may come, if we permit it, a time of retrogression. Our zeal may flag, our love grow cold, and our interest may be lost, and we may become indifferent. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). Water, when unconfined, always flows downhill, and so do the natural currents of life. Serving the Lord, like any other good thing, requires exertion. If we grow careless and merely drift along, the current will always lead us farther away from God. Progress Godward is always progress upward.

How many who once were afire for God are now cold and indifferent! How many who once were bright lights are now only smoking wicks! Remember that what we once were does not give evidence of what we are now. Spiritual progress results from conformity to the laws of progress, and spiritual retrogression from lack of conformity to these laws. Physical growth is dependent upon the taking in and assimilation of new materials by an already organized structure. Spiritual growth depends upon our taking in spiritual materials and utilizing them properly in our development. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. If we keep so filled, there will be no retrogression.

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There are a number of things that contribute to drifting away from God. Let us consider some of them.

Neglect of prayer and of the reading of God's Word. When we neglect these, we cannot but grow Indifferent and fail to make spiritual progress. When we neglect these things, we soon lose our relish for them; and when that relish is lost, it becomes still more easy to neglect them. In this way we shut up the channel of grace and thereby prevent its flowing into our hearts.

Neglect of attending meetings. When people grow careless about assembling themselves with God's people, it is an evidence that they are drifting. Fervent love for God gives us a fervent love for his people; and a fervent love for them brings a fervent desire to be with them. A loss of interest, either through neglect or by letting another interest come in ahead of God, draws the soul away. We can prosper spiritually only so long as God has first place in our affections and first place in our interests. Beware of anything that comes between you and God, to draw your interest away from him. It will be ruinous to your soul.

Drawing away from duty. When people are first saved, as a rule they have a great zeal to work for God. They prefer doing that to anything else. Their souls delight in it. It is their meat to do his will. So long as they are in this attitude, they will prosper; they will steadily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord. But when their zeal begins to cool and their love becomes less strong, there is often a drawing back from duty. Before, they needed no urging; they were ready. Now, duty is irksome; they go about it reluctantly. They prefer that someone else work while they look on. They serve God from a sense of duty rather than from a sense of love. If we saw these things in their right aspect and their true meaning, we should see them as great danger-posts along the way warning us of the trouble

ahead. Such a change always indicates spiritual retrogression. It shows that the soul, instead of becoming more spiritual, is becoming less so.

Hardening the conscience until it loses its tenderness toward God, and so becoming careless in life. In the beginning of our new-born life, we have a tender conscience toward God. We ought to care for this tender conscience. We ought to follow it carefully, and keep it tender toward God. It must, however, be regulated by common sense and good judgment, or it will become a tyrant and rule our lives in a way to make us miserable. This is quite different from having that careful, earnest desire to please God. When we are drifting, we are not so much concerned about pleasing God as we were before, and we become more concerned about pleasing ourselves. Beware of the increase of this self-pleasing disposition. It is always a mark of spiritual degeneration.

Self-indulgence. No matter what direction this may take, it is sure to bring evil results. Partaking of worldly amusements, allowing pride to come into the soul and gratifying it with worldly apparel, luxurious living, and all similar things are destructive to spirituality.

Going back on our obligations. When we make God a promise to do something he asks of us, he expects us to live up to it; and not only does he expect it, but he will require it. Therefore, if we draw back from that which we have promised him, or if we withhold from him the service that we have promised him, we shall do it at great cost to our souls. There are thousands of souls who draw back in this way. They make promises to God, and when they make them, they mean to fulfil them; but as time goes on and they do not fulfil them, they grow careless about it, or indifferent, or unwilling, or for some other reason fail to perform what they promised. They draw back

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from being wholly the Lord's. They want to do something for themselves. They want to choose their own way and make their own plans. God, of course, permits them to do this, but it is at the loss of their spirituality and of his blessing upon their souls. In the end, if they persist, it will mean their eternal ruin.

Oh, beware of drifting! Beware of carelessness and neglect. Beware of drawing back from what you have promised God. Beware of anything and everything that makes you less spiritual. Keep this thought in mind: You have but one chance to gain heaven. If you miss that one chance, you have missed all. Press forward; make some gain each day. You will not be able to see that you have made a gain every day, but if you walk humbly before God and do your duty, lovingly and faithfully, you will each day draw a little nearer God. He has said, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." Every step we make toward God, he makes a step toward us. It is just like walking toward your reflection in a mirror. Every time you step toward your reflection, it seems to step toward you, so that one step brings you two steps nearer. Just so each step you take toward God brings him two steps nearer you.

Backsliding and Fainting

“Backsliding” is sometimes used in the sense of spiritual retrogression, but in this chapter I shall use the word in its fuller sense, applying it to the result of that retrogression—the severance of the soul from God. The backslider, in this sense, is one who has lost his spiritual life. Jeremiah defines backsliding as sinning against God. “For our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee” (Jer. 14:7). It means that the heart has turned away from God. “And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel” (1 Kings 11:9). It is rejecting God. “Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward. . .” (Jer. 15:6) It is forsaking God. “Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken Jehovah thy God, and that my fear is not in thee” (Jer. 2:19). It is a turning away from one’s righteousness. “When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die” (Ezek. 3:20). These scriptures and many others show that it is possible for a soul that has once known God to turn away from him, to sin against him, and to be cut off from him, to lose what spiritual life he had once had, and to become an outcast from the holy God. There are multitudes of piously religious professors in that condition today. They had once been saved; the glory of God had once been in their hearts; his sweet

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peace at one time abode with them. But now, alas! their stony hearts are cold and lifeless; the Spirit of God has gone from them; they have a name to live, but are in fact dead. How sad their estate!

There is another state of the soul, called “fainting” in the Bible, that should be carefully distinguished from backsliding. To draw this distinction is my present purpose. In appearance, fainting is very much like death. I remember that in my school-days a girl fainted on the playground. The other children came running around, and some said, “She is dead; she is dead.” We older ones knew better, but the children did not know better. I have known many instances when people who had merely fainted spiritually, were supposed to be dead and were treated as though they were dead. I have known of hundreds of people who came to the altar, supposing that they were backsliders, but who were not backsliders at all, as a little inquiry into their cases revealed. They were not cut off from God. They had simply let down in their faith, had given up their confidence, and had begun to suppose that they were cut off from God. Many times these fainting souls are treated as backsliders. They are taught to seek God again, to repent, to “begin at the bottom,” as it is said. This treatment has resulted in many a soul’s losing confidence in God and getting into a place where it can never be certain as to its standing before God, except when it is under the influence of a joyful emotion. The only thing that will cut a soul off from God is actual sin, a wilful departure from the commands of God.

Some people are harassed much of the time by a feeling that they have done something that is not right. Their various troubles bring them into condemnation, and they question their standing before God. If God chastises them a little or permits them to pass through a trial for a time, or they do not feel just as they think they

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ought, they do not know whether they are saved or not. There is nothing else that can so torture a soul as this fear and uncertainty.

Perhaps a little of my own personal experience will help some soul. When I was first saved I formed in my mind an ideal standard of life. When forgiven, I had very strong emotions of joy. My cup ran over with praises. I had never known that one could be so unspeakably happy. For weeks I seemed to walk on air. I supposed that this was the normal state of a Christian and expected it to continue permanently. But presently these emotions subsided. I began to question myself, "What have I done to grieve or offend the Lord?" I could think of nothing, but I reasoned that there must be something wrong or I should still have those joyful feelings. I began to let doubts come in, and they, of course, helped to depress my emotions. Thus, I was still further alarmed. I took refuge in prayer and prayed until my former feelings were restored. Faith mounted up, and I went along rejoicing. A little later my joy subsided again, and I began questioning myself: "I must have done something, or the joy would not have departed." My conscience seemed to trouble me and say, "That must be it." Then I tried to repent; and prayed until at last my joy returned.

