

WRITINGS OF CHARLES E ORR - VOLUME 1

by Charles E. Orr

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Charles E. Orr (Volume 1), compiled for study and devotional reading.

100 Chapters

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01.00. A Religious Controversy

A Religious Controversy

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01.000. Introduction

Introduction

“Great is the mystery of godliness”* to the unregenerated man, for “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them.”* Nevertheless it has pleased God to have his glad tidings published and preached throughout the world; for, since the world through its wisdom knows not God, it is his good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe.

We have no apology to make in placing this booklet before the public. It is a supposed conversation, and presents a few of the real everyday experiences that come to those who serve God. It is written for the purpose of vividly explaining doctrines of truth and thus manifesting the inconsistency of objections and objectors.

We commit it to God for the accomplishing of whatever good may result from the reading of it, believing that the Spirit of the Lord has led in the writing and the publishing. The characters chosen for the conversation are a husband and wife, James and Sarah Wiseman, and their pastor, Mr. Kent.

01.01. Conversation 01

Conversation 1

Mr. Wiseman (sitting by the fireside)—Well, I never read such a paper! What will people get to teaching anyhow? Say, Sarah, have you read any in this paper?

Mrs. Wiseman—What paper, James?

Mr. W.—This religious paper I found on the sitting room table. I never saw such reading. Where did you get it?

Mrs. W.—I've been reading it for the last four or five weeks. I think cousin Jane is having it sent to us; for you remember that when she was here last summer she told us about this paper and the people who publish it.

Mr. W.—Oh, yes, the saints! But whoever heard of such a thing as a saint on earth? The saints are all in heaven, for the Bible says, "We shall be crowned saints in glory."

Mrs. W.—I don't remember reading that in the Bible. You must have read it in our hymnal. The Bible speaks of saints.

Mr. W.—I know the Bible says something about the saints, but it is those who have gone to heaven. It doesn't mention saints on earth.

Mrs. W.—I think it speaks of saints here on earth. Let me get my Bible and see. Paul begins the Ephesian epistle like this: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus."* So there were saints at Ephesus. Also, in his second letter to the Corinthians he says, "With all the saints which are in all Achaia."*

Mr. W.—Well, I've belonged to the church nearly two score years; I've heard our best preachers, and I never heard them tell about saints. I don't expect a paper like this to teach me anything. I knew what it is to be a Christian long before this paper was published.

Mrs. W.—It's not only the paper, James, that talks of saints, but the Bible also calls Christians saints. I believe we should take what the Bible says. Cousin Jane says there are a great many saints where she lives.

Mr. W.—Well, I do hope they'll not come East. I shouldn't want to see so strange a thing as a saint.

Mrs. W.—Well, I like their paper anyhow. I read every word in it, and I want you to subscribe for a year when the ten weeks are out.

Mr. W.—Subscribe for a year! I'll not have it in my house. I'm not going to have my children reading such nonsense. Let me read you a few words here—"On the fifteenth of last September I was thrown from a hack. In the fall I struck my head and fractured my right shoulder. My circumstances seemed to require that I continue my work, which the Lord enabled me to do

without laying off a day.” Here is one who says he has been healed of paralysis; another says he has been healed of a tumor and of sore eyes. Did you ever hear such nonsense? You know there’s not a better educated man or preacher than our presiding elder, and I’ve heard him say that the days of miracles are past.

Mrs. W.—I like our presiding elder very much, but let me say, since I’ve been reading this paper I feel more like looking to God and the Bible than to man. Now, where does the Bible say the days of miracles are past?

Mr. W.—Well, I’m going to believe what our presiding elder says, and not believe every new thing that comes along.

Mrs. W.—But it’s no new thing, James. This is not the work of man I’m reading you; it’s the Bible. Which are you going to take, the Bible or man?

Mr. W.—I think our church and our preachers are good enough. I’ve stood by them forty years and I’m not going to be turned aside in my old days.

Mrs. W.—I think we ought to believe the Bible, for even the very best man might be mistaken, but the Bible makes no mistakes. We never get too old to learn.

Mr. W.—I see you mean this last remark for me. Well, I’m too old for such a paper as this to teach me anything.

Mrs. W.—But I want to read you what the Bible says about healing. I’ll read you from Mark: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”* Now, Husband, the Bible says, “These signs shall follow them that believe.” The great trouble today in our church is they don’t believe. Cousin Jane sent me a book called Divine Healing of Soul and Body, and in it I read of many who have been healed of different diseases.

Mr. W.—Well, Sarah, I think you’ll get to be a saint pretty soon.

Mrs. W.—If to be a saint is to be right with God, I pray him to hasten the day. The way we’ve been living is very unsatisfactory to me. But I want to read you more of what the Bible says about healing. I’ll read from James: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.”*

Mr. W.—Well, I don’t believe that we can be healed in these days. So that ends that; I just don’t believe it.

Mrs. W.—As for my part, I’m beginning to believe that God can and will heal in these days. I’ve been taking medicine, as you know, for eight years; but I’m almost ready to conclude that if I’m ever well, God will have to heal me.

Mr. W.—I'm very much afraid, Mother, it'll not be long until you are as crazy as the rest of these people seem to be, and that will be a sad day at our house.

Mrs. W.—Well, I'm tired of living in sin. My poor soul is sick.

Mr. W.—Living in sin! Why the Bible says, "He that saith he liveth and sinneth not is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Mrs. W.—Where does the Bible say that?

Mr. W.—I don't know just where, but I can find it.

Mrs. W.—Well, you find it while I see to baking my bread.

01.02. Conversation 02

Conversation 2 Mrs. Wiseman (returning from her work)—Well, Husband, have you found that text you quoted?

Mr. Wiseman—No, I haven't found it yet, but I know we can't live in this world without sinning. Any of our preachers will tell you that. Our pastor said just last Sunday that we're all sinners by nature and much more so by practice. I believe he read it out of the Bible, didn't he?

Mrs. W.—No, the Bible doesn't say that. It's true all of us are by nature sinners; but if we give up the practice, Jesus will save us from the nature.

Mr. W.—I do find here: "There is none righteous, no not one."* Mrs. W.—Wait until I get my Bible. Now, where did you read that?

Mr. W.—It's in Romans 3:10.

Mrs. W.—Well, whom is he talking about? Read on to the eighteenth verse. This tells us that he's writing about a certain class of wicked people, and not about Christians.

Suppose when you go down-town tomorrow you should hear two men talking. One would say to the other, "They're all wicked, every one of them." Now, you would not go away and say those men said everybody in town was wicked. You would first learn whom they were talking about. By asking them, you would perhaps find they were talking about a certain family, and not about all the people in town. In this chapter, as well as in Psalms 14:1-7, from which the apostle is quoting, reference is evidently made to the natural, unregenerate man, and not to those who have found God. The apostle is speaking about man in his natural corrupt state. The people who publish that paper believe in God; they believe him to be all the Bible says; they take him for all the Bible promises him to be. Consequently, they're not classed with the people of whom the apostle is speaking. They claim God has made better men and women of them than the class who are "none righteous."

Mr. W.—Well, I'm just as good as those people; I believe there's a God as much as they do.

Mrs. W.—There's a difference between saying, "I believe," and really and truly believing. Those people the apostle spoke about were those who said in their hearts there is no God. They may have said with their lips that they believe there is a God. What a man believes in his heart, that's what his life will be. You don't believe in having a pure heart; you don't believe in living free from sin; you don't believe in a holy, righteous life; you don't believe in divine healing. It's far less blasphemous and disgraceful to God to believe there is no God at all than to make Him such a character as you'd have Him to be. By your life you deny Him, and you class yourself among this people about whom the apostle speaks.

Mr. W.—I think you'd make a pretty good preacher. But here s something that neither you nor those saints can explain away. Jesus himself says. "There is none good but one, that is God."* I

have it right here before me. You talk so much about the Bible: now I'll give you some Bible that I guess will stop the mouth of every one who talks about living a holy life. You'll find it in Matthew 19:17.

Mrs. W.—I don't claim to know all the Bible; in fact, I'm very ignorant of the Word of God. I sincerely hope to know it better. I know it is by the Bible that we are to be judged when we stand before God in judgment. My dear husband, we must live up to the Bible. Keep the place where you are reading while I read you a few texts. In 1 Peter 1:15, I read these sweet words: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Now I have the Revised Version also: let me read this text from it: "Like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves holy in all manner of living."RV These words thrill my very soul and put such a longing in my heart to be holy like Jesus. There are some scriptures I can't explain to you, but my very soul teaches me we must be holy, and I find many Bible texts teaching the same thing. Let me read again: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, even as he walked."* Then again I read, "Because as he is, so are we in this world."* Oh, to be like Jesus, to have him with us in this life, to lean on His breast and have sweet communion with Him—it would be heaven here.

Mr. W.—Yes, but you won't find heaven here. Everybody in this world lives in sin. "There is none good," Jesus says, and I believe what Jesus says. And here's another text that I guess you don't understand. Listen while I read it to you: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* Now, that settles this controversy. Nobody can live without sin, and if those saints say they have no sin, this text says they deceive themselves and the truth is not in them. I'm glad we have the Bible and I'm glad that text is in it. Get a holy life out of this text, my dear wife, and I'll join the saints.

Mrs. W.—I don't claim to be able to explain all the Bible, but if you'll explain the seventh verse, then I may be able to explain the eighth. Will you please read the seventh verse?

Mr. W.—"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

Mrs. W.—Did you say from all sin, James? Now, how much sin is left in the heart after it's cleansed from all sin? I believe my blessed Savior is able to cleanse from all sin. I'm glad that text is in the Bible. I know I live in sin, though I belong to the church and have been trying to do right; but since I've been reading that paper I've found I'm not saved at all, but expect to be.

Mr. W.—Well, I'm not going to let such a paper as this unchristianize me; no, indeed.

Mrs. W.—That paper did not unchristianize me. It taught me in clear simple words the true way of the Christian, and so showed me plainly that I was already unchristianized. And, if other people who live as I did would be reasonable, they, too, would find out just what I have learned.

Mr. W.—Here is another text which I suppose you're not able to explain. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."*

Mrs. W.—Listen while I read verse nine—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* If we are cleansed from all unrighteousness, how much is there left?

Mr. W.—Well, I must admit this is a little puzzling. One verse reads just contrary to the other.

Mrs. W.—They only seem to be contrary. I'm sure they agree if we only understood them.

Mr. W.—Well, I'm sure we can't live here in this world without sin. Heaven is the only place that is holy. This world is in sin.

Mrs. W.—But the Bible speaks about our dying to the world and being separated from the world and getting into the kingdom of heaven even here in this life. But here comes the mail carrier, and this is the day I always get the paper. I'll go and get it.

Mr. W. (talking to himself)—I'm afraid my wife will join those saints. I'm sure she would if there were any here, but I'm glad there are none.

Mrs. W. (returning)—I didn't get the paper today, James, but I have a letter from Cousin Jane, and she says she has made arrangements for two of the preachers to come and hold meetings in our town hall, and wants to know if we'll board them.

Mr. W.—Board them! No, indeed! they'll get no board or lodging in my house; I don't keep saints.

Mrs. W.—Cousin Jane says they'll come and trust the Lord. They're coming next week. When they come, we'll have them explain these texts for us. Please don't forget where they are. Now I must go to my work.

01.03. Conversation 03

Conversation 3

Mrs. Wiseman (a week later)—Well, James, those “saint preachers” have come. There are two of them. The meeting begins tonight. Won’t you go out to hear them?

Mr. Wiseman—No, indeed; I will not. If they preach there every night for a year, I’ll be one that won’t hear them. They’re too good for me; when people get so good they can’t sin, they’d better not come around here. And say, Sarah, you’re not going, either.

Mrs. W.—They don’t say, dear, that they can’t sin, but do say that Jesus can save and keep them from sin. But why may I not go?

Mr. W.—Simply because you can not. I’m not going to have my wife led astray by any such false teachers. I say for you to stay at home. You believe so much in doing what the Bible says—now stay at home; for the Bible says for wives to obey their husbands and to be in subjection.

Mrs. W.—Yes, my dear, the Bible says those things, and I’m sure I want to obey those words in all they mean, but possibly they don’t mean a wife should obey her husband when he attempts to bind her conscience and take away her Christian liberty. The Bible also says that we are to obey God rather than man. I’m to obey you as long as your commands don’t conflict with the commands of God. When they do, I’m to obey God, and that, dear, is what I’m going to do.

Mr. W.—By that you mean you’re going to that Mormon meeting tonight, I suppose.

Mrs. W.—I’ll be a good wife to you and care for the home in every needed way. I’ll obey you in all that’s right, but it’s not right for you to require me to stay away from hearing the gospel. I expect to go tonight. But why do you call them Mormons?

Mr. W.—Our pastor told me yesterday that they were Mormon preachers going through the country tearing down churches and separating husbands and wives.

Mrs. W.—You can hear a great many things. I’m sure they’re not separating husbands and wives. I have a little tract published by them on “Marriage and Divorce,” and it teaches against divorce; also, if a man has put away his wife and been granted a divorce, it teaches that neither the man nor the woman should marry again while the other is living.

Mr. W.—Yes, they say things in their literature just to deceive, but privately they teach to the contrary.

Mrs. W.—How do you know they do? Now let us beware. You claim to be a Christian; and if these people are ever so bad, that doesn’t justify you in saying things you know nothing about. Cousin Jane wrote me that those same preachers who are here now were at her place, and that a man who was divorced from his wife wanted one of them to officiate at his new wedding, and offered him twenty-five dollars to do so, but that he positively refused. She said the preacher took his Bible

and read to the man where God forbids one to remarry as long as one's companion is living. The man told the preacher that he could get either of the other preacher who lives there to marry him to this woman, and asked, "If the Bible forbids such things, why are these preachers willing to perform the ceremony?" The preacher told him that the doing of such things by certain preachers did not make the thing right.

Mr. W.—Well, I don't know whether to believe such a story or not. I've never yet seen the preacher that wouldn't marry anyone for twenty-five dollars.

Mrs. W.—Go to the meeting with me tonight and you'll see one, for this is the same man. But I didn't tell all the story. This preacher began to talk to the man about his soul and how wrong it would be to remarry and disobey God. "Go back," he said, "to your divorced wife and live with her. Both of you get saved, and you can live happily together." The man said he wanted to do what was right. The preacher asked him to come out to the meeting and hear the Word of God. The man did go to the meeting, got saved, and then he and the preacher went to see his divorced wife and talked with her. She, too, got saved and they married again and have been living happily together ever since. That doesn't look like separating husband and wife!

Mr. W.—I believe what our preacher told me yesterday. I'm sure he knows what he's talking about. He said he knew some of these saints out in western Pennsylvania. and attended their camp meeting. He told me something he saw there which you could hardly endorse, and that thing he knows for himself.

Mrs. W.—I'm sure, Husband, I'll believe all they teach that is Bible. But what was so dreadful that our pastor saw?

Mr. W.—To be plain, he saw them kissing each other. I don't think you would care to belong to a people among whom men and women kiss each other, even if they do say they are saints. A saint wouldn't do such a thing.

Mrs. W.—I have always liked our preacher very much. but I'm afraid he went there to find fault. I know very well they don't practice promiscuous kissing. The brethren kiss each other and the sisters kiss each other, but brethren and sisters do not kiss each other. Just wait a moment and I'll get one of their books and read you just what they say about this. Listen now. while I read:

True love manifests itself in many ways. We embrace with the arms and greet with a kiss the object of our love. We speak of these love tokens oftentimes in a spiritual way—"Folded in the arms of Jesus," "Leaning on His breast," "Sheltered beneath His wings." The Psalmist says, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry."* These were literally practiced by the Savior and His beloved followers while he was here. After Jesus arose and went to the Father, the apostles practiced the holy kiss. "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him."* We behold the love they bore for him. It was not a cold kiss of formality, but of love. In the first verse we see the love Paul had for the disciples. "Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them."* In his apostolic epistles of the New Testament the holy kiss is five times mentioned: "Salute one another with an holy kiss."* "Greet one another with an holy kiss."* "Greet one another with an holy kiss."* "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."* "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity."*

Satan, ever ready to corrupt the pure precepts and practices of the sacred Word, has led people into the disgraceful fanaticism of promiscuous kissing. Such is not a kiss of love, but a kiss of lust. Everything done in the order of the kingdom of heaven is done in the perfection of decency and respectability.

Now, dear, we see here they don't teach nor practice promiscuous kissing. Jane's husband, you know, is a Methodist, and he himself says these people are all right. They have had camp meetings there for years. At first he opposed her going to their meetings, but soon saw his mistake. He says they're good, respectable citizens, and kind, obliging neighbors. They live good, quiet, orderly lives, attend to their own business, and let other people do the same. They pay their debts, keep their promises, and can be depended upon. All these stories were told about them, she said, when they first came there. She thinks her husband is going to get saved soon.

Mr. W.—I may have been mistaken in what our preacher meant by "saints kissing each other." But what do you mean about Cousin Jane's husband? Why, woman, he has belonged to church as long as I have! He and I joined at the same time. And now his wife talks about him getting saved. That's the way they are; they think nobody is saved but them. I expect you'll soon get to thinking I'm not saved.

Mrs. W.—Well, I've belonged to church, too, nearly as long as you have, and I know I'm not saved; but I hope to be, and if those people can help me, they're the people I want to find. My soul is crying within me for the peace and love of God. To possess what these people are telling about is the very longing of my heart. Oh, husband, let's get right with God and cease this miserable way we've been living! You know we don't live right; you know you do many things that are not proper for a Christian to do. But I must get ready for meeting.

Mr. W.—You are not going, I tell you!

Mrs. W.—Yes, Husband, I am going.

Mr. W.—There'll be trouble around here if you do!

Mrs. W.—You'll have it to yourself then. I'm ready now and am going. Have a good fire when I come home.

Good night, dear.

Mr. W. (speaking to himself)—She is already getting like her cousin Jane and all those saints. You can't do a thing with them when they think they're right. But I'm afraid I've made a fool of myself. I'll not knuckle down, though: that's one thing I won't do. I'll fight it out. My pastor will help me; he said he would. I'll get him over to talk with my wife.

God bless her! She's a good woman.

01.04. Conversation 04

Conversation 4

Mrs. Wiseman (returning from the meeting)—I'm glad to find you still sitting up, dear. How kind of you to wait so late for me!

Mr. Wiseman—I don't know that I was particularly waiting for you, but do you think I could go to bed and sleep with my wife off to a saints' meeting?

Mrs. W.—How I wish you had been to the meeting with me! I never heard such preaching before! It was positively Bible from beginning to end, and the singing was simply heavenly. But I fear, James, you use the term "saints" quite ironically. As the preacher said tonight, everybody is either a saint or a sinner. I admit that I'm a sinner, though I've belonged to church many years; but I pray God to hasten the day when I shall have become a saint.

Mr. W.—I repeat it, there is no such thing as saints on earth; I'm a sinner saved by grace, and we can be nothing more in this life.

Mrs. W.—If a sinner gets saved by grace, is he any longer a sinner? To save a sinner is to save him from being a sinner. To save a drunkard—is it not to save him from being a drunkard? If he still continues to be a drunkard can we say he is saved? All are sinners sometime in life; but when a person is saved by grace, he's something else than a sinner; and what is it? It is a saint. When a sinner gets saved by grace, he then becomes a Christian, or a saint. I wish you could have heard the sermon tonight.

Mr. W.—I told you I didn't expect to hear them, and I don't. I suppose he told you all about how to be holy.

Mrs. W.—He preached from Ephesians 2:8 : "For by grace are ye saved through faith." He read a great many other texts. He was careful to give us the references so we could read the texts in our homes out of our own Bibles, for he said that oftentimes people accuse him of having a Bible different from theirs.

Mr. W.—If his Bible says we can live in this world without sin, it's not like mine.

Mrs. W.—I'll get your Bible and let you read a few of the texts he referred to. His first text told us how we're saved. His next text taught us who it is that saves. Turn and read Acts 4:12.

Mr. W.—Is Acts in the Old Testament or the New?

Mrs. W.—Well, Husband! I'm afraid you haven't read your Bible enough to know whether or not it says we can live without sin.

Mr. W.—I know as much about what it is to be a Christian as those preachers, I assure you. They can't teach me anything; I've been a Christian too long for that.

Mrs. W.—You'll find Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament. It comes after the Gospel of St. John.

Mr. W.—Yes, I knew, but I had forgotten for the moment. “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

Mrs. W.—You remember that Free Mason man we were talking with a few evenings ago said that being a member of the Free Mason order would save us, but this text teaches us that only Christ can save.

Mr. W.—I don't agree with that man, but we must belong to some church or we can't be saved.

Mrs. W.—Just belonging to some sect doesn't save us. It's only Jesus that saves. The preacher tonight then taught us from Matthew 18:11 who it is that Jesus came to save.

Mr. W.—Matthew—let me see—yes, here I have it. Eighteenth chapter and eleventh verse—“For the Son of man is come to save that which is lost.” We all knew that.

Mrs. W.—Then he read in 1 Timothy 1:15. I have it here and will read it. My Bible is just like yours. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” So the lost are the sinners, and the sinners are lost. Now read “Matthew 1:21”*. This text, he said, would teach us what sinners were saved from.

Mr. W.—“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Mrs. W.—You see, dear, if a man sins he's a sinner. Now, Jesus saves a sinner from his sins. It was his sins that made him a sinner. If he gets saved from his sins, will he still be a sinner? If a man who is a thief gets saved from stealing, will he any longer be a thief? Certainly he'll not, for he has ceased to do that which made him a thief.

Mr. W.—Well, I know my Bible says, “He that saith he liveth and sinneth not is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” But I think it's time we were going to bed.

Mrs. W.—Just a few moments more. Suppose thieves should form an organization with the claim that joining it would make them saved thieves, and would go right on stealing, wouldn't they still be thieves? Certainly! And their profession of salvation wouldn't shield them from punishment by the law.

Mr. W.—Of course, anybody knows that.

Mrs. W.—If a sinner professes to get saved, but still commits sin, he's yet a sinner. Though he claims to be a saved sinner, yet he's still doing the things that make him a sinner. Won't God punish him just the same as if he were not making any such profession?

Mr. W.—I think it's time we were going to bed.

Mrs. W.—Just another text or two. The preacher then told us what sin is. He read in 1 John 3:4 : “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.” If we knowingly do anything that God commands us not to do, we commit sin; and if we commit sin, we're sinners, and if we're sinners, we're lost. He then referred us to Colossians 3:9. Will you

please read it? Here, you may read it from my Bible if you can't find it in yours.

Mr. W.—“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.”

Mrs. W.—Next read Ephesians 4:25.

Mr. W.—“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.”

Mrs. W.—Now, James this is very plain. We must some day meet God. Oh, let us fear Him and make ready. To tell a lie is a sin because God's Word forbids it, and to sin is to be lost. Now listen to what it says: “All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”* You believe the Bible, do you not?

Mr. W.—Certainly I believe the blessed old Bible. I've been reading it for many years. It has been a lamp to my feet: it has comforted me in many a trying hour. I believe it, every word.

Mrs. W.—Well, now, I don't want to give offense, dear, but I do want to be right with God, that we may not be cast into the lake of fire. You know last fall when you sold old Dan to Mr. Nead, you told him he was eleven years old, and you know that we'd had him for twelve years and that he was four years old when we got him.

Mr. W.—He was eleven years old and older, too.

Mrs. W.—Yes, but that doesn't make it a truth. God will not excuse you on such a plea. Oh, Husband! Let us live pure and sinless lives.

Mr. W.—I told you those preachers were going about making trouble in families, and if you keep this up there will be trouble here. There'll be no living with you if you listen to those preachers and read that paper. I'm glad its ten weeks is about out. But I'm going to bed.

Mrs. W.—I received a letter from Cousin Jane today, and she said she had subscribed for the paper to be sent to us for a whole year.

01.05. Conversation 05

Conversation 5

Mrs. Wiseman (after next meeting)—Thank God! I've had the privilege of attending another meeting. I'm so glad to find you sitting up for me again, dear. I never heard such preaching in my life—so plain, so simple, so beautiful.