My conscience became very sensitive. It would condemn me for things which I now know did not affect my standing with God, but which at that time threw me into doubting and distress and sometimes nearly into despair. I would feel so discouraged that I felt that it was of no use to try any longer. It was only a great determination not to give up trying that kept me going on. Sometimes I was tortured almost to distraction by the doubts and fears that my sensitive conscience brought upon me. Sometimes I would go to meeting and have joyous seasons, and my confidence would be strong; but more than once I was hardly out of sight of the

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place of worship until I felt miserable again. This alternation of joy and distress was repeated again and again. While joy lasted, faith seemed strong; but when joy subsided, my faith was gone, and my conscience would begin to lash me. Years passed before I learned the lesson of true faith and brought my conscience to the place where it would allow me to be judged by the Word of God and to hold fast my confidence through every test of emotion. I did not give up, but many times I should not have had faith to testify that I was saved if I had been pressed to declare myself.

Under the influence of discouragement resulting from the lashings of a morbid conscience or bad feelings or something of the sort, many persons surrender their faith and give up counting themselves the Lord's. They have not sinned, so far as they know; but their faith fails. They reason that they must be wrong, and so they give up the fight and count themselves backsliders. They have a tender conscience toward God; they would not do anything wrong for the world. They desire to be right and to please the Lord; their hearts have not turned away from him at all. They have simply surrendered their faith. They are not backsliders at all. They belong to the Lord just as much as they ever did. All they need to do is to let their faith take hold anew, and when they again count themselves as God's, they will find that the ties that bound them to him have never really been severed. Just to give up to discouragement this way is not backsliding. It is what the Bible means by the word "fainting." Some give up their sanctification in the same way. But that does not bring impurity into their hearts. All that is needful to restore their confidence is that they believe as they did before.

You may say that you have no evidence. If you are doubting, of course, you will not have any assurance. The Bible says, "He that believeth . . . hath the witness" (1 John 5:10). It does not say that he

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that doubteth shall have the witness. You can have the witness in your soul only so long as you are believing. Doubts silence the voice of God's testimony in the heart. They "ground" the wire, so that no message reaches us. He may be speaking to us, but our doubts prevent our hearing. To give up under the influence of doubts is not sin, nor does it make us sinners. To count ourselves sinners when God does not, does not cut us off from him. It only excites his pity. It is always dangerous to give up our confidence; for the discouragement that comes weakens us so that we cannot so well resist temptation and may easily fall into sin. But unless we do thus go into sin, we have only to go to believing, just to take hold where we let go, to be victorious again.

I remember a preacher who, when he found persons in this state or condition, or bothered until they hardly knew where they were, would say, "Well, if you were out in the woods and did not know where you were, would you not conclude that you were lost?" So he would call upon them to repent, counting them sinners. That preacher was sincere; he thought he was doing just what he ought to do. His unwise dealing with such souls was due to a lack of understanding. In his mental picture of men, one was either victorious or backslidden. He knew nothing about what the Bible means by fainting. He is not alone in this. There are many who cannot distinguish a soul who has merely fainted from one who has backslidden. A backslider, as already shown, is one who has turned away from his righteousness and from God and gone into sin. One who has fainted is one who has just given up and has not sinned. The former must forsake sin, repent, and believe God for pardon. The latter should count himself the Lord's as before, and all will be well.

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An experience I once had with a woman illustrates this point very well. Hearing that she was having some spiritual trouble, I visited her and saw very clearly that her only trouble arose from her doubts. I encouraged her to believe that God still accepted her, and she seemed to grasp the idea and act upon it so far as she could at the time. A few days later in a meeting where there was considerable manifestation of joyful emotion and where a number of sinners were seeking the Lord, I found her among the seekers. She was weeping and praying the Lord to have mercy upon her. When I recognized her, I went to her and said, “Sister, what are you doing here? Get right up and go away and begin resisting the devil as you ought to do.” She looked at me in astonishment and started to obey my imperative command. She arose to her feet and turned around to go, whereupon the glory of the Lord fell upon her, and she began to shout for joy. If this course were followed in a wise way with many souls, they would regain their confidence without having to look back upon themselves as having backslidden. We must learn to diagnose cases as accurately as a good physician, or we may give the wrong remedy, to the lasting hurt of the patient.

Why People Faint

When Jacob’s sons returned from Egypt and told him of Joseph and his position there, “Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not” (Gen. 45:26). Unbelief produces the same effect spiritually. Anything that causes us to let go our faith will bring fainting. Sorrow is also a cause for fainting. “When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me” (Jer. 8:18). Anything that causes discouragement reacts on faith and causes us to faint if we yield to its influence. When people faint spiritually, they feel just as Jonah did when he fainted literally. He “wished in himself to die, and said,

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It is better for me to die than to live” (Jonah 4:8). Many persons have felt exactly this way because of their spiritual troubles.

There is an unfailing remedy for fainting. It never fails to prevent when used in time, and it is a cure when we have fainted. David said, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord” (Psa. 27:13). When people do not hold fast their faith, they cannot see the manifestation of the goodness of the Lord in coming to their help. If they will hold fast their trust, he will bring them safely through. But instead of holding fast, many people heed the suggestion of the enemy, “You might as well give up.” They listen, are convinced, and act upon his advice. Thus, they take the worst possible way out of their trouble, and then, instead of getting out, only find themselves in deeper. O soul, do not faint at your tribulations, but trust God, and he will not fail you. He is watching over you. He will let the fire become just hot enough to take out the dross. It will refine you, but not destroy you. You will only be the better for those tests of life. God may have to reprove and chasten you, but that will not be for your destruction, but for your profit. Believe in God; believe in your own integrity. Hold fast your confidence, and you will never faint. If you have fainted, begin to believe again, and your spirit will revive as did the heart of Jacob when he believed (Read Gen. 45:27, 28).

Even if we should turn away from our righteousness and commit sin, our case is not hopeless yet. We have an advocate with the Father, even Christ Jesus, our Lord. God is still merciful. His mercy will not fail us if we shall truly repent. Sometimes people get to thinking that they have sinned against the Holy Spirit, and that consequently there is no salvation for them. There is one infallible test. It will settle every case. When a soul has any disposition to repent, or any desire to get back in favor with God, and a disposition

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to confess to him and serve him, he has not sinned against the Holy Spirit. It is said of those who have backslidden and sinned against the Holy Spirit and counted the blood of Christ an unholy thing that “it is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance” (Heb. 6:6). This is the key of the whole matter. The trouble is that they have gone so far in their sins that they no longer have any disposition to repent. There is no penitence in their hearts. They are not sorry that they have done what they have done. Never let yourself be troubled about having sinned against the Holy Ghost when you know that there is a disposition in your heart to please the Lord. In fact, the very feeling that you experience, that perhaps you have sinned against the Holy Ghost, is sure proof that you have not done so. I have seen persons who were almost in despair because of the feeling that they had sinned against the Holy Spirit and could not be forgiven. They would go on from day to day grieving and grieving over it, when if they had understood their own hearts, they would have known that the very grief which they felt over their supposed sin against the Holy Ghost was an absolute proof that they had not sinned against him. A man who has really sinned against the Holy Ghost is not concerned about getting back to God.

All other sin is forgivable. And if we do sin, we may find mercy and restoration to the joys of God’s salvation if we will repent and believe. All sins do not have the same effect upon the soul, though every sin brings guilt. Some sin because of being overcome by an unexpected temptation. They are taken unawares and yield before they hardly realize it. Their conscience at once feels the sting of guilt. They feel immediately penitent. They are conscience-stricken and full of remorse. They immediately regret the step that they have taken, and would undo it instantly if it were in their power. Under such conditions, restoration to the favor of God is very easily obtained. There has been no hardening of the heart against God.

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There has been no thinking over the question, and so there has been no real turning away of their hearts from God. They yielded under such pressure as Peter did in the palace of the high priest. His courage failed him in a critical moment, and he weakly yielded. His repentance followed with equal rapidity.