Mr. Wiseman—What did the preacher talk about that was so wonderful? I've heard good preaching all my days. I'm sure no man even if he is a saint, can preach like our bishop.

Mrs. W.—He preached on the subject of repentance.

Mr. W.—I suppose he thinks we're all sinners around here.

Mrs. W.—Isn't that what you profess to be? You say you sin every day. But I desire, dear, to tell you a few things he said. No man is truly penitent, he said, who doesn't forgive all men all the injuries they have done him, and none such can have forgiveness from God.

Mr. W.—Well, you see, I wouldn't sit and listen to such nonsense. I don't believe a word of it.

Mrs. W.—You believe the Bible, do you not?

Mr. W.—I don't believe their interpretation of the Bible. I'm sure.

Mrs. W.—I will read you what the Bible says and leave you to interpret it for yourself. "But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

Mr. W.—Well, I know I'm a Christian, and I don't intend for those preachers to unchristianize me, either.

Mrs. W.—But you know, dear, that you haven't forgiven Mr. Smith. Only a few days ago you told me that you hated him and that some day you would get even with him.

Mr. W.—Yes, but he treated me shamefully. Just because my cows got into his pasture for only a few minutes, he put them all into his lot and made me pay one dollar a head to get them out. God does not expect us to forgive so mean a man as that, and I'm not going to do it either, no matter what the saints' preachers say. I do hate the man.

Mrs. W.—It isn't what the preachers say; it's what God says that we must heed, or we shall never gain heaven. This man belongs to our church, and the preacher calls him brother, and he partook of the sacrament at the communion altar with you last Sunday. You say you hate him. Oh, Husband! I do want you to see and know yourself. Listen while I talk to you a few minutes. You don't want to miss heaven, do you?

Mr. W.—Certainly I do not, and I don't expect to. I was converted forty years ago and I have been a church member in good standing ever since. You talk like a foolish woman.

Mrs. W.—You have said you believe the Bible.

Mr. W.—Yes, I do, and you can't get me to say anything else. I believe it, but I don't believe every preacher that comes along.

Mrs. W.—Never mind about the preacher just now; let us take the Bible. The Bible says that “all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.”* Do you believe this?

Mr. W.—To be sure, woman, but I'm no liar.

Mrs. W.—What if the Bible should say you are one? “No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”*

Mr. W.—You don't look on me as a murderer, I hope. If you don't stay away from those saint preachers, I fear I shall have a wife in the asylum.

Mrs. W.—Listen to what the Bible says. From what I've read we know that liars and murderers can not go to heaven. This is a plain settled truth set forth by the Bible. Now you say you love God?

Mr. W.—Of course I do. I love Him with all my heart.

Mrs. W.—You say you hate Mr. Smith?

Mr. W.—Who wouldn't hate such a man? He beat me out of seven dollars, and I can't love such a man. But I'll get even with him the first chance I get.

Mrs. W.—Let me read you what the Bible says: “If a man say, I love God”—and you say you love God—

Mr. W.—Yes, I do.

Mrs. W.—“And hateth his brother”—and you say you hate Mr. Smith—“He is a liar.”* Mr. W.—But who is meant by “brother”? Old Smith is not my brother.

Mrs. W.—He belongs to the same church with you: your names are on the same class-book; you have the same class-leader, pastor, presiding elder, and bishop; the preacher calls you brother and calls him brother. But I admit that it is not because we belong to the same church that we are brothers. Joining church doesn't make men brothers. The term “brother” as used in this text has reference to any man. We are all the children of Adam. As a human family we are one brotherhood. Every man is your brother. We are commanded to love our enemies. If you look on Mr. Smith as an enemy, you're obliged to love him. If you hate him and say you love God you have just heard what the Bible says you are. But let me read you again from this book of truth: “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.”* You say you hate Mr. Smith and the Bible says that you are a murderer, and that “no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”* Oh, let us get right with God! I'm not saved, but I'm seeking God with my whole heart. I am getting nearer the kingdom. I have hope that Jesus will soon be mine. Oh, how blessed it will be! How sweet it would be to lay our heads upon our pillows tonight and know there is not a text in all the Bible that condemns us! I would rather have such an experience than be possessor of the entire world.

Another expression you made grieved me. You said Mr. Smith was a mean man and that you'd get even with him.

Mr. W.—Yes, I do say he's a mean man. Don't you say he is? Didn't he do a mean thing?

Mrs. W.—Yes, I admit that he did wrong, and that it was mean.

Mr. W.—Well, if a man does a mean thing doesn't that make him a mean man? According to your own reasoning, it does. You said if a man committed sin it made him a sinner; so if a man does a mean thing, it will make him a mean man.

Mrs. W.—But you said you'd get even with him. By that you mean if you find his cows outside you'll pen them and make him pay to get them out.

Mr. W.—Indeed, I will, and do it quick.

Mrs. W.—Then you'll be as mean a man as he is. You will have done the very same thing that he did; and the doing of the same thing will make you as mean as he is.

Mr. W.—But he did it first.

Mrs. W.—His having done it first doesn't lessen the wrongness of the deed. Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit didn't excuse Adam; he had to suffer the penalty of sin. Then you talk of getting even with him.

Mr. W.—Yes; I mean to get even with him the first chance I get.

Mrs. W.—To do what the Bible says is the best rule of life. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* Do a wrong to Mr. Smith and that will increase his anger, and he will seek to do you another wrong; so in that way you'll continue doing each other wrong; trying to get even, but never getting even. Now, you had better forgive Mr. Smith. Begin by showing him love and kindness; do good to him, and he will become ashamed for the evil he has done to you and will come and ask forgiveness, and then you'll be even. The Bible way is the only right way. But I must go to bed, as I wish to go to meeting tomorrow night. I want to talk more with you tomorrow about what the preacher said about repentance. Goodnight.

Mr. W.—Good night. (Talking to himself) My wife is a dear, good woman; I can not deny it. I believe she is nearer right than I am; but I never will go the way of those saints. I'll be more of a man than that. But those Scriptures about the liar and murderer being cast into the lake of fire make me uneasy. But I've belonged to church too long to acknowledge myself in the wrong, and I just won't do it.

01.06. Conversation 06

Conversation 6

Mrs. Wiseman (the next day)—I don't desire, James, to talk on any subject that is unpleasant to you; but if you have no objections, I should like to tell you some more things before I go to meeting, that the preacher said on repentance last night.

Mr. Wiseman—I have no objections; of course not, I think I am able to hold my own. I was converted forty years ago, and do you think I can be annoyed by a woman talking repentance to me? You must think I'm a sinner.

Mrs. W.—I have your own testimony; but we will not discuss that point now, for it will soon be time for me to start to meeting, and I want to tell you more about real, true Bible repentance. As I said last night, we must forgive our enemies. If we don't, we're not Christians.

Mr. W.—I tell you, Sarah, I am a Christian. I've been a member of the church for forty years; I pay the preacher as much as the next one; I help in the missionary cause; I gave two hundred dollars toward building the new church; I gave ten dollars on the funeral expenses of the Widow Sanders; I visit and help the sick all I can. Just last week I gave Mr. Jenkins five dollars to help him replace the barn he lost by fire, and if a neighbor comes to me for a favor, he always gets it.

Mrs. W.—What if Mr. Smith should come over for a favor?

Mr. W.—I don't want that man to come on my place, and he'd better not. You know how he treated me.

Mrs. W.—But we must love our enemies. We must return good for evil, and do good to those who despitefully use us, and bless those who wrong us. Can't you bless Mr. Smith? You say he has done you a great wrong, and I admit he did, but the Bible says to bless such.

Mr. W.—Old Smith had better not come about me, or he'll get something he won't call a blessing.

Mrs. W.—But, dear, we're not Christians simply because we do some good deeds. Good works do not save us. Paying the preacher, helping the missionary cause, building churches, giving to the poor, and favoring our neighbors don't make us Christians. Here is Mr. Wright, who gave fifty dollars more on the church than you did and twice as much on the Widow's funeral expenses, and he even pays the preacher as much or more in the course of a year than you do, yet he doesn't profess to be a Christian.

Mr. W.—He does not belong to the church nor make any profession of Christ, and I do. I am a Christian, thank the Lord!

Mrs. W.—And you know, James, what you did when you gave that two hundred dollars on the church. You cut down the wages of your laboring men twenty-five cents on the day; you raised the price of wood fifty cents a cord and the poor people had to have it. The man who has your valley

farm rented had to pay fifty dollars more for it the year we built the church than he did the year before. You even sold wheat to your poor neighbors for ten cents on the bushel more than you could have gotten for it on the market. So, after all, the poor have paid the two hundred dollars, but you get the praise for it—the praise that comes from men.

Mr. W.—It's not a woman's place to meddle with a man's business. I'm able to attend to that.

Mrs. W.—But we must obey the Bible. Let us make our calling and election sure. The Bible is the only way. I am concerned about your soul. The preacher said we must plead for the widow, judge the fatherless, and relieve the oppressed.

Mr. W.—What do I care what those preachers say? They know no more about it than other people.

Mrs. W.—But he proved it from the Bible. “Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widows.”* Mr. W.—There's nothing in that that you can condemn me with.

Mrs. W.—I'm not trying to condemn you: I only want you to be right with God, just as I want to be right myself. Oh, let us be real Christians, not merely having a profession of religion and doing many things we ought not to do.

Mr. W.—Well, what now? What more do you find to fault me for? The Bible says to judge not. Now, if you believe in living to the Bible, then stop judging me.

Mrs. W.—Let us be kind and talk for the good of our souls. I'm not judging you; neither do I mean to find fault. I only want you to see that the way you have been living is far from the way a Christian should live. The text I read says, “Relieve the oppressed.” In the margin it says “righten.” We should give the oppressed their rights, and not take advantage and oppress them more.

Mr. W.—Just tell me where I did anything of that kind. Didn't I give Mr. Jenkins five dollars just last week to help him build a barn?

Mrs. W.—Yes, but Mr. Jenkins is not at all a poor man. He is able to help you in return; and if we do good only to those who are able to help us or return the favor, we shall not get much reward. What did you do the day after?

Mr. W.—I don't know what you mean.

Mrs. W.—Why, you know the next day when we went to town, you told the old Widow Jones, who lives in your town property, that you were at so much expense you would have to charge fifty cents a month more for the rent of your house. So the widow in less than a year will pay your five dollars for you, but you get the thanks and favors from Mr. Jenkins.

Mr. W.—A man has a right to do as he pleases with his own. If I want to give five dollars, it's my business. and if I want to raise the rent, it's my business.

Mrs. W.—In one sense that may be true, but in another it is not, and God who knows the heart will some day bring all into judgment. But again, dear, you remember about the Widow Perkins' cow?

Mr. W.—I bought her cow of her. That's all I or anyone else knows.

Mrs. W.—The old man Dodson, you remember, had a mortgage of fifty dollars yet on her little cottage, and he was demanding payment, and if she did not pay it by a certain date, he was going to foreclose it. You went to the widow and told her that you were always ready to help any one in trouble and that it is our Christian duty to aid the poor and that you had come over to help her in paying off the mortgage, and you would buy her cow. She said that she regretted to sell her cow, as it was her main support, but she supposed she would have to sell her; and she asked you what the cow was worth. You told her she was worth about thirty-five dollars. She wanted more, but you told her that she was not worth a cent more than thirty-five dollars, but that you would show her a favor under such circumstances and give her forty dollars. So you bought the cow. The next day when Mr. Brown was over here looking at the cow, you told him that she was worth every cent of fifty dollars and that you wouldn't take a cent less. And I think you sold her for fifty dollars, didn't you?

Mr. W.—Well, I'm using that ten dollars in paying up my life insurance fees. I have my life insured for the benefit of my wife and children, and that is right. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."* I know I care for my family and have not denied the faith, so I know I am a Christian.

Mrs. W.—To rob one to help another is sinful in the sight of God. The Bible commands us to relieve the oppressed, and we must keep the commands of God, or we shall never have right to the tree of life.

Mr. W.—Well, the steward in our church bought her hog for ten dollars, and he told me he wouldn't take fifteen dollars for it; and if this isn't wrong for him, I know it's not for me. I'm sure he has had enough experience in the Christian life to know what is right and what is wrong.

Mrs. W.—His evil doings do not justify you in doing wrong. The poor widow's cow and hog both gone—all her living—bought by two men that stand high in the church, for fifty dollars, when they were well worth sixty-five dollars. Oh, for shame! The preacher said we should have to make right all our wrongs as far as we could. We should have to give money back we had cheated others out of. But I must go to meeting, as it's now time. I will leave you to think over the matter of selling that horse last month for one hundred and fifty dollars, which you said was sound and all right so far as you knew, but which you knew had the heaves bad last summer and fall. But won't you come and go with me and hear the sermon tonight, dear?

Mr. W.—I think I've had sermon enough for one night, SO I'll not go, if you please.

Mrs. W.—Good night; sit up for me.

Mr. W. (talking to himself)—I feel strange; the words of that woman make me uneasy. I halfway believe she is right. I don't want to miss heaven. Oh! What if after all my years of profession I should be wrong and be lost at last? But there are hundreds of others in the churches living no better than I do. If they are all right, I am, too. But somehow I feel uneasy. I don't know what is the matter. But I'll be a man! I'll not come down now and admit that I'm not right after I've belonged to church all these years. I know my preacher approves of my conduct and will stand by me, and I'll not give up—that I won't. I'm a fool for giving away as much as I have, but my wife doesn't know it and she shan't. I'm going to step over and talk with my pastor a while and come back before wife returns.

01.07. Conversation 07

Conversation 7

Mrs. Wiseman (after the meeting)—As the sermon was being preached tonight, how often I wished you were there to hear it!

Mr. Wiseman—I went over and had a short talk with our pastor. I tell you he's a level-headed man. He said those preachers ought to be stoned out of the country and I fully agreed with him.

Mrs. W.—Yes, I've read in the the Bible of some religious professors stoning the ministers of Christ, and it seems that such a class of people still exist. But we care not for these things. Oh, James, I must tell you—I am saved! Tonight my sins were washed away. I have peace with God. I have a heaven in my heart. I never, never thought such happiness could be enjoyed by a mortal being. Oh, how wonderful! I'm God's child! Won't you come and get saved?

Mr. W.—Our pastor said tonight that one of the most objectionable and harmful things about these people is that they will not acknowledge any one as being saved but themselves. I tell you, I was converted forty years ago.

Mrs. W.—The preacher's subject tonight was, "Christians Live in a Heavenly Place." His text was Ephesians 2:6 : "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In the preceding verses the apostle speaks of the time when they were dead in their sins. They lived as the world lives; they fulfilled the desires of the flesh and mind. But their sins were forgiven; they were made alive; they were saved by grace; and now they sit in a heavenly place.

I have that experience. I've been a cold, formal professor for years, living in sin, loving the world, loving the flesh and fulfilling its desires, but, thank God! I'm saved.

Mr. W.—And now have you become so good you can't sin any more?

Mrs. W.—Jesus who saves me is able to keep me. I could sin, but I put my trust in Him who is mighty to keep. I couldn't sin and live in a heavenly place. Wherever heaven is, there is holiness; and as long as I live in a heavenly place, I shall necessarily live a holy life.

Mr. W.—No one can live a holy life in this world; I know too much about that. Our pastor said tonight that he had been intimately acquainted with the most devoted and God-fearing men, and that they all admitted they sinned more or less.

Mrs. W.—Though this may be true in the lives of many men who desire to live right, yet it is not the true Bible way. You'll admit that when one becomes a Christian he is raised up to a heavenly plane.

Mr. W.—Yes, indeed; I was just as happy, when I was converted forty years ago, as you are tonight. I loved communion with God; nothing could disturb my peace. But we can't always retain

that joy and favor. We must attend to the duties of life and mingle with the world; and, as an inevitable result, we will sin more or less and have more or less care and worry. We can't always keep that sweet peace in our souls. I know something about it. You'll find in six months' time you'll be living just as you have been.

Mrs. W.—If I do, I'll not profess to be a Christian. I believe Jesus will keep me to the end. The preacher talked tonight about the Christian life being a heavenly life, consequently a holy, sinless life. He read Titus 2:12, which says we are to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. He also read Luke 1:75, which says we should serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life—not only six months but all the days of our life. That is what I expect to do. I expect to serve my God in holiness all the days of my life.

Mr. W.—But Jesus himself said there is none good but one, and that is God. When people get to be better than Jesus Himself, they are too good for me. Those preachers of yours will never read such texts as these. They just skip about here and there and select such texts as suit them and prove what they want to prove and thus deceive the people.

Mrs. W.—You remember you said to judge not, lest we be judged? You have not heard these ministers. He did read and explain that text tonight. If you will turn to Matthew 19:16-17, you will find it.

Mr. W.—Yes, I know where it is, all right; my pastor and I were reading it tonight.

Mrs. W.—This is the explanation the preacher gave: three times the instance of this young man's visit is given—in Matthew 19:16-17; Mark 10:17-22; and Luke 18:18-23. You'll more readily understand this text when I read Matthew 19:17 from the Revised Version—"Why asketh thou me concerning that which is good?"RV The young man recognized that Christ was good. The instruction under which this man was brought up taught that goodness was the result of doing works of the law. He wished to know what he might do to obtain eternal life. Christ was a new teacher among them, and the zealous young man, like Nicodemus, was evidently ready to admit that Christ was "a teacher sent from God." Christ pointed to God as the only source of goodness and of eternal life. The Jewish religion consisted of good works, but even under the law goodness did not come by works only; neither now may we become righteous by our own good works alone. God only is good. Without him we're vile and sinful. In such a condition we can't gain his favor, because an evil tree can't bring forth good fruit. We must come to God and confess our sinfulness, lay ourselves at his feet perfectly helpless and unworthy. Through the worthy name of Jesus he'll forgive our sins, cleanse them away, and come into the heart. When we have God dwelling in our hearts, we have his goodness in us. Then we're good—not of ourselves, but we have God's goodness in us. That's what Jesus meant. None are good of themselves, but we can be good in God's goodness. Isn't that very plain?

Mr. W.—Oh, they can explain everything to their notion, but it doesn't change my opinion any. I have a right to my opinion. "As a man believes, so he shall be saved," the Bible says.

Mrs. W.—Where does the Bible say any such thing as that?

Mr. W.—I can't tell you just where; I'm not supposed to know where every text is, but it's in the Bible. You know we've always heard that.

Mrs. W.—I'm afraid, dear, we've heard some things that were not true. I'm sure there is no such text in the Bible. But this is what the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."* Nowhere does it say, "As you believe, so shall you be saved." The Bible says also, "They shall believe a lie" and "be damned."* We should be careful what we believe.

Mr. W.—Well, the Bible says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* That is a text they can't get around.

Mrs. W.—That is one of the texts I said we would get these ministers to explain when they come. The minister read and explained that text to us tonight. I can't make it as plain and simple as he did, but I'll bring them home to dinner with me some day, and they can explain it to you.

Mr. W.—Bring them to dinner! Don't you do such a thing. This house is mine, and they shan't set their feet in it. If you're going to go with them, you can go, but don't you bring them here if you want to avoid trouble.

Mrs. W.—I don't mean to give you any offense, James. Of course, I won't bring them if you don't wish them to come. They won't go where they're not wanted.

Mr. W.—They won't come here, then. I have no dinner for any such peace-disturbers. They go about tearing down churches and turning things upside down, and I want them to stay away from me.

Mrs. W.—Very well, dear; I will explain the text as best I can, and I think I remember his teaching quite clearly. Let us open our Bibles to 1 John 1:1-10. In 1 John 1:1 he is talking about Jesus. He calls him the "Word of life." He had both seen and heard this "Word of life," and now he says, "[Him] 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." There were many people in those days who believed in God, but did not believe in Jesus as the Son of God. They could not have fellowship with John unless they had fellowship with Jesus and walked in the light. If they would walk in the light, that is, if they would accept Christ, then the blood of Christ would cleanse them from all sin. Sins were no longer forgiven through faith in the blood of animals. And now the eighth verse—"If we say we have no sin"—those who have not been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. They may believe in God and say they have fellowship with him; but if they have not accepted the "Word of life"—Jesus, the light of the world—they're walking in darkness and are not cleansed from sin: and if they—those who have not believed on Jesus—say they have no sin, they are yet in their sin, and they deceive themselves. In verse nine he says to them, "If we confess our sins he [Jesus] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In Christ there is freedom from sin. I found it tonight.

Mr. W.—Well, I know I'm a Christian. I admit I do things I ought not, but we all do that. No man lives who doesn't. But I must retire. Good night.

Mrs. W.—I'm glad we can, by the help of God live in this world just as we ought to live. Husband, let us live as we ought. Jesus will help us. Good night.

01.08. Conversation 08

Conversation 8

Mr. Wiseman (after meeting next evening)—Those preachers must find a great deal to talk about. I was expecting you home an hour ago.

Mrs. Wiseman—The meetings are getting better every night, James. The large hall was filled to overflowing. The preacher talked for two hours, and no one became weary. He preached on the subject of redemption.

Mr. W.—I suppose he thought he was telling the people something they didn't know. Perhaps he doesn't know our ministers are great theological scholars.

Mrs. W.—He treated the subject from a Bible standpoint, and it was so plain and comprehensive that all could understand it. I can tell you of it only in part.

Mr. W.—I suppose you think if I won't go and hear them, you'll have me to hear it anyway. Well, do tell me all he said. If I know what he said, I can better refute his teaching. Deacon Jones said that one of those preachers said he was better than Christ or the angels.

Mrs. W.—You can't believe all you hear. I've been there every night, and I'm sure I have heard every word that was said, and there hasn't been anything said like that. Besides that, Mr. Jones hasn't gone to hear them.

Mr. W.—No, he hasn't been there, but he was told that the preacher said that.

Mrs. W.—This is what the preacher did say. He said there was power in the blood of Christ to save us and make us as pure as the angels.

Mr. W.—The deacon told me the preacher said there hadn't been a man saved in the Methodist church in twenty years.

Mrs. W.—People are ever ready to wrest a man's words and have him to say something he never said. I'll tell you just what he said. He said he himself had been a Methodist for twenty years, but wasn't saved any of that time. But I must tell you something of his sermon. He said that man in his primeval day was pure and holy.

Mr. W.—We all know that. Our theologians teach the same thing.

Mrs. W.—Man possesses, he said, not only a physical life, but eternal life. By means of our physical life with its senses he has correspondence with the world, and by means of the eternal life with its senses he has communion with God.

Mr. W.—That is all very good and true. I presume he has studied our theology.

Mrs. W.—But sin, he said, just one sin, one act of disobedience, brought death. Man was turned away from the tree of life. Death didn't mean an end of the physical life, but loss of eternal life.

Mr. W.—But death was also pronounced upon the physical man. You see, I know a thing or two.

Mrs. W.—Since Adam's sin, all his posterity are born in sin. There is an evil principle in the heart of every child; but they are not sinners, for they have never transgressed.

Mr. W.—What did he say about children who die in their infancy—are they saved or lost?

Mrs. W.—He said they were saved. He proved it by the text, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."* But when they arrive at an age when they know right from wrong and they willfully do a thing that is wrong, they are sinners and are in a lost state.

Mr. W.—I don't see any great revelation in that; we have all known that.

Mrs. W.—But the truth I desire to call your special attention to is that just one act of disobedience or wrong doing knowingly committed makes the child a sinner and cuts him off from God.

Mr. W.—I think I know what you are trying to come at, but you'll not get me in a corner; I'm too old for that.

Mrs. W.—If that child who willfully does wrong and becomes a sinner ever gets converted, he'll have to repent of his sins, will he not?

Mr. W.—Certainly he will.

Mrs. W.—He repents of the sins he committed; he doesn't repent of the evil that was in his heart when he was born. Now, when one comes to Jesus in real true penitence, he forsakes everything. To repent means more than to shed a few tears. Repentance is giving up the world; it's forsaking every sin; it's forsaking all. Jesus says, "[He] that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."* It's a surrender to God.