Sometimes the will consents to do evil through persuasion or through yielding to a powerful and long-continued force. Under such conditions the will may gradually yield, but finally gives up its resistance and does the things asked of it, or the things which it is influenced to do. When it yields, it is involved in guilt, and that guilt is more serious than the guilt previously mentioned. This time the will has not been taken unawares. It has had opportunity to summon its reserve forces and keep on saying no, and so to overcome. In such a case repentance may be immediate or not, depending somewhat on circumstances. But whether the person repents at once or procrastinates, this case is more serious than the other, because the will is involved in a more vital way. In other instances, people just go into sin deliberately through their own volition. The desire to do the thing arises in their hearts, and they do it, despising God's law. They do it with their eyes wide open to all the consequences. This kind of sin is terrible in its nature. Oftentimes the sinner has no feeling of penitence, and oftentimes he will have trouble to bring himself to submit to God. But the greatest sin of all is the neglect or refusal to repent when sin is done, to let sin go on for months not repented of. Such a sin is utterly inexcusable. If you have sinned, repent at once. Seek God's mercy at once, and you shall find it. Harden not your heart by delay. Grieve not the Holy Spirit. Impenitence or persistence in refusal to repent hardens the heart as nothing else can and multiplies the guilt enormously.

The Crucified Life

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt 16:24, 25). This saying of Jesus has been so little understood through the ages that people have come to have the idea that to take up one’s cross and follow Jesus is to do those religious duties that fall to their lot through life. They speak of bearing the cross as meaning witnessing for Christ, praying in public, or doing some other religious duty. This idea could arise only from a total misconception of the meaning of Christ’s words. We are to take up our cross and follow him. We all know what happened when he took his cross. He went forth on the “way of sorrows” bearing his cross outside the city, and there, on Calvary, he was laid upon it and nailed to it and raised up between the heaven and the earth. Upon it he suffered and bled and died. He was then taken off the cross, because the cross had for him no further meaning. It had done its work. The full measure of the hatred of his enemies had been poured out upon him there.

The crosses that were made were for just one purpose: they were for people to die upon. Your cross and my cross is for us to die upon. It is not something that we should carry through life. It is not some burden that we should bear in our Christian journey. It is not

some duty that we should do. It is not some penance that we should perform. Whenever the Scriptures say anything about the cross, it carries with it the idea of dying. It is true in the text quoted above: “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” Christ means exactly what he says in these words. He expects us to lose our lives for him. If we do lose our lives for him, he will give to us that life which is eternal. So he who refuses to take up his cross and go to his Calvary and suffer the crucifixion and death of which Jesus here speaks, will lose his life, that is, he will never have eternal life. It is only by giving that we save. It is only by dying that we live. Christ died that we might live, and now we are to die in order that he may live in us. Let us get away once for all from that old idea that bearing the cross is doing Christian service. It is nothing of the kind. The cross is to die upon. If you do not die upon your cross, it will avail you no more to carry it through life than it would have availed you had Christ carried his cross around through life and never died upon it. So it is not carrying the cross that counts; it is dying upon the cross.

Paul speaks of the same thing. He says, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14). Again, he says, “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (chap. 5:24). In the next verse he says, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” He elaborates this idea still farther in chapter 2:20—“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

There are three main ideas involved in these scriptures—first, the crucifixion; second, the death which it brings; and third, the life

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to which we are raised through Christ, and in the newness of which we walk before him. Speaking further on this, Paul says, “For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:10, 11). The matter of becoming a Christian is not merely turning over a new leaf. It is not merely forming good resolutions. It is not merely joining church. It is not merely beginning to do religious duties. It is a death. It is a death as real as the death of Christ. It is a crucifixion as real as his crucifixion. It is being raised to walk in newness of life just as really as he was raised from death. There is no use in mincing words about this. If we have not been crucified, if we have not died with him, and if we have not been resurrected with him, we are not his.

We are told to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin. What does this mean? It means that our lives shall be as free from sin as though we were really dead and now lying in our graves. It means an absolute shutting out of all sin from the life. It means this, because that new life which comes to us from Jesus Christ is no longer the old self-life that loved the things of the world. We commit sin only when we love sin. Christians do not love sin; they hate it. We cannot always tell what a man is by the label he bears. There are a multitude of people who call themselves Christians who bear no resemblance to Christ in their lives. John says of a true Christian, “As he [Christ] is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). Those who are crucified to the world cease to love the world. Those who still love the world have not been crucified to the world. John says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15, 16). Again, we read,

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“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4). They who still love the pride and vanity of the world, they who are absorbed in its frivolities, they who covet its gold and its honor, they who love its applause—these are they who have not yet died to the world. A worldly professor is a disgrace to God, to himself, to the people among whom he worships, and to the community in which he lives. The woman who arrays herself in the paraphernalia of worldly fashions and decks herself in gold and jewels and the finery that pride calls for, and at the same time calls herself a follower of Christ, insults her Lord every time she does so. A Christian is one who is Christlike in character, in desire, and in deportment. No other has any right to bear Christ’s name. If all preachers had honesty enough and courage enough to preach the truth, the tide of worldliness that is overwhelming such a multitude of souls and sweeping them into perdition would be stayed, and to be a Christian would mean very much more than it now does to the world at large. As long as preachers allow their sermons to be dictated by public sentiment or the worldly desires of their hearers, they will cater to fashion, and souls by the million will drift on to hell. Oh, what a reaping such preachers will have at the judgment!

What does it mean to be a true minister of Christ? God said to Ezekiel, “Hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me” (Ezek. 3:17). To Isaiah he said, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isa. 58:1). To Jeremiah he said, “He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully” (Jer. 23:28). He also told Ezekiel that if the watchman did not warn those who were in danger He would require their blood at his hands. The full measure of God’s wrath will fall on those who fail to be true to souls and to God in preaching those truths the Bible clearly teaches

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against sin and worldliness. He who has not courage to preach these truths now will not have courage to face the judgment.

Those hypocritical professors who bear Christ's name but will not obey him, but dishonor him and by their example influence others to do the same, how shall they escape the damnation of hell? If there is one thing that God hates above all else, it is a proud and worldly heart. Such a heart can never be a reverential heart. Its religion is but hypocrisy. It is only a sham. It has no reality. It is merely in word, while in deed they deny him. It is only a cloak of respectability, while the heart is full of corruption.

What do such professors know of the love of God? What do they know of the sweetness of fellowship and communion with him? What do they know of the joys of salvation, or of the blessed hope that anchors the soul in God? What do they know of that grace which sweetens the bitter cup of sorrow, or of the comfort of God's love? Nothing whatever. Their lives are empty and graceless. Those who make a profession of religion for the sake of personal advantage or business gain, or for respectability, or as a cloak for their deceit, are sowing that which will bring them a fearful harvest of woe in eternity. Everybody hates the hypocrite. Even the hypocrite hates another hypocrite, and in his more sincere moments he must hate his own hypocrisy.

There is no excuse for anyone to profess to be a Christian who does not live the kind of life and have the kind of character that the Bible shows to be the true test of one's acceptance with God. The way is so plain that even a fool may understand it if he will. God declares that people are left without excuse. They can know how they ought to live if they will read their Bibles, and they may have grace to live such a life if they will abandon their worldliness and sin and seek God till they find him.

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The Christian life is, and ever will be, a life of separation from sin and pride and worldliness. If you are not willing to be thus separated, you should have common honesty enough not to profess to be what you very well know that you are not. If you are going to be a Christian in name, be one in reality. Only the genuine metal will stand the test of the judgment. Your character, not your profession, will be what will count then, and it is what counts now. It will be your Christian character, not your morality, that will count too. Many people pride themselves on their morality and their careful observance of conventionalities, whose hearts are vile and sinful before God. It is not alone that outward immorality, such as licentiousness, drunkenness, profanity, etc., that marks the great sinner; there are many things that are hidden to the eyes of the world, and many things that are considered quite respectable, that are just as bad in God's sight, and disgrace the person in his eyes just as much as these grosser things. Morality is like a marble statue, cold and lifeless; Christianity is warm and vibrant with the very life of God. It is God dwelling in us, living his own life there, and impressing his own character and likeness upon our souls and our lives. Christianity is not a form; it is a life. It is not in word, but in vital power. It is not a profession, but a divine possession.