Mr. W.—Yes, I know that is what the Bible says, but our preachers don't make these minor points so prominent. They dwell more on the love and mercy of God.

Mrs. W.—But the love and mercy of God can never save those who don't come to Jesus in true repentance. Oh! I can see now, dear, how many in our church have professed conversion who have forsaken but little. There was no putting away of sin; there was no forsaking of everything. They go on after they profess conversion very much the same as they did before.

Mr. W.—Well, we're not to judge. We can't see the heart. God's ways are not our ways. I'm sure we can't tell who is converted.

Mrs. W.—I know people must meet the demands of the Bible. When one repents and believes on Jesus, he is then converted or regenerated. To be regenerated is to be born again. This is a work of the Spirit of God in the soul. All sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus. The Spirit of God comes into the heart with its quickening, resurrecting power, making the individual alive in Christ Jesus. He is a new creature. Old things are passed away, and all things are become new. Salvation makes a change—it brings peace and joy and, oh, James, I have that peace in my soul.

I'm not a creature of this old world; I'm on a higher plane, in a holier realm. I live more among heavenly things than I do among earthly things.

Mr. W.—That is the way it was with me when I was converted forty years ago; but we can't always keep that fullness of joy in this world of sin and trouble.

Mrs. W.—Let me die now then. I can't be separated from this joy I feel in my soul. I would rather die than to have this sweet peace depart from my heart. Oh, tell me not that we can't keep this sweet heavenly life!

Mr. W.—I've talked with many and have never found any one yet who has retained the joy he found when converted.

Mrs. W.—They have been taught that they must sin more or less. It's sin that destroys this peace. As long as man is a Christian, he'll have peace with God. To be a Christian is to be righteous, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. They cannot be separated. If you don't have peace, you're not a Christian. When a man is converted he's in the kingdom of God. You know what Jesus says?

Mr. W.—He says, "Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God,"* and of course, we understand that when he is born again he has entered the kingdom of God.

Mrs. W.—Can you tell me what the kingdom of God is?

Mr. W.—I don't know that I can: I've often heard our preachers explain it but now it escapes my mind.

Mrs. W.—Open your Bible to the fourteenth chapter of Romans and read Romans 14:17.

Mr. W.—Romans—let—me see—is that book in the Old Bible?

Mrs. W. (turning to her Bible, with which she has recently become better acquainted)—No, James, it's in the New Testament. Here it is, read it from my Bible.

Mr. W.—"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."*

Mrs. W.—It's peace and joy as well as righteousness. If you no more experience the peace and joy, you have also lost the righteousness. But after conversion there is yet an evil element. This is cleansed away in sanctification as a second work of grace, which I desire to talk to you about tomorrow, but now I must retire. Good night.

01.09. Conversation 09

Conversation 9

Mrs. Wiseman (next morning)—Since it's such a rainy morning it's a good time for us to talk of the things that pertain to the life to come. I have peace and joy in my soul. I know that my sins are all forgiven and that I'm God's child, but I'm not sanctified.

Mr. Wiseman—Well, I am; I was sanctified when I was converted.

Mrs. W.—What did conversion do for you?

Mr. W.—My sins were forgiven, and my heart was changed. I was made a new creature; old things passed away, and all things became new.

Mrs. W.—That was very good; that is just what Jesus has done for me, and now I'm living free from sin. If I were to commit sin, I wouldn't profess to be a Christian until I had repented and found pardon for the same. O Husband, you say you're a Christian and you even say you're sanctified, although I never knew before that you made any such profession; but yet you say you sin more or less. The Bible says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."* but I'm conscious of an evil in my heart. I want to be sanctified. What do you think sanctification is, James, and what did it do for you?

Mr. W.—Sanctification is a setting apart.

Mrs. W.—To whom and for what purpose have you set yourself apart?

Mr. W.—I set myself apart to God for His use and service forty years ago when I became a Christian.

Mrs. W.—And yet you say you sin every day. You ask God to forgive your sins every time you pray. Are you being used of God? Are you serving Him when you sin? Sanctification of the Old Testament was the setting apart for sacred use. That which is set apart was used for the purpose for which is set apart and nothing more. In the Jewish economy they received forgiveness of sins, but they were not born again. They did set themselves apart to God, but they did not receive the new life that we receive when we become Christians. In this Holy Spirit dispensation when our sins are forgiven, we are also born again, and then when we set ourselves apart to God, for His service, we're made perfectly holy in our very natures.

Mr. W.—I don't believe in two works of grace. I got it all at once. I don't believe the Lord will do things by halves.

Mrs. W.—No, the Lord doesn't do a half work. If he did a half work when he forgave us our sins and then did another half work when he sanctified us, that would be but one work. The plan of salvation doesn't consist in two half works of grace, but in two whole works.

Mr. W.—I don't see why God has to take two hitches at us to get us out of the mire.

Mrs. W.—I wouldn't use such an expression, James. The work of God is too holy and sacred. I'm sure God has a right to form just such a plan to redeem man as pleases Him.

Mr. W.—I don't think He has any set plan. If one believes he gets it all at once, then he gets it that way, and if another believes he gets it by two works, then he gets it by two works. It's just as a man believes.

Mrs. W.—God has always proceeded in all His works according to an established law. His plan is established. He has but one plan, one way to redeem man. He doesn't save one to the uttermost in one way and another in another way. In the very nature of things He can't give us the experience of the new birth and sanctification at the same time.

Mr. W.—Well, then, I don't understand the nature of things, and I'm willing to become your pupil and have you teach me the philosophy of this thing, if the tuition is not too high.

Mrs. W.—Freely I have received and freely I give. God can never effect a change in man's heart without a preparation for the change. God can never forgive a man's sins unless the man repents. He must be sorry for his sins; his heart must be touched; the fallow ground must be broken up. God does not and cannot forgive a man except of what he repents. He must repent of all his sins before he receives forgiveness. If a man repents of all but one of his sins and won't repent of that one, he will not receive forgiveness of any; but if he repents of all, then he receives forgiveness of all. Now a sinner repents only of the sins he has committed. He can't repent of anything more, for he's not guilty of anything more. The evil that is in the heart of all of us in our childhood is not something for which we can repent; but we do repent of all the sins we have committed, and God forgives them all. Then we are as innocent and guiltless as a child. We are happy because we are innocent.

Mr. W.—It was just that way with me when I was converted. I repented of all my sins just as you say, and they were all forgiven. I was happy. I loved God. It was the happiest day of my life and many times now I am made to weep when I think of those happy days. They were blessed days. But I didn't keep such a free, happy innocence very long. I have doubts and fears, ups and downs, and a sense of guilt, so that I'm not as happy as the day Jesus washed my sins away.

Mrs. W.—I don't doubt that you were converted; and if you had had the teachings I'm now getting, you would have lived free from sin, gone on into the second grace, and been a happy man all these many years. But as you say, you've been committing sin more or less all this time, and there can't be innocence where there is transgression.

Mr. W.—You claim, then, that after sins are forgiven and one is born of the Spirit, there is yet an evil in the heart?

Mrs. W.—Such is very plainly taught in the Bible, both by precept and example. It has also been taught by many reformers since Bible times. John and Charles Wesley and many others in their day taught justification by faith and sanctification as a work subsequent. The apostles were born of the Spirit before Pentecost, but they yet had an evil principle in their hearts. They had power to do some things before Pentecost; they believed in Jesus and were born of God, yet they strove to be the greatest, they envied one another, and they greatly lacked boldness. At Pentecost they were

sanctified. The evil was cleansed out of their hearts, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost. Then they preached with great boldness. Power was given unto them, and they did many wonderful things in Jesus' name. That's the experience I need and must have. My sins are all forgiven; I'm born of God; but there is an evil nature within me, which I want cleansed away that I may love Jesus with all my heart and dwell in the blessed fullness.

Mr. W.—Deacon Brown and I were talking a few days ago about sanctification, and he said that he believed we grew into sanctification. He says that after we're converted, then we're to grow in grace, and that finally we'll become sanctified.

Mrs. W.—Does Deacon Brown profess to be sanctified?

Mr. W.—No, he said he was not sanctified.

Mrs. W.—When was he converted? Haven't I heard him testify of his conversion back in the great revival of the sixties?

Mr. W.—Yes, he was converted nearly fifty years ago.

Mrs. W.—So, he's been converted nearly fifty years and hasn't grown into sanctification yet! How much longer does he expect it will take him? What progress has he made? Maybe he's like you—he looks back to the day of his conversion as the happiest and best day of his life.

Mr. W.—I know he does, for he told me he'd give anything if he could just be as happy as he was when converted. Tears came into his eyes as he talked of the good revivals and the blessed times they had in those days. He spoke of how common and humble the ministers were then. But he said a great change had come.

Mrs. W.—Thank God! I'm just as happy today as they were in those days, and these ministers who are here preaching are just as humble and common as the ministers back in the times Mr. Brown speaks about. But I must now see about dinner. If it still rains this afternoon, I will show you by the Bible that sanctification is a cleansing and not a growth.

Mr. W. (talking to himself)—I'm sure that woman has something I haven't. She makes me feel she is right, but I'm not going to give in. Just think what my pastor and brethren would think of me! I won't give in!

01.10. Conversation 10

Conversation 10

Mrs. Wiseman (after dinner)—The rain still continues and so we have an opportunity to finish our talk upon the subject of sanctification. I was to prove to you that sanctification is not attained by growth. Open your Bible to Ephesians, fifth chapter, and read the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses.

Mr. Wiseman—"Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word."* What is the church?

Mrs. W.—The church is God's saved people. When a man is born again, he's in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God and the church of God are one and the same thing. A church of regenerated people need to be sanctified, and this is done by a washing, a cleansing. The evil nature that's in the heart of every child and that causes it to so naturally go into the ways of sin, is cleansed away in sanctification. There are certain chemicals that remove coloring-matter from cloth, leaving it white. The blood of Jesus will cleanse the evil from our very nature and make us white. David said, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."* It is not a growth that makes us white; it's a cleansing. You may read John 15:2.

Mr. W.—"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Mrs. W.—You'll notice He's speaking of a branch in Him. It's not a sinner, but a Christian. The fruit-bearing branch, which means a converted person, is to be purged, that is, sanctified, that it may bring forth more fruit. Here again we read that sanctification is a purging. Sanctification changes our natures. The evil nature is taken away, and we, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, are made partakers of the divine nature.

Mr. W.—Is a regenerated man a saved man?

Mrs. W.—Certainly.

Mr. W.—Suppose he never heard such a doctrine as sanctification and never professed such an experience—if he were to die, would he go to heaven? What do your preachers say about this?

Mrs. W.—The preacher said last night that all who died in a justified state would go to heaven.

Mr. W.—Why, then, do we need to be sanctified?

Mrs. W.—That we may keep justified; and not that only, but that we may be more useful to God.

Mr. W.—I heard a holiness preacher say that a man wasn't saved until sanctified. He said that sanctification was the salting or preserving grace.

Mrs. W.—Sanctification is the preserving grace; that is true. It cleanses the heart, making it pure, and keeps it in that state of purity. But the justified man is a saved man.

Mr. W.—I see, but do you mean to say that a sanctified person will never sin again?

Mrs. W.—No, sir, I don't mean to say so much as that. He may sin, but it is the grace wherein he can stand and have dominion over sin if he will. He is full of power and might by the Spirit of God. In a justified (but unsanctified) state he is likely to be overcome, but in a sanctified experience he can live a pure life naturally. If he sins, it is because he becomes negligent and drifts away from God.

Mr. W.—One of our pastors used to teach that we are sanctified in the hour of death and that none can be sanctified until that hour.

Mrs. W.—But what say the Scriptures? Please read Acts 26:18.

Mr. W.—“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

Mrs. W.—It is by faith in Jesus that we are sanctified. and not by death.

Mr. W.—I understand what you say about sanctification, but—

Mrs. W.—Let me explain further. Sanctification is an experience obtainable in this life; in fact, it is the real true Christian life. A regenerated person is a Christian, yet no one is supposed to tarry long in a justified relation to God, but to go on to perfection.