We are told that our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). A true Christian is a citizen of that heavenly country. It sometimes meant much to Paul to be able to say that he was a Roman citizen. Roman citizenship was a thing of dignity and honor, and it gave him privileges that he could not otherwise have enjoyed. But he rejoiced far more in his heavenly citizenship and in the privileges that that citizenship brought to him. The life of a citizen of heaven should correspond to that of the people of his own country, and not to that of the foreigners and strangers among whom he is sojourning. "Be not conformed to this world" is the command of our Lord. I

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think one of the most pitiable things that we can behold in this world is one who talks like a Christian but lives like a sinner, one who professes to be a citizen of the kingdom of God and yet lives like one who is a citizen of the kingdom of Satan. Peter says of those who are true Christians, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people . . .” (1 Pet. 2:9). They are sacred vessels into which God pours his grace. They are the chosen ones to whom he reveals himself. They are the kingly priesthood who see the glory of his majesty. They are the precious jewels that adorn his kingdom. They eat of the bread from heaven, the old wine and oil, and honey out of the rock. They drink of the river of his pleasures. They bear his mark upon their foreheads and upon their hearts. They have a clear and clean conscience: void of offense toward God and man. Their souls are the dwelling-place of the mighty God.

To be a real Christian is something very high and very sweet. He walks in a path that “the vulture’s eye hath not seen.” In joyfulness he mounts up with wings as an eagle. The worldly professor fills his days with folly. His cup of joy is always bitter at the last. He gathers up the “fool’s gold” that glitters in earthly things. He lives after the flesh and after the world. He goes with the crowd. He misses all those good things that he might have if he would only really consent to be crucified with Christ. He misses all the blessedness of righteousness, and, worst of all, he misses heaven at the last.

O soul, have you been crucified with Christ? Are you dead to the world, so that you have no relish for its follies, its fashions, its sinful pleasures, and its applause? Do you care more for your reputation with God than you do for your standing with men? Are you out and out for God, or are you going hand in hand with the

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world? Do you know that your name is written just now in the Lamb's book of life? If others follow closely the example that you are setting before them, will they be on safe ground? If you were to die just now, would you be fit to enter heaven? Face the issue squarely. Are you a real true Christian? Have you been crucified with him? Is he just now living in you his own innocent, pure, holy life? Do not be a mere counterfeit which will be rejected at last. It means a great deal to be a real Christian, worthy of the confidence of God and the world, but it means a great deal not to be such. You may be a whole-hearted Christian if you will. But there is only one road that leads to the exalted plane on which such Christians live; and that is by way of Calvary and the cross. You must take up your cross and bear it to Calvary and there die upon it if you are ever to have the life of Christ abide in you. But if you will really die to the world, to the flesh, and to the follies of this life, you need know nothing further of heavy crosses. Your shoulders need never again feel its burden, but you may look forward to that bright crown which awaits all those who have been crucified with Christ and are risen to walk in newness of life.

Three Spiritual Elements

There are three elements that operate in the spiritual world. They are the divine, the human, and the Satanic. The Bible recognizes these three elements, or instrumentalities working to produce the spiritual results that we see. Nothing is more clearly taught in the Bible than the personality of God and of the angels who do his will. Likewise, Satan is, all through the Bible, a personality, and the demons that do his will are also spoken of in a way that makes it plain to us that they too are personal beings. These good and evil personalities exist as really as man exists and are just as personal. Man is capable of having definite relationship with any of these personalities, whether the good or the bad. He is capable of working with them to a certain end, or of working against them to a certain other end. He may work with the divine to carry out the will of God, or he may work with the evil personalities to carry out evil things. Anyone of these three elements may work independently, so that a thing may be of God independent of man and the devil, or it may be of the devil independent of God or man, or it may be of man independent of God or the devil.

True religion is of God, but it also involves man. Therefore, the human element will always enter more or less into our religion. The vital elements of religion are from God, but when these vital elements, or powers, work in man, they do not coerce his will. They

do not overcome his personality. They do not take possession of him so as to rule him. He does not come under rule; he still acts voluntarily. This human element in religion shows itself in peculiar manifestations, customs, ideas, and forms. When the Spirit of God comes into a man, he manifests himself in different ways, but especially in a holy Christian character and a holy Christian life. His presence affects all the faculties of man, but the outward expression of these effects are not particularly of the Holy Ghost. They are rather of man. All who are saved have in them the same divine element operating to produce the same results. The external manifestations of this working depends largely upon the temperament of the human. One manifests his joy by shouting, another laughs, another weeps, another sits quietly with shining eyes and glowing countenance. But these manifestations are merely the human expression of the inward joy. During the centuries, man's spiritual emotions have been manifested in a great variety of ways. Special religious movements have been noted for the special manifestations among them. Some movements have been noted for shoutings; others, for wild demonstrations of many different kinds. People often suppose these outward demonstrations to be the work of God. If they were of God, he would manifest himself in a more uniform manner. There would be none of those extreme and unbecoming demonstrations that are sometimes seen among religious people. Man may make these demonstrations as a result of his own choice and enthusiasm, or under the influence of the Spirit of God, though we must never blame God for the manner or the extent of such manifestations. If a Christian lets his emotions or his enthusiasm run away with his judgment and acts unseemly, we must lay the blame upon the human element. It is the man, not his God, nor his religion necessarily, that is at fault. Satan also operates on people to produce wild, emotional excitement, and in some

movements he is the principal cause of the emotionalism. Especially is this true when the life of the person is immoral. The jerking, contortions, “falling under the power” etc., that characterize certain brands of religion are usually of Satan and man, though sometimes it may be only of man, he abandoning himself to his emotions to such an extent that nervous reaction sets in. It is safe to reject these things from our consideration of the work of God. We must place them in some other category.

The variation of religious customs and forms in the world are the outcropping of the human element. God did not give us a definite program of religious worship, nor did he introduce any of the prevailing religious customs, except those specifically named in the New Testament. Those since introduced are of man, and should always be distinguished from the real and vital elements of religion. I do not mean to condemn all that is of man as being evil. A thing must be judged by its intrinsic value, not by its origin. Man’s works may be either good or evil, either wise or unwise.

The many religious ideas and doctrines in the world are of various origin. Some are directly of God, some are “doctrines of devils” and some are of men. The varying and often contradictory doctrines taught in the world that are supposed by their adherents to be the revelation of divine truth come largely from man’s imperfect conception of truth. Sometimes God is blamed for this doctrinal confusion and discord, but we must remember that God has given the same revelation of himself and his truth to us all, and that it is only man’s misinterpretation of this revelation that makes the discord. It is true that some teach special doctrines through perversity, others through an unwillingness to teach the truth because they are not willing to obey it. But for this we must blame man, not God. God’s truth is one; he is not the author of the babel

of religious teachings in the world. It is highly important, then, that we learn what is the real truth among the clashing doctrines of men.

It is the human element that differentiates between religious movements. The leader usually impresses his own thoughts, views, customs, and temperamental peculiarities upon the movement that he heads. We have only to look into the past a little to see this. All men who have the religion of Christ have the same vital power of godliness working in them. They all have the same salvation, but they have different ways of manifesting it. The old Puritans were austere and high in their morality. They were formal and rigid. Their religion had in it much of the nature of iron. Then came Fox with his quietism. His morality was just as high, but it took a very different course. Instead of being formal, like Puritanism, it went to the opposite extreme of having almost no form. It was meditative, quiet, and non-resistant. Methodism was radically different from both of these, it being emotional and noisy and demonstrative. Its devotees sometimes went to extremes that were unseemly. The Scotch Covenanters were worthy people, but they differed widely from many others. It was one Spirit that operated in all these movements, and he operated in them alike so far as people would permit it. These great differences in manners, customs, views, and manifestations must be attributed to the human element that entered so largely into them.

The same thing may be observed among modern Christians. There are still “shouting Methodists” and quiet Quakers, and formal, orderly Presbyterians. No matter how much of God one of these may have in him, the effect of the influence or sentiment at work in the particular movement has a strong influence upon his actions. His tendency is always to act according to the forms of the movement with which he is familiar.

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This human element is a variable quantity. It may or may not obstruct the working of the divine, but in many instances the divine is greatly limited or even entirely crowded out by it, so that the religion becomes only a human thing, while the soul is empty of God. There is such a thing as a religion that is of man and has none of the divine element in it. Those professing it have never been born again. God has never entered into their lives. They simply joined church, and that was all there was to it. Their religion is wholly of and from themselves, and will die with them.

When we meet people and recognize them as being Christians, yet see that they are different from us, that difference may be attributed to the human element. It cannot be a spiritual difference if both have the Spirit of Christ. God draws all Christians together. He gives them all one Spirit. He gives them the tie of love that binds them to one another. The things that divide them are those human forms and views and customs which they have accepted. Where there is animosity and contention and bitterness, the Satanic element enters and God is shut out. God wants his people to be all one. He is not so concerned that they should be all alike in these human elements, for that is hardly possible and not to be expected; but he does want the divine element to have so large a place in our lives and so to dominate the human element that his people will be of one heart and soul in him, and that there will be no division among them. We may teach unity all we will, but if there is in us elements that are of a nature to separate us from other Christians, even if these should be only human elements, they will be a barrier to the realization of a practical unity. Unity must have for its basis only spiritual elements. To make the human element in any wise the standard is to make real unity impossible, except among those who are alike in the human element. We should recognize the fact that a general uniting of Christians must be built on the foundation of the divine element,

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and that this must be clearly separated in mind and heart from the human element and held as a separate thing. So long as any particular form or custom or any special manifestation is a part of the standard around which Christians are called to rally, there will be those who will find themselves unable to accept that part of it, no matter how much they may desire unity.

There is also a human fellowship. Those who are in the same human element or influence have the fellowship of the movement with each other and do not have it with anyone outside the movement, even though they have spiritual fellowship with him. People changing from one movement to another carry this human influence with them, and are marked by it so that they are sometimes suspected and held aloof.

Satan is always ready to take advantage of this human element to make it work out his purpose. He works to make us think that humanly devised forms or customs are things of vital importance. In fact, some of these are much harder to break away from than we suppose them to be. They take deeper hold upon us many times than divine truth. People feel as though they would be giving up their religion if they should surrender these forms. A particular mode of dress becomes sacred; a particular form of service becomes exalted above all other forms. It is only when we recognize these as being merely human things and as having no vital connection with Biblical truth that we are in a position to look at things from a broad enough standpoint to stretch out our hands equally to other Christians. If we become wedded to our forms and customs, Satan is likely to use the fascination that they possess for us to keep us from having the confidence that we ought to have in other Christians. Let us look away from these things back to the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and life. These, and these alone, can be the basis for the

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acceptance of Christian profession. These alone can be the common grounds upon which all Christians can meet. Let us look away from ourselves and from these toys which we have whittled out for ourselves. If we have labeled these things Christianity, let us tear off the labels, and see that henceforth we call nothing Christian but that which is fundamentally divine working out through the human, or has its origin in God himself. Do the best we will, there will be more or less of the human element in our religion. But let us deal with it as the human element and not as the divine. Let us give it its due weight, but no greater weight than it is worthy of receiving.

Trials

Daniel said, “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried” (chap. 12:10). All Christians are glad that they are purified and made white, but when it comes to being tried, that is a very different thing. They shrink from the very word. Their trials are to them as a nightmare from which they would gladly escape. But trials are only a part of God’s process of preparing us for heaven, and they are as needful to us as is the blessing, in order that we may be prepared for our glorious eternal habitation.

The peaceful, quiet waters soon lose their freshness and become stagnant; the clearness is soon gone, and they are filled with germs. Soon a green scum covers the top, and they become foul and odorous. Quiet air becomes stagnant. The smoke, the dust, the odors, and the miasma rising from swamps and bogs would soon render quiet air unfit for breathing, and instead of being a life-giving tonic, it would become a life-destroying poison. God has arranged the operation of natural forces so that there is unceasing motion. The warm air rises, the cold air falls. The gentle breezes blow, and swell into great gales and terrible hurricanes. These latter may be very destructive in their action, but they work out a good by purifying the air. They scatter the noxious poisons far and wide, and carry in pure air to take the place of these. The waters of the sea are driven and tossed and dashed against the rocks. The sea is ever restless. Its

waves are never still. No matter how calm the day, the ripples are ever breaking upon the shore. Were it not for motion, for the storms and currents, the whole ocean would become stagnant as a pond. The same thing is true in a large measure in our lives. The storms and difficulties and obstacles all work out for our good if we meet them as we should. Through them our lives are enriched and ennobled and developed. They are blessings to us, though they may seem to be blessings very much disguised.

Sources of Trials

Many trials are only the natural result of circumstances. Sometimes circumstances are in our favor, and work for our happiness, peace, and contentment. Sometimes we have smooth sailing, and everything goes pleasantly. We are courageous and confident and rejoicing. The sun shines brightly out of a cloudless sky, and every prospect seems fair. But this does not always last. Sooner or later the clouds must come and the storm-winds beat upon us. We must have the rough weather as well as the pleasant, the storm as well as the calm. The sunshine and the calm are very needful in life, and they work out a definite and good purpose; but the storms and the rain and the wind are likewise needed; they also fulfil their purpose. Trials will come; we cannot evade them. We cannot look ahead into the future; so we may plan and build up hopes, only to have our air-castles come crashing down around our heads. If we have set our hearts upon these things, we are likely to look very gloomily upon their wreck and to feel very bad over the result.

If we permit ourselves to give way and grieve over the failure of our plans and hopes, we may make ourselves and those around us miserable. Sometimes people let go their hold on God just because

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they do not get their way in things. They let disappointment so discourage them that they just give up trying to do right. That is acting like a spoiled child. If our plans and hopes fail, God will not fail. Sometimes it is a real blessing to us that they do fail; for God can plan far wiser for us than we can for ourselves, and we ourselves can act more wisely after we have failed than we did before. Never fret on account of disappointments. They grow rapidly under such treatment, both in size and in intensity.

Losses may come to us; our property may be swept away or burned up. If we have our hearts set upon our possessions, this may touch a tender spot, and we may let it darken our lives and make us morose and dissatisfied. Poverty may come and the many difficulties incident thereto. How greatly such things may try us will depend upon how much we rebel against the circumstances or how easily we submit to and adapt ourselves to the inevitable. How greatly we are affected by our trials depends on how much we open our hearts to them and encourage them.

Sickness may lay its heavy hand upon us or our loved ones, and try every fiber of our being. It may play upon the chords of pain a threnody that thrills with exquisite torture, or it may fire our blood with fever until the sparkle has gone from the eye and the glow of health from the cheek, or it may bind us in chains helplessly captive. Death may come and take those dear by the ties of nature or friendship and leave sorrow and grief to be our companions. These things try the soul, but they must be borne. We cannot escape such things, for they are the common heritage of those who dwell in tabernacles of clay. They belong to mortality and to the mutable things of time.

There are trials that come to us as the result of the acts or attitude of others. How few are man's kindnesses to man! How great

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his inhumanity! How much of the human distress is needless and comes only by the inconsiderate or evil acts of others! Christ said that we should not marvel if the world should hate us. Neither should we marvel if it should act out its hatred in malicious persecution. Our Lord has told us that offenses must come. To be a Christian means to be a target for the world's hatred. We can count this a part of our heritage. Sometimes we shall have cruel mockings and have our names cast out as evil. We cannot endure these things without some sense of pain. How much we suffer under them will depend on how we meet them. If we praise God and go resolutely on our way, strength will be given us, and we shall overcome, and instead of hindering us, persecution will bring us rich treasures of grace and blessing.

Sometimes we may be tried over what others do when they have no thought or intention of causing us a trial, and perhaps are wholly ignorant that they are causing us to be tried. Very often people allow themselves to be tried when the thing need not be a trial if they will hold the right attitude toward the supposed offender. We can let ourselves be tried over trifles if we will, when if we would act as a real man or woman, we could pass over them quite easily and do it joyously and not suffer to amount to anything. The trouble with so many is that they are like petulant children, who are hurt or displeased at almost anything. If someone has really done something on purpose to try you, you should not give him the satisfaction of knowing that it hurt. Keep the hurt out of sight. Hide it away and overcome it, and, if possible, let it be known to none but God. Bear with meekness what happens. Pray for your persecutors. That is the surest way to keep God in your own heart. "Father, forgive them," is the plea that takes the sting out of persecution.