Mr. W.—What do we need to do that we may be sanctified, and what do we get saved from?

Mrs. W.—We have nothing to do but to present our bodies a living sacrifice—simply to dedicate ourselves to God for cleansing and for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, which are received by faith. This cleanses us from the inherited depravity, and we're sanctified wholly.

Mr. W.—Does a sanctified person ever get angry?

Mrs. W.—His heart is pure, and out of the heart are the issues of life; consequently, his life will be pure. No, a sanctified person never gets angry; that is, in a sinful, carnal sense.

Mr. W.—But you know some things are very provoking in their nature. Now yesterday when I was trying to get the pig back into the pen, just as I got him up to the gate the dog ran out and scared him, and away he went down the road. Now, you don't expect one to keep sweet under such trying circumstances as that, do you?

Mrs. W.—I'm not yet sanctified, but the experience, I understand, will keep one calm amid the most trying circumstances: and oh, my very soul is longing for just such an experience. Today when Mary's baby turned the ink over on the stand cover, I felt a sense of selfish provocation in my heart, but the grace of God was sufficient to keep me from uttering a word. But I do long to have the carnal element cleansed from my soul.

Mr. W.—I don't believe in such nonsense. We can never have such an experience in this world. There's no man or woman who doesn't get mad and speak angrily. I don't profess more than I have.

Mrs. W.—I expect to gain the experience, and I'm sure God will help me to live it before you. But it's time for supper. The rain is over and I desire to go to the meeting tonight. Won't you go with me? I do wish you would.

Mr. W.—Well, I'm not going, and you needn't ask me. I can find a better way to employ my time.

Mrs. W.—I'm sorry to hear you talk so. I have found such peace in my soul. Those meetings are dear to me. I shall pray for you.

Mr. W.—Better look to yourself, and I will do the same.

01.11. Conversation 11

Conversation 11

Mrs. Wiseman (after the evening meeting)—I have good news to tell you tonight, dear. The very God of peace sanctifies me wholly. My soul is as pure as heaven. I'm conscious of a sweet, internal clearness and purity. Just as heaven is, so is my soul.

Mr. Wiseman—But where are your wings?

Mrs. W.—They are in my soul, and I have a perfect consciousness of deliverance from inherited depravity.

Mr. W.—Why would the Lord keep you here in this world of sin if you had such an experience?

Mrs. W.—For the good of others. The Bible says, "Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."* I'm ready to lay aside this earthly tabernacle this night and go to Him whom my soul loves, but for me to abide in the flesh may, be more needful for you.

Mr. W.—I'll tell you, wife, I'm all right. You insinuate now and then that I'm not a Christian, but I tell you I am. Now, if you want to go with these people you may go, but I shall go my way, and if you'll not interfere with me I shall be very grateful to you. Those preachers have you excited. You'll soon come to your senses and settle down to the common, ordinary life of men.

Mrs. W.—By the help of my God I'll not settle down to a life of more or less sin. I expect to live a holy life and keep Jesus reigning in me. I'm glad you are willing for me to do as I wish. I've been wanting to tell you for several days that I'm going to be baptized.

Mr. W.—To be baptized! Why, woman, you've been baptized.

Mrs. W.—When was I baptized?

Mr. W.—You were baptized by Bishop Long in the old Bethel church when only a little girl, so the records say, and I have heard your mother say so many a time. Surely you're not going to ignore the faith of your mother and cast a reflection on her religion. You'll bring down her gray hairs in sorrow.

Mrs. W.—I have a tender regard and great love and respect for my mother, and should be sorry to cause her any grief in her old days; but she's only human and may have erred, as many others have. My mother knew no better. Her teachers taught her that she should have her children baptized, but the Bible teaches no such thing.

Mr. W.—Why, Jesus says plainly, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

Mrs. W.—But please tell me where and how this refers to baptism; I fail to see that it does. Please tell me what benefits are bestowed upon a child by baptism.

Mr. W.—It places the parents under greater responsibility for the care and training of the child.

Mrs. W.—It cannot possibly. Every parent should feel the greatest possible responsibility for the training of their child from the moment it is born. I'll ask you to give me a command from the New Testament to baptize infants, or one single instance where infant baptism was practiced, or even one allusion to it.

Mr. W.—I don't know that there is any clear and express command, but the rite has been practiced for so long that we feel that it has become an obligation.

Mrs. W.—The long practice of error doesn't make it right. Ten thousand years of constant practice by the most conscientious people will not convert an error into truth.

Mr. W.—The Bible speaks of Lydia and her household being baptized and this is as much as to say that her children were baptized.

Mrs. W.—She may have had no children. Let us examine the record of the instance. In Acts 16:14-15, we read of her. She was a tradeswoman—a seller of purple. Her home was in the city of Thyatira. She was at Philippi, where she had gone to sell purple, when she heard the gospel. Philippi is three hundred miles from Thyatira. If she had small children she must have taken them with her, which is not at all probable. Her household consisted, no doubt, of servants or children old enough to aid her in the selling of the purple.

Mr. W.—It seems you'll find some way to prove your point, but I'll give you another instance in which you'll have to admit infants were baptized. The Bible says the jailer and all his children, from the youngest to the oldest, were baptized.

Mrs. W.—Why, Husband! I'm greatly surprised at you. There's nothing like that said about the baptism of the Philippian jailer.

Mr. W.—I heard our pastor say so only a few days ago. He also said that Paul baptized whole families—the father and mother and children.

Mrs. W.—There's always one way to prove a statement. Let's see what the Bible says. Acts 16:33 says, "And was baptized, he and all his."* Now, this is all that's said about those who were baptized—just "he and all his." I don't know whether it was his wife, his children, or his servants, or all of these. The language doesn't imply that he had young children. Let's see what the next verse says—"And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."** Not only he, but all his house, were capable of believing in God. Surely, then, there were no infants in the household.

Mr. W.—Well, be that as it may, I know infants should be baptized.

Mrs. W.—How do you know they should? Can you give me any text in the Bible that says they should?

Mr. W.—I can't call any to mind just now.

Mrs. W.—Tell me what good it does. Does it make them any better?

Mr. W.—I don't think it does—it has never seemed to have much effect on ours.

Mrs. W.—It doesn't take them to heaven; it doesn't make them any better—it does no good in any way.

Mr. W.—Well, if it doesn't do any good, of course it can do no harm.

Mrs. W.—Yes, but it does do harm.

Mr. W.—I don't see wherein it can do any harm.

Mrs. W.—It does harm because it deprives a Christian of being Scripturally baptized. You were baptized when an infant. Later in life you say you were converted.

Mr. W.—I was.

Mrs. W.—Then was the time when you should have been baptized. “Repent, and be baptized”^{**} is the Bible way. Your infant baptism, which is no baptism at all, prevented you from being baptized after your conversion, and consequently you've never been baptized.

Mr. W.—You're a very bold-spoken woman. My father and mother had me baptized when I was a child, and I'm sure it's good enough for me.

Mrs. W.—I'll give you another way in which infant baptism does harm. In the very performance of the act the minister declares what is false. He says, “I baptize thee,” and does nothing of the kind. Some people even say it regenerates the child. Christ never taught nor practiced infant baptism. He commissioned his disciples to go preach His Word, that those who believed and were baptized should be saved. Only believers were to be baptized.

Mr. W.—The parents of children in the Old Testament times had their children circumcised, and it seems to me that having ours baptized is something like that.

Mrs. W.—In the old dispensation the children were Jews because their parents were; but the children are not Christians now because their parents are. If they were, it would be Scriptural to baptize them as soon as they are born. The apostle Paul tells us plainly that the circumcision of the Old Testament was typical of the regeneration of the heart. It is the act of the Spirit of God that separates from the world. But it's growing late, and we'd better conclude our talk on this subject tomorrow, so I'll say good night.

Mr. W.—Just a moment. Our pastor said that Paul baptized children, which of course you can not deny; but you'd like to get off without saying anything about it.

Mrs. W.—I remember your speaking about that before, but it escaped my mind. Now, I ask you to find one place in all the history of Paul where he baptized any children.

Mr. W.—I read not long ago where Paul baptized the children of Stephen.

Mrs. W.—I certainly would advise you, my dear, to make no boast of your Scriptural knowledge. Let me read you what the Bible says—“And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.”^{**} Nothing is said about children. It may have been servants

or children old enough to be saved. Let me read to you again. Paul says, “Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.”* Those of Stephanas’ household were old enough to minister to saints; consequently, there were no infants in it.

Mr. W.—It’s getting late, so we had better go to bed. Good night.

01.12. Conversation 12

Conversation 12

Mrs. Wiseman (next morning)—Well, James, you've had time to study our talk last night, and I suppose you are ready for me to tell you I'm going to be baptized.

Mr. Wiseman—No! I'm very much surprised, Sarah, that you're going to be baptized again. That's casting a reproach and insult on the rites practiced by our church. It's a pity those preachers ever came to this town, but Satan is doing all he can to destroy the kingdom of God.

Mrs. W.—I was baptized when an infant, which is altogether unscriptural, as I proved to you last night; and, besides, I was only sprinkled, and that is also unscriptural. Immersion is the only true mode of Christian baptism.

Mr. W.—What! You don't, mean to say you're going to be immersed? You're certainly losing your mind!

Mrs. W.—My one difficulty heretofore was the same as that of many others who have too much of their own minds. If they'd submit more to the mind of Christ and be guided by him, there wouldn't be so much error practiced.

Mr. W.—Tell me, please, where you find immersion taught for baptism in the Bible.

Mrs. W.—I'll do so with great pleasure; but before I do, let me ask you a question.

Mr. W.—Very well, I'm prepared to answer any question on this subject.

Mrs. W.—What is the true signification of baptism?

Mr. W.—Some teach that it's a saving ordinance, but I don't think so. What do you think?

Mrs. W.—No question, for the moment, as to what I think about it. Give me a text from the Bible which proves it isn't a saving ordinance.

Mr. W.—Well, I know our church doesn't believe it to be a saving ordinance, and I don't believe it either. What do your preachers say about it?

Mrs. W.—Let me read you a few texts. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* What do you think of that?

Mr. W.—Do you believe baptism is a saving ordinance?

Mrs. W.—Let me read you another text. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us."* What answer can you give to this?

Mr. W.—I have always been satisfied with my baptism and the way our church teaches it. But tell me, do your preachers teach baptism to be a saving ordinance?

Mrs. W.—Let me read you one more text—“And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*

Mr. W.—I don’t think I ever read that text before. Can you tell me what it means, and do you believe that baptism, sprinkling or immersion, does really wash away our sins?

Mrs. W.—No, I don’t believe it does, and I’ll tell you why. John says, “Unto him who has washed us from our sins in his own blood.”* Mr. W.—The Bible is a strange book. I tell you it isn’t for us common people to understand.

Mrs. W.—It’s not for any one to understand except by the Spirit of God; but the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth, so that all may know, from the least to the greatest. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse from sin. He’s the cleansing Fountain. Salvation is not in water, but in Jesus.

Mr. W.—Well, now we agree, but those texts you read puzzle me.

Mrs. W.—I read again that baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. Now, if you’ll listen, I’ll tell you what baptism signifies.

Mr. W.—I’ll certainly give the best of attention.

Mrs. W.—We, as sinners, in order to get saved must die to sin, self, and the world; we must sever our affections from all. All must be forgiven. Within us there must be a death. Without this there can be no spiritual, heavenly life. We separate ourselves from the world. Of course the world of bystanders cannot see that death has taken place in our inner being. They can’t see the soul washed from sin by the blood of Jesus; they can’t see the soul quickened into life by the Spirit of God. This is all done by the Spirit and blood far out of sight of the natural sense of seeing. But Jesus has instituted an ordinance in his church for us who are saved by grace, to practice openly so all can see. This ordinance outwardly represents what has been done inwardly. We experience a death and a resurrection in our hearts. Now, baptism is used to represent this. We’re buried in water (not a little sprinkled on), which testifies of a death, and then we’re raised up out of the watery grave, which testifies of the resurrection life in the soul. Baptism is a figurative death and resurrection, or, in other words, a figurative salvation. In 1 Peter from which I read to you, it says, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.”* In Mark 16:16 it’s the believing in Jesus that saves from sin, and the baptism that saves in a figure. In Acts 22:16 it’s the washing away of our sins in a figure, by water. There’s a real salvation from sin through faith in the blood, and there’s a figurative salvation, or an outward work, that all can see, which represents an inward work that the world cannot see.