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Some trials come directly from Satan. For some reason we are left liable to his attacks. He attacked Job, destroyed his children, his possessions, and his health. God could shut him clear away from this world, just as he has shut him away from heaven, if he chose. But for some purpose he sees fit to let us be exposed to his attacks here. Many persons feel like a little boy who once said: "Mother, I wish God would kill the devil. Why doesn't he do it? I would if I were big enough."

Satan is limited in his work against us, and God is ever on our part, so that he can never go beyond God's will for us, so long as we leave ourselves in God's hands and rely upon him for the needed help. God does see fit sometimes to let him try us severely, but there never need be any cause for despair. God will not suffer us to be tempted more than we are able to bear. If Satan makes the temptation, God makes the way out. Sometimes he does not let us see the way out, even when he has prepared it, and we have to resist and endure the temptation until he sees that it has gone far enough. Then he shows us the way out. Sometimes he will take us and lift us clear out of it by his own hand. At other times he will put our adversary to flight. Our part is to endure and trust; God's part is to make the way of escape. We must endure patiently until our deliverance comes.

Sometimes God himself tries or proves us. "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (Zech. 13:9). The purpose of God's trying us is often that we may know ourselves. If we become self-sufficient, or go to rejoicing in our own works, he will likely send upon us or permit to come upon us something that will bring us to know our insufficiency and need of help from him. Danger is often the only thing that can help us to know our own weakness; so God

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often lets a danger come in order to bring us to our senses. We should not let such a thing discourage us, but get the lesson that our strength is from him and that our best efforts, if merely of ourselves, can avail little. He who trusts in himself leans on a broken reed. He who trusts in God has strength enough for his needs.

God sometimes tries us that we may know him better. He wants us to know just how dearly he loves us, and how earnest is his care for us, and how faithful he is to us; and so he lets every hope and resource fail us and distress fall upon us. When everything fails, and we turn to him, how real is his help! how sweet is his comfort! If, however, when we find ourselves in such a situation, we despair and give up, we lose the blessedness that he was preparing us for. We grieve his loving heart and cheat ourselves. Hold fast and wait for him to work out his purpose. He afflicts only to heal. He grieves only to turn the grief to rejoicing, and to give greater rejoicing than could come through any other means. Our trials are the root upon which our blessings grow. These roots may be bitter, but the fruit is sure to be sweet if we patiently wait for its maturing. Too many want the fruits of joy, but are not willing to have the trial. Many choice fruits grow on thorny trees, and he who will gather the fruit may expect to be pricked now and then by the thorns.

But the trials that are hardest to bear are the ones that we bring upon ourselves. Many people suffer as a result of their own indiscretion. They act unwisely or unbecomingly, and people buffet them for their faults. They are ridiculed or condemned; their names are on the tongue of the gossip, and they have no one to blame but themselves. If we do not act wisely or worthily, we need not expect to have the confidence and esteem of others. If we are buffeted for our faults, the only Christian thing to do is to endure with meekness and patience and try to do better next time. This is one kind of trial

that is always bitter medicine. It brings no joy. The best thing we can do is to take our bitter medicine and make no wry faces about it.

We sometimes do things or say things that bring heaviness upon us. We heap blame and condemnation upon ourselves. We feel regret and sorrow, and cannot get done chiding ourselves. How many of these self-made trials could be avoided if we would be careful always to watch ourselves and to think of the outcome before we speak or act. When we have brought such a trial upon ourselves, we can only brace up and endure it manfully. We need to learn well our lesson, but we need not let ourselves be crushed under it. Do not let yourself brood over it. Brooding will not help matters. Resolve to do better next time and ask God to help you. Rise above the trial. If you have learned your lesson, God will help you out. He does not want to bruise you over it. He may chasten you sorely, but he will do it for your profit, not for your destruction.

Effects on the Sensibilities

The effect of trials on our sensibilities is often very great. Our feelings become deeply involved, and this is what makes trials hard to bear. Our feelings respond to them, and sometimes the result is great distress. If we permit these feelings to have their way, we may suffer a great deal in a trial. Some let their feelings have full freedom of action at such a time, and therefore the trial affects them powerfully. It is within our power to limit our feelings to a very great extent. We can give way to them and greatly increase them, or we can set ourselves resolutely to modify and control them, and we shall be able to do it, and thereby greatly lessen the effect of the trial upon our sensibilities. Keep your mind off your troubles. Resolve to be happy in spite of them. Think of things that will make you feel better. Take hold of yourself and say: "Here! I will not feel this way.

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I will control myself and not give way to my emotions.” Get your mind busy on other things. Get your hands busy with labor. Do not let your trials get too close to you. Do not make friends of them. No matter how beautiful may be the scenery around you, you can hold a small, ugly object before your eyes and hide all the beauty, and see nothing but the object at which you gaze. So it is with our trials. If we let them hold our attention, if we look at them all the time, they will shut out all the beauties of life about us, and will come to be the greatest things in our lives, even though in reality they may be very small and insignificant things. There are people who allow their minds to be taken up largely by their trials. They are continually thinking over them and worrying over them. Their faces are clouded by them. They sigh and groan. When they testify, it is to tell what a hard, rough path they have been having. In such cases, the person is making his own hard paths.

Trials need not be allowed to take the sweetness out of life; they need not be allowed to shut out all the light and beauty of life. God does not intend that they shall. Paul speaks of being “exceedingly joyful” in all his tribulations. He had plenty of tribulations, but he met them like a man, and instead of letting them get him down, he got his feet upon them and mastered them. The first step in mastering a trial is to master yourself. Gain control of your feelings. I do not say that you can feel as you will, but you can prevent yourself from feeling as bad as you would feel if you would give way to your feelings. Do not act like a hurt child and go around trying to get people to sympathize with you. Do not waste any time pitying yourself. Act like a full-grown man or woman. Act as if you had some courage and fortitude. Face the situation manfully. You can do it if you will. Summon your resolution. Stand your ground against these things. Look to God and expect his help. You can overcome just as easily as others do if you will.

Trials—Continued

What Makes Them Hard to Bear

Giving way to our feelings and letting them have their way is not the only thing that makes trials hard to bear. It is one of the chief things, but there are other things that add to the hardness of bearing trials. First, there is love of ease, and unwillingness to suffer. The flesh naturally loves an easy time. It seeks pleasure and self-gratification. Anything that goes contrary to such is unpleasant to it, and it is likely to rebel against it. If we give the flesh its way, trials will be very hard for us. No matter what trials may come, it will make us shrink from them and rebel against them. Life has both its bitter and its sweet. We need not always expect to have the sweet alone. We cannot have the capacity to enjoy without also having the capacity to suffer. Suffering is just as needful in our lives as enjoyment, and sometimes serves an even better purpose. If we are unwilling to suffer and in consequence begin to kick against the goads, we shall soon find ourselves wounded and our sufferings increased. This unwillingness to suffer keeps many people out of the pleasure which God would give them if they would only let him give them the preparation to receive it. But they draw back. They are not willing to suffer. When trials come, they rebel against them.

“We count them happy which endure” (Jas. 5:11). But the class of people I am describing cannot look upon endurance in this light. There is no happiness in it to them. There is no pleasantness to them.

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No matter what good comes to them through trials, they want it some other way. But trials will come anyway. They cannot escape them. The only thing they will do by rebelling will be to increase their suffering in the trials and prevent themselves from getting the blessedness out of them. We ought to be willing to suffer when it is God's will for us to suffer, or when he sees it is necessary for us to suffer. Our Master drank the cup of suffering even though it was bitter. Are we better than he? Shall we refuse to go by the path that led him to glory?

Another thing that makes trials hard to bear is fear of being overcome by them. When trials come to some, the first thing they think of is, "Shall I be able to endure them? Shall I be overcome in it?" They are all the time fearing and worrying, lest they should not be able to go through it. This fear itself is a source of weakness. It also increases the suffering that results from trials. When you add fear to your trials, you double their size and weight. Why should you fear? Is not God upon his throne? Is he not watching over your life? Does he not know just how much you can endure? Will he let the fire be too hot? Will he let distress be too great? Will he fail you in anything? He says, "Fear not, for I am with thee." If you are disposed to fear your trials, a good thing to do is to collect a large number of the promises of God's help from the Bible. Write them down on a piece of paper, and keep them handy, and when you see a trial coming or realize that it is already upon you, and your fears begin to arise, get your list of promises and begin reading them over. Read them carefully and thoughtfully. Read them as being true. Remember that God stands back of each of them, and stands back of it to make it true for you. The trouble is that when people get to viewing their trials, they keep looking at their trials and not looking to God. They do not look at the promises. They forget all about them. And so the more they fear, the more troubled they become.

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There are a thousand promises that apply to your case. There are a thousand promises that meet your daily need, and not one of all those promises will fail.

Another thing that makes trials hard to bear is unbelief. God's promises will amount to nothing for us unless we believe them and appropriate them unto ourselves. They are true for us whether we believe them or not, but they do not become effective for us until we believe them. If you do not believe that God will help bear your trials, then you must take the whole weight of them upon yourself. If you do not believe that he will give you victory in them, then you must fight through to victory in your own strength. If you do not believe that victory is to be the outcome for you, your unbelief will be a source of weakness to you, so that you will not have the confidence that you need to carry you through. Unbelief is your greatest enemy. Unbelief will cloud your whole sky and shut out the sunlight, and will close the channel of God's grace, so that it cannot be supplied to meet your needs. Unbelief will darken your mind and your heart. It will whisper in your ears that the situation is hopeless, that it is of no use to try. Unbelief is Satan's strongest ally. Shut your heart to it, and believe with all your strength that God is true and that God is true to you. This is only asserting the truth; there is no make-believe about it. His trueness is just as real as your existence. You may have his help if you will believe, but if you will still abide in unbelief, you must fight your battles and get out the easiest way you can. And that easiest way will often be a hard one. How much better to believe God and take his way and his help!

Another thing that makes our trials hard to bear is struggling to escape from them. The question with so many when they are in trial is: "How can I get out of this? How can I overcome it? How can I get to the end of it?" They will take almost any way out of it, just so

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they get out quick. The easiest way out is not always the best way out. Trying to get out in what seems to be the easiest way oftentimes gets us in the deeper, and makes the trial the more bitter. The only safe way is to submit to God and let him bring us through in the way that he sees fit. He knows the best way. He knows just what we can endure. He knows just what is needed. He sees the end from the beginning. He knows how we are going to get through it. He knows what the outcome will be and what a blessing he has in store for us at the end of the trial. But if we try to get out of the trial without passing through it, we are sure to miss the blessing in the end. It is the blessing that God wants us to have and that is what we need. If you struggle out of the trial without getting the lesson and the blessing, God may have to let it come again. He may have to let it be repeated again and again, until you submit to his will and have wrought in you the thing that is needful. You have seen a child with a splinter in its finger. When someone would go to pick it out, the child would jump and jerk and scream as though being dreadfully hurt, when probably the affected part had not been touched. Some act in this way toward God. It only hinders him and only hinders you. Hold still. If there is a splinter that must be picked out of your finger, let him have his way about it. Hold still until he finishes the operation. If you do not, you will only make it hurt the more.

Do not meet your trials with fear. Meet them courageously. Do not dread them. Keep confident in God. Do not rebel against them. Submit yourself to the Lord. He will make all things work together for good to you.

How Faith Sustains in Trial

We are told that we stand by faith. Faith is the one thing that can sustain us through every peril and through every difficulty. I

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once stood upon the shore when the waves were dashing wildly against the rocks. A considerable distance from the shore I saw two objects rising and falling upon the waves, but as I kept gazing at them, I observed a difference in their behavior. I soon saw that, while both were being tossed by the waves, one was coming nearer me. It was being driven in toward the land, while the other remained in its position. One was a floating log; the other was a buoy. Every wave drove the log nearer shore, and I watched it until it was dashed against the rocks. The buoy still held its position. What was the difference between the two? The buoy was anchored; the log was not. The iron cable of the buoy took fast hold upon the bottom and held, no matter how the storm raged; but the unanchored log was at the mercy of every wind and every wave. Which object represents us depends upon our faith. If our faith is anchored in God, we are like the buoy which, though tossed by the waves, though beaten by the storms, yet holds its position and cannot be moved away. If we are not anchored by faith in God, we are like the log, and it will be no wonder indeed if we are dashed upon the rocks.

The seaweed floats upon the surface of the water. It too is beaten by the storm and tossed by the waves, but it keeps its place; for down beneath the waves it has a sure grounding—by strong roots it is anchored to a rock. The storms may beat, the winds may blow, the waves may roll, but it holds fast, because it is fastened upon the rock. So God would have us rooted in him through faith. This faith will sustain us and hold us in our place in the wildest storms or the bitterest trial. Balance the trial by trust. As the trial increases, increase trust. The harder the trial comes upon us, the harder we should lean upon the Lord. He will sustain you if you trust, but he cannot sustain you unless you do. He may be ever so willing to help you, but if you do not trust him, you do not give him the opportunity to help you.

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We are not likely to be tried as hard as Job was. In fact, if we will compare our trials with his, we shall often feel ashamed to call them trials. Though Job was tempted to the limit and tried to the utmost, he was fully determined that his conduct should be righteous, and that not simply for a little while. Hear his expression of his determination: “All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live” (Job 27:3-6). Hear his testimony: “My foot has held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (chap. 23:11, 12). Through all his trials and afflictions, he stood steadfast and unmovable, glorifying God even when he could not pierce the darkness ahead of him, and when he could not understand the present, and when the past was unexplained and unexplainable. When his wife despaired, and his friends united in condemning him, still he held fast his integrity. His decision was not simply to hold on a little while and see if things would change. No, he intended to go through to the end, no matter what came. His decision was to be steadfast as long as he lived. Death was the only limit that he put upon his faithfulness. He might not be able to understand, but he would trust and keep true anyway. He might suffer, but he would not rebel. If he could not understand God’s ways, he could understand his duty, and he would do his duty, regardless of what happened. What a lesson of faithfulness and steadfastness! We ought to be ashamed to let the few little trials that we have weaken our decision to serve the Lord and be true at any cost. What have we to endure compared with what

he had? Let us be steadfast, therefore, and keep right on, knowing that our God is our helper and that he will never fail us.

Different Kinds of Trials

Some trials test us in one way and some in another. Some test our courage. Satan sometimes tries to frighten us by making a great show of threatening. Sometimes he makes things look very dark. He whispers to us that we shall surely be overwhelmed. If we but have courage to meet these, we shall be able to overcome them. Often we have but to face them boldly in order to chase them off the ground and to stand victorious on the field of battle. Other trials test our faith. When sickness or disease takes hold of us, it is then that faith is tested. When the adversary tries to bring doubts in our minds about God's faithfulness or the truth of his Word, and the faithfulness of his people, then faith is the weapon that we need to use to overcome him.

There are trials that test our loyalty. We are brought face to face with the question whether we will be loyal to God and his truth, or whether we will take some seemingly easier way and compromise his truth for the sake of getting off easier ourselves. We are often put in a position where our loyalty is tested, where we have to stand right by the truth without deviating from it in the slightest degree, no matter what comes. Sometimes we must make a choice between Christ and our friends. The question is then one of loyalty. To whom shall we be true, Christ or our friends? To whom shall we submit ourselves, and whom shall we obey? He has said, "Be thou faithful unto death." Shall we do it? Shall we do it no matter what it means nor how long a struggle it means? The battle is half won when we are fully decided to stand loyal whatever comes. Battles of this sort may be decided before we enter into them, and then we have only

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the fighting to do. The result is certain. The old saying, “Well begun is half done,” is certainly true in the Christian life, especially when it comes to the matter of being decided to do the right and stand loyally by the truth whatever comes.