Mr. W.—That’s all very beautiful except the immersion. I don’t believe in immersion. You said you would prove by the Bible that immersion is the mode of baptism.

Mrs. W.—The very signification of the ordinance proves it to be a burial. John the Baptist baptized in Jordan, and Jesus was baptized in Jordan. The Ethiopian went down into the water, and Philip baptized him there in the water. Just to have a little water sprinkled on our heads in a meeting house doesn’t look like being baptized in the manner of our Savior, who is our example.

Mr. W.—I’ve always been taught that any mode would do if you believed that way.

Mrs. W.—But it's not as we believe. We must do what Jesus says and the way he says, or the true meaning will not be expressed. Sprinkling a little water on the head never conveys to the minds of the audience anything of a death and resurrection. The word baptizo is used many times in the New Testament, and is the only word used to express baptism. The word louo, the preacher said last night, is used six times, and means to wash the body. The word nipto, he said is used seventeen times and means to wash the hands, face, and feet. Rantizo is found four times, and means to sprinkle, but is never used in connection with baptism. Ekko means to pour; katharizo means to purify. But those are not used to express baptism.

Mr. W.—Well, I'm satisfied with my baptism. I'm not expecting some new preacher to change my mind.

Mrs. W.—If you had only heard the scriptures he read on the subject last night, it surely would have convinced you, but I haven't time to tell you all of them and give you the explanation. However, they have a little book, "Christian Baptism," on this ordinance, which they sell for fifty cents, and it thoroughly explains the doctrine. If you'll give me the money I'll get one.

Mr. W.—Not much! I wouldn't have it in my house. I'm not as near converted to the saints as you think.

Mrs. W.—Well, it's almost meeting time again, and I wouldn't miss the sermon for a great deal, so I must get ready. Can I not prevail upon you to go with me tonight?

Mr. W.—No, indeed. We have our class tonight. So go your way, and I'll go mine.

Mrs. W.—There are better things than this for us; we ought to go the Bible way.

Mr. W.—You're the cause of all the division—but I don't want to hear any more tonight.

01.13. Conversation 13

Conversation 13

Mrs. Wiseman (next day)—How glad I would be, James, if you enjoyed these meetings as I do. Oh, how sweet the Word of God is to my soul! I can hardly wait for the meeting time to come. But now it will soon be time to go. I hope you'll have a good time at home. I stepped over to Sister's Johnson's a few minutes since. Did you know she received the forgiveness of her sins the other evening?

Mr. Wiseman—Yes, I heard her husband talking about what a great change there'd been in his wife. He seems to be glad she has joined these people. I think he's a very foolish man, and I told him so.

Mrs. W.—You shouldn't discourage him. He requested prayer for himself in the meeting last night. I hope he'll get saved tonight. Sister Johnson bought one of those books on the ordinances, and she said I could read it first if I wished. I brought it here with me. I thought I'd tell you so you would know I didn't buy it. I don't want to do anything contrary to your wishes.

Mr. W.—Thank you. I'm very glad you have such a regard for my wishes.

Mrs. W.—It's now time that I was off to the meeting. I trust you'll have a good time at home. Good-bye until I get back. Sit up for me.

Mr. W. (talking to himself)—I feel that my doctrines aren't worth much. I don't know what to do. That woman is enjoying something I don't have. I wish I did; but I'll not let her know it; I'm too much of a man to yield my position. But I'll see if I can find that book she spoke about, and if I can, I'll read it while she's at meeting. Here it is. (He reads).

Well, I must say I never read anything like this. It gives Bible proof for every statement. I can't deny it, however much I would like to do so; but I'll not let my wife know I've read it. But it's the clearest, plainest, and most convincing work on baptism I ever read. I didn't know there was so much to be said in favor of immersion. However, I'll not yield my position, no matter how much Bible they give; but if wife wants to be immersed, I'll not object, although I had intended to do so. I wish our preacher could read this book. I believe he's coming up the walk now.

Come in; glad to see you, Brother Kent. I was just thinking about you.

Mr. Kent—And what was the nature of your thoughts, Brother Wiseman? I thought I'd step over for a few moments to learn how you're getting along with those saints. I hear your wife's going to be baptized. This reproaches her parents' faith and our beloved church. Can you prevent this in some way?

Mr. W.—You don't know my wife, Brother Kent. When she's convinced that God wants her to do a thing, there's not enough men in town to prevent her.

Mr. Kent—She's awfully headstrong, I know.

Mr. W.—It's not just that. She's kind to me; she's so submissive in every way to me; she's devoted and so good, and lives such a pure life that I can find no fault. That's what troubles me. If she would do something wrong so I could condemn her, then I would have gained quite an advantage; but she lives right. She's subject to me in everything but her religion. She is decided to go the way she believes God wants her.

Mr. K.—But can't you convince her by the Bible that God doesn't want her to be baptized?

Mr. W.—I shall be pleased to have you undertake that; I've been undertaking it, and I come out defeated every time. I tell you those saints know more Bible than any people I ever saw. Their literature is nearly all Bible. And they tell me that those preachers who are here now don't take just one text and no more, as our preachers do, but read texts as they go along and prove from the Bible that what they say is true.

Mr. K.—You're not weakening are you, and beginning to lean that way?

Mr. W.—No, sir; I'm not, and I won't: but I get puzzled. I don't know how to meet all my wife's arguments, and the way she lives troubles me. I sometimes think I'm no Christian. If we must live like her to be a Christian, I know I'm not one.

Mr. K.—You're too thin-skinned and too much of a baby. I wouldn't let a woman unchristianize me: I'd be more of a man than that. Think how long you've been a member of our church and the great good you've done! Now, after all this you're not going to say you're not a Christian.

Mr. W.—No, sir; I'm not, but I get awfully troubled. Their literature, too, gives more Bible and is simpler and plainer reading than anything else I've ever seen. Did you ever read any of it?

Mr. K.—Now, I tell you, Brother Wiseman, I see where your trouble is. If you don't stop reading that stuff, you'll very soon be as crazy as your wife. Why don't you do as I do? Their paper comes into my home—your wife sends it, I suppose—and I put them into the stove just as fast as they come, and I advise you to do the same.

Mr. W.—I do sometimes think I will, and I tell my wife so; but when I go to do it, there's something that won't let me. I fully believe it's my wife's prayers. Now here's a book. I didn't intend to have it in my home; but here it is, and I've been reading it all evening. I never read anything like it. It's on baptism. I wish you'd read it.

Mr. K.—No, indeed; I won't read it. I know what our theologies teach. I'm not coming down to where I have to go to such people for knowledge. And I tell you, you need to be more of a man; have more backbone!

Mr. W.—Oh, I'm not going to give up or give in; I'm going to stand by my profession and the church of my parents. But there's a text or two I'd like to have you explain to me if you will.

Mr. K.—Well, I don't believe much in talking on the Bible. It's such a book of mysteries that no one can understand it—at least, none but the very best educated.

Mr. W.—Yes, but I remember reading where it says the world by wisdom knows not God, and that he hides spiritual things from the wise and reveals them unto babes. But here is one text that I do want you to give me some light on: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”* It seems from this text that we need to believe before we’re baptized, and I was baptized when only an infant, so of course I didn’t believe.

Mr. K.—Well, our higher critics say that the latter part of this chapter, or from verse nine on, is not found at all in the original manuscripts; therefore it doesn’t belong in the Bible at all.

Mr. W.—Well, I’m glad of that, for it helps me some. But I read again, in the eighth chapter of Acts and the twelfth verse: “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”* Here comes the believing again before the baptizing. I believe our church is right, and I’m going to stand by her, live or die, sink or swim, but I’m troubled sometimes, and I can’t help it. Of course, I don’t want to miss heaven.

Mr. K.—I warn you against those saints. Listen to their deceptive doctrine, and you will miss heaven.

Mr. K.—It’s the Bible that I want explained. You know Peter told the people when they asked what they should do, to repent and be baptized. Here repentance precedes baptism. I didn’t repent, so there I’m puzzled again.

Mr. K.—You’re puzzling yourself about too many things. Believe our theologies. They’re written by men who know the Greek. The words of Peter were used back in the days of the establishing of the church and were all right then; but we don’t need to do that now. This is an age of progress. Time has changed the order of things.

I think I hear your wife coming from meeting. I’ll go out this back door and across the lot; it’s my nearest way home. Good night, Brother Wiseman, keep your wits.

Mr. W.—Good night. Brother Kent, come again. You have strengthened me very much.

Mrs. W. (coming in)—I’m back again, dear, and oh, such a glorious time we had! Have you had a pleasant evening? You look worried. I thought I heard you talking to someone as I was coming up the steps.

Mr. W.—It may have been the dog.

Mrs. W.—I would love to tell you about the meeting, but it’s late and you look so tired. Be of good cheer. I’m as happy as I can be. Good night. I’ll tell you about the meeting tomorrow, the Lord willing.

01.14. Conversation 14

Conversation 14

Mrs. Wiseman (next morning)—Well, I only wish, dear, that I could tell you how happy I am this morning. The peace of God is filling my soul. Oh! I would that all people were as happy as I. But you're looking worried or troubled. What's the matter? Didn't you rest well last night?

Mr. Wiseman—I don't know that I have any trouble particularly. I wouldn't advise you to have uneasiness about me; I'll come out all right.

Mrs. W.—There's only one way for us to come out all right, and that is by giving up all to Jesus and following where He leads.

Mr. W.—I did that years ago, but I see you don't have much confidence in my religion. I'm going to go my way anyhow.

Mrs. W.—Do you feel perfectly assured that you're a Christian?

Mr. W.—I certainly do; I've belonged to a church for forty years.

Mrs. W.—But you'll admit that not all are Christians who belong to church.

Mr. W.—Oh, I know that some church-members are not Christians.

Mrs. W.—How do you know you're not among that class?

Mr. W.—I know I've passed from death unto life because I love the brethren.

Mrs. W.—You don't love Mr. Smith.

Mr. W.—Yes, but you know how he treated me. He beat me out of seven dollars.

Mrs. W.—Yes, but he belongs to the same church with you, and you must love him.

Mr. W.—Well, I don't.

Mrs. W.—What assurance have you that you are a Christian then? You don't love your brother.

Mr. W.—I love God, I know.

Mrs. W.—But, dear, the Bible says if a man loves God he will keep His word.

Mr. W.—I do keep His word.

Mrs. W.—The Bible says love your brother, and you hate Mr. Smith.

Mr. W.—He's no brother; he's an enemy.

Mrs. W.—The Bible says to love your enemies.

Mr. W.—Where does the Bible say any such thing?

Mrs. W.—Open your Bible to Matthew 5:44 : “But I say unto you, love our enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.” You say Mr. Smith used you despitefully?

Mr. W.—He certainly did. You know what he did.

Mrs. W.—The Bible says to love your brother and to pray for those who despitefully use you. Have you prayed for Mr. Smith?

Mr. W.—Indeed, I haven't.

Mrs. W.—“If a man love me,” Jesus says, “he will keep my words.”* Here is certain proof that you don't love God. If Mr. Smith was hungry, would you give him something to eat?

Mr. W.—Would I? He would starve before I would give him anything.

Mrs. W.—The Bible says, “If thine enemy hunger, feed him.”* But you say you'll not do that.

Mr. W.—No; I will not.

Mrs. W.—Jesus says, “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* Why do you profess to be a Christian and not do what Jesus says?

Mr. W.—I don't care whether I make a profession or not. You have been trying to get me to backslide ever since those preachers came to town. I don't see where there is any Christianity in that.

Mrs. W.—You can see, my dear, that I have only been giving you the Word of God. I want you to be right.

Mr. W.—You have about put out all the light I had.

Mrs. W.—You may be mistaken in that. It may be like Sam Jones one time said.

Mr. W.—How was that?