There are things that test our humility. There are plenty of people who for their own purposes will flatter us and try to make us think that we are great personages or that we have done some great thing. They will praise us and “make over” us generally for some selfish purpose. If we heed what they say, we may become puffed up over it, and come to esteem ourselves more highly than we ought. If we do something that is praiseworthy, we very often find within ourselves a feeling of having done so well that we become elated over it. This also is a test of our humility. Let us keep our feet on the ground no matter how much God blesses us. No matter how much praise comes to us, no matter how many things are said in our favor, let us keep balanced, and let not our humility be turned into pride.

There are things that test our love. Can we love God just as much after he has let us pass through a hard trial as we did before? If our brethren do something to wound us, can we still love them? If people misunderstand us and attribute wrong motives to us, can we still love them? These are the tests that count. These are the tests that test love. These are the things that prove whether it is genuine or not. If we are despised and persecuted, misrepresented and abused, can we still love? If people are our enemies, can we still love them?

There are trials that test our steadfastness—whether we will just stand still and suffer and endure until God sees that it is enough and takes us out of the fire. Other things test our patience. These are often very small things, and the smaller they are, the more they test our patience. Sometimes we need to keep a good hold upon ourselves and “let patience have her perfect work,” that we may be

“perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” No matter in what way we are tested, if we have a will to be true, God will see to it that we have grace to trust him, so that we may overcome and be “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37).

The Value of Trials

Peter tells us that the trial of our faith is “much more precious than the gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire” (1 Pet. 1:7). The question that now confronts us is whether we place such a value as that upon our trials. What will men undergo to get gold? They will scale lofty mountains and wade through deep snows. They will face piercing winds and all sorts of perils, if they may but have the hope of getting gold. Our trials are still more precious than gold, and it seems that we ought to be willing to bear them when we view them from that standpoint. However, there are a great many Christians who shrink from trials. Why do they? If they believe that trials are so valuable, why do they shrink? Ah, that is the trouble: they do not believe what Peter said. They can see no gold in their trials. They see no value in them whatever. They are something to be gotten away from.

The trouble is that we often look at the wrong thing. If a man goes after gold and looks at the hardships instead of the gold, he will not get any gold. But the gold-hunter does not look at the things that lie between him and the precious metal. He looks at the gold. He keeps his mind and his heart upon that. He presses forward through everything to gain that gold. There is gold for you and me in every trial. The trial lies between us and the gold. If we look at the trial, we may forget the gold, and that is just what is the trouble with so many. They can see nothing but the trials. Beyond these lies the gold, yea, something far more precious than gold. Get your eyes off

the trial. Look beyond it to the gold. Keep your mind and your heart set upon the gold, and you will find that you can face the trial a great deal easier than if you saw nothing beyond it. The gold of Christian character comes only through stress and storm. Fair-weather Christians never amount to much for God or souls, nor do they develop rugged characters. They are always contented with little fruit.

Results of Trials

God always works out something worth while from our trials if we are true in them. He does not try us merely to be trying us. He has a definite purpose to accomplish. Of Israel he said, “Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end” (Deut. 8:16). The humbling and the proving were only that he might do them good at the latter end. So it is with us: God humbles us and tries us just to do us good later. God’s purpose is also made very plain in the parable of the Figs in the twenty-fourth chapter of Jeremiah: “Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans, for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart” (verses 5-7). God did not permit them to be carried into captivity simply as a punishment. It was that, to be sure; but his purpose was greater and more kindly than that. It was that he might do them good—that they should turn to him with their whole heart, and that he should bring them back to

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their own land and make them a holier and more trusting people than before.

Job knew the good that was going to come out of his trial, and he said, “He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). The Psalmist learned this same lesson. He says: “O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place” (Psa. 66:8-12). This is the way the Bible speaks throughout when it speaks of trials well borne. We may get into a net, and affliction may be laid upon us; men may ride over our heads; we may go through fire and through water; but the outcome of it will be that we shall come out into a wealthy place. And then, like the Psalmist, we can say, “Oh, bless our God!” Take your Bible and read also Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:7; and 4:12, 13.

There is another text that we shall do well to study over and over: “But we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope; And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts” (Rom.5:8-5).

How to Count

Spiritual arithmetic is an important branch of study for the Christian. He who is not able to count properly in the spiritual life may come to some very wrong conclusions. It is important, therefore, that he give his attention to learning how to count accurately. If we do not learn to do this, we may fail in some critical moment, or at least we may view things from our own standpoint and have wrong ideas concerning them. James gives us a problem in this spiritual arithmetic and tells us how to solve it. He says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (Jas. 1:2). Many people have tried to solve this problem in their lives and have found that it did not work out according to the rule here enunciated. When they fell into divers temptations, they could not figure it out any way so as to make it come out joyful. The answer was something else always.

I have seen people in such difficulties and have heard some say to them, "Oh, count it all joy, brother; count it all joy." They tried to do so, but for some reason they could find no joy at all. It felt more like sorrow and grief and disappointment and things of that nature. I have heard others in like situations say resignedly, "Oh, I am counting it all joy," and their countenances at the same time were witnesses against them, for these showed that their owners had no joy in it at all.

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When James said, “Count it all joy,” he did not mean that we should simply pretend that it was joy, but that it should really be joy. If we get the correct answer, it will be joy. There is a way in which we can work out these problems so that they will all come out joy. The reason that James could get joy for an answer is shown in the third verse: “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” He looked at the outcome, not at the thing itself. Paul expressed the idea when he said, “If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Rom. 8:17). The reason why he could count it joy was that he looked beyond the present and saw the glorifying together at the end. He continued, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us” (verse 18). This is one thing that we must learn if we are going to find real joy as the answer in working out these problems. If we leave out that which is coming as a result of them, we shall certainly miss finding any good or glorying in them. Paul said, “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.” He knew that the joy was not in the trial or in the chastening, but he further said, “Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11). It was the “afterward” to which he looked. It is the “afterward” to which you and I must look if we are to get the joy.

There is one more thing that we must know if we are to get the right answer, and that is that there are three things which we must add to every trial in order to make the answer come out joy. If we fail to add anyone of these, the answer will not be what we desire. They are submission, obedience, and faith. Add these to anything that comes upon you, and the result is bound to be joy. The first thing is to submit yourself to God’s will in the matter. Let him have his way fully with you. Be willing to endure whatever is his will that you shall endure. Let him burn out the dross, if the fire must be hot.

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Let him work out his pleasure, for that is always “good pleasure.” In whatever comes, obey him. If we disobey for any cause whatever; if we turn our back on his commandments and the things that we know he would have us do, we cannot “count it all joy.” There will be nothing joyful in it, no matter how hard we try to count it so. Then, as we obey and submit, we must believe—believe that he will take us through victoriously; believe that he is working out his purpose; believe that he will be true to us. Believing thus, trusting thus, we can have the victory through it, and there will be joy indeed for our hearts. We shall not have to count it joy and feel it something else, for God will make our feelings correspond with the fact, and it will be joy to us. The joy may not come until the end of the chastening; it may not come when we are overcoming the temptation; but joy will come in the end, and we shall see that the problem is worked out in a satisfactory manner, and we shall not have to count and make believe that we have the answer desired, but we shall have it in the satisfaction of our own hearts. Let us look away from the toil to the reaping; and when at last we come with the reapers to that great harvest-home, we shall bring our sheaves with rejoicing, and we shall enter into the joy of the Lord, there to abide and to share in the pleasures that are at his right hand forevermore.

Let us think more about the glory that shall be revealed in us. When our life on earth is over we shall forget about the toils, the hardships, and the disappointments along the way; and we shall join with the ransomed in the song of rejoicing and surround God’s throne, and through the ages of eternity we shall thank God that he brought us by that rugged way that led upward and onward to the world eternal. We shall then never repine for the thorns that were along our way. We shall then rejoice that he counted us worthy to suffer for him. We shall then rejoice in him with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Let us therefore press on. Let us not hesitate.

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Let us, therefore, press on with courage to the goal of life's race, where the heavenly hosts with harps attuned will greet our coming with anthems sweeter than any that ever fell on mortal ear, and where our glorious Redeemer will place upon each victor's brow a glittering diadem and will welcome him to life eternal in those mansions of resplendent beauty, where he may dwell content through ages without end.