Mrs. W.—The people accused Mr. Jones of putting their lights out, and he told them, no, he was only taking the bushel off that they might see that their lights were already out.

Mr. W.—Well, I'm not going to love Mr. Smith. I would backslide before I would love such a man as he.

Mrs. W.—I want to read you another text.

Mr. W.—I don't know what you'd do if it wasn't for the Bible—and this new literature of yours.

Mrs. W.—I don't know either. But listen a moment. “But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.”*

Mr. W.—Well, now, I guess there's not much of the Bible I don't keep. I'm sure no one obeys it all.

Mrs. W.—I wouldn't be so sure. As for me, I have set out to obey every word. Speaking of obeying every word suggests something to my mind entirely different from what we're talking about. In your present state of mind, though, I almost question whether I ought to speak of it.

Mr. W.—I told you I would not change my feeling toward Smith. He needs to be taught a lesson. I'm not a backslider because I don't love him. But what was that different thing that came into your mind about obeying every word of the Bible?

Mrs. W.—It's about a New Testament ordinance we've never observed. Did you ever read the thirteenth chapter of John? I have it, and am sure we ought to obey what Jesus taught.

Mr. W.—Of course I have, but I don't remember just what it is.

Mrs. W.—It tells of Jesus' washing the feet of the disciples.

Mr. W.—Oh, yes; He was teaching them a lesson of humility.

Mrs. W.—But He said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."*

Mr. W.—You don't expect to practice such a thing, do you?

Mrs. W.—Jesus says, "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."* I told you I had set out to do the whole Word of God.

Mr. W.—Do those preachers teach such a doctrine?

Mrs. W.—I think likely they do. They said they were here to preach and practice all the Bible, yet I haven't heard them say anything about it.

Mr. W.—Do the saints believe and practice feet washing?

Mrs. W.—I think they do. I received a letter not long ago from Cousin Jane in which she said they had an ordinance meeting at their place, and she spoke of what a blessing she received while washing her sister's feet.

Mr. W.—I don't know what such an ordinance could signify.

Mrs. W.—It expresses outwardly our true attitude toward each other. "By love serve one another,"* the good Book says. We're all servants to one another. That's the true experience in our hearts; that's the way we feel. There is, perhaps no more menial service than washing the feet of another, and Jesus has taken this to express outwardly the true feeling of our heart toward each other. There's nothing we're above doing that we might be a help to our fellow man. I think it's beautiful.

Mr. W.—Well, I don't know. I guess it's all right if people want to do it.

Mrs. W.—Did you know that Cousin Jane's husband had gotten saved?

Mr. W.—Gotten saved! What do you mean? He's been a Christian as long as I have; we joined at the same time.

Mrs. W.—Pardon me, dear, but he's been about such a one as you and I have been. By reading the saints' literature and by the life Cousin Jane has lived, he has been brought to see that he had nothing but a cold, dead profession. He repented of his sins; gave up all, and God has forgiven

him, and now he's a happy man. Let me read you a few lines he enclosed in Cousin Jane's letter:

"I am glad to tell you I am saved. I fought the truth for a long time. Even after I saw it was the truth, the enemy of my soul did not want me to get saved. I was too proud. This was such a humble way I did not want to take it. They all dressed so plain and were so unlike our popular churches, I found it hard indeed to humble myself and take this blessed Bible way. Thank God! He helped me, and now I am saved and happy. Praise the Lord! Our home is a happy home. There is no quarreling, no more harsh words—these are things of the past. Such will do for cold-hearted professors, but will not do for real Christians. Oh! I am so glad there is a better way to live! You remember how ugly I used to get when things did not go as I wanted them to go. James well remembers it, I am sure. Dear man, he wasn't any better than I. But God had mercy on me, and I pray He will show mercy to him. I hope he will get saved soon. I believe he will. You must have lots of patience with him. It is hard for one who has been under the teaching of a 'sin-you-must' religion so long, to see the truth at once; but like myself, he will see it by and by."

Cousin Jane has been saved for some time, and after all this time her husband has been being brought to the blessed light of the gospel.

Mr. W.—Yes—um. You'll please excuse me now; I have an engagement which I must meet. Good-bye.

Mrs. W.—Get home for an early dinner if you can, as we have an afternoon meeting today. Good-bye.

01.15. Conversation 15

Conversation 15

Mrs. Wiseman (at home after meeting)—This afternoon meeting was the very best meeting we have had. Oh, such wonderful truth!

Mr. Wiseman—What now? Haven't we had the Bible all the time?

Mrs. W.—We have had the Bible but it seems like a new book to me. The minister preached on the oneness of God's people, and I never heard such wonderful, beautiful truths. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

Mr. W.—We are one in spirit, but of course we all have our different beliefs and opinions. Each of us has a right to his own opinions.

Mrs. W.—The Holy Spirit is given to us to guide us into all truth. If all God's people had the Holy Spirit and were led by the Spirit he would guide them into the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Mr. W.—Do you believe that all Christians can be in one body and have perfect unity?

Mrs. W.—Yes, sir; I believe it with all my heart.

Mr. W.—Well, I'll admit that in all our former controversies you have gotten the best of the argument, but you certainly have taken the wrong side now, and I'll soon convince you.

Mrs. W.—If you give me the Word of God, you'll find me easy to convince.

Mr. W.—Men are so differently constituted that it never was intended for all people to believe alike; therefore the Lord has provided different ways for people to worship. If one church doesn't suit them, they can find one that does.

Mrs. W.—Your last remark is too true. People can find a church to suit them, no matter what they believe, but God never intended it so. He'll save man from his sins and give him the Holy Spirit, and then he is suited with the church that Jesus built. Give me one text that upholds division.

Mr. W.—Well, I can do that because I read it just yesterday. It was in Luke. I can find it in a moment. Here it is: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division."* Here Jesus says He came to give division.

Mrs. W.—You don't think that the division here spoken of has reference to the different denominations and that Jesus has given them to suit the different beliefs of the people, do you?

Mr. W.—Well, what else could it mean?

Mrs. W.—I'm really astonished at you. He has reference to the separation salvation makes from the world. There's division between the people of God and the world. If you'll read the next two

verses, you can plainly see.

Mr. W.—Well, I know it is utterly impossible for us all to see alike.

Mrs. W.—That may be truly said about unconverted people. Even after conversion there may for a time be differences in judgment or regarding certain Scriptures; but while there may be a lack in uniformity as to some Scripture teaching, there will always be unity of spirit and oneness in the body or church. The Spirit who brings unity also guides our minds in the study of the Scriptures until we all see and understand alike. There exists, then, in due time, uniformity as well as unity.

Mr. W.—Never! Never! That's impossible.

Mrs. W.—It looks so to those who have not the Spirit of God to illuminate their minds, but are following their own ways. Men don't treat other books as they do the Bible. They don't set up their opinions about the meaning of the sayings of other books, but take them as they read, and consequently they are believed alike universally. The Bible says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."* Why not every one believe it? It needs no (minions of men as to its meaning. Every man that has the Teacher in his own soul will believe it that way. We an all see alike.

Mr. W.—The apostle Paul and Barnabas were divided. They didn't see alike. Now, I guess you'll give in.

Mrs. W.—They didn't see alike in a certain matter; but was it pertaining to anything doctrinal? Barnabas desired to take Mark with them, and Paul thought best not to do so. It was not on any of the teachings of Jesus that they differed. When we hold to different doctrines and different ways in which to worship God, as much as to say, "You can go your way, and I'll go mine," then we're divided, and the apostle Paul condemns such division.

Mr. W.—Now, Sarah, I won't give up this matter so easily. It's true that the difficulty between Paul and Barnabas wasn't doctrinal and that your explanation of that matter is good, but wasn't the difficulty between Paul and Peter, which is mentioned in Galatians, second chapter, on a doctrinal matter?

Mrs. W.—Yes, James; it was. You'll remember that I said I would be easily convinced that divisions are good if you would show me from the Bible that they are necessary. You'll remember, too, that I believe unity may exist while for a time all do not agree on certain doctrines. In this instance the contention between Paul an Peter was quite sharp, but they didn't separate and establish independent companies of followers. Paul simply and clearly, as well as forcibly, explained the truth of his position, and sent his epistle to all the churches in Galatia. You might think at first that Peter was offended because Paul so widely published that he (Peter) was wrong on this point of doctrine. But Peter wasn't offended; nor did he try to get those into a company by themselves who believed as he did. He took a very different course. He also wrote a letter for the benefit of all the churches everywhere. In his letter he spoke of "our beloved brother Paul"* and certain things "hard to be understood,"* which things, he said, those who were unstable wrested and twisted, as they did other scriptures. So you see that Peter, against whom the trouble came, recommended Paul and his writings, and that, after all, this is an example of unity for us to follow. Sectarianism is certainly bad and unscriptural.

Mr. W.—You always have some way to get out; but we know there always have been divisions and there always will be. Our pastor admitted that divisions were evils, but said they were necessary evils.

Mrs. W.—He spoke the truth when he said they were evils, but not so when he said they were necessary evils.

Mr. W.—There needs to be different ways, so that all men can be reached. Those whom one church can not reach can be reached by another.

Mrs. W.—Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up... will draw all men unto me.”* We have to lift up Jesus only, and not some creed. Jesus is the only way. He prayed that we all might be one. Let me read you a few verses from the blessed Bible: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”* You say that divisions are needed in order that different people may be reached, but instead of reaching them the divisions are causing many to disbelieve in Jesus. If all the professed Christians were really Christians in the oneness of the Father and Son, what power they would be for Jesus! In unity there is strength.

Mr. W.—That looks very nice, I know, but you know that all Christians can’t worship together, because we can not possibly see alike.

Mrs. W.—You keep repeating this, and it does look that way to you, no doubt; but get saved, and you’ll see it differently. Let me read you the next verse: “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.”* You see the extent of the unity.

Mr. W.—But do you mean to say that we should all believe alike?

Mrs. W.—Let me read you what the Bible says: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing.”* But alas! the professed people of God are not doing that. One preacher is saying that sprinkling is the mode of baptism, another that it is immersion, another that three dips is the Bible way, and still another that there’s no water baptism at all. One says we must live without sin; another says we must sin more or less. One says there are two works of grace, another there are three, another there is but one, while another says there is no such thing as heart-felt religion. Oh, how shameful! It’s so dishonoring to God. The apostle beseeches them by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—Him who gave His life that all might be one—that they all speak the same thing.

Mr. W.—I never knew before that that was in the Bible—“all speak the same thing”—let me see your Bible.

Mrs. W.—Here’s yours; you can read it in your Bible.

Mr. W.—“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing.” Well, well, is it possible?

Mrs. W.—Read on.

Mr. W.—“And that there be no divisions among you.”

Mrs. W.—In the margin you will see it says “schisms.”

Mr. W.—What is meant by “schisms”?

Mrs. W.—It means parties or sects, caused by people believing different doctrines. But you haven't read it all yet.

Mr. W.—“But that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* Is it possible?

Mrs. W.—Yes, thank God! it's possible. But I must now attend to my household duties, and we'll talk more of this later.

Mr. W. (speaking to himself)—I never read such before. I thought sure I'd have no trouble in confounding her on that subject, but I couldn't think of anything that was solid and couldn't be overthrown. I hardly know what to do. I almost believe she's right, but how can I acknowledge it?

01.16. Conversation 16

Conversation 16

Mrs. Wiseman—Well, James, I've finished my work and am ready to continue our talk if you're not too busy.

Mr. Wiseman—I'm glad you have come in, Sarah; I've been reading your paper, and it speaks quite often about "this reformation." What is meant by this reformation?

Mrs. W.—This truth those preachers are preaching and that is being taught by the saints, is a reformation. There have been a number of reformations in the Christian world. You're well acquainted with the Lutheran reformation, and you're still better acquainted with the Wesleyan reformation. These were of God. In the Roman Catholic sect there was no light of God, except in a few hearts here and there. God gave Luther some light on His Word, and Luther lifted the standard of the Bible up to all the light he had.

Mr. W.—Yes; I understand that, but I'm waiting to know about "this reformation," as you call it.

Mrs. W.—That's what I'm going to tell you. Wesley was given more light of God's Word than Luther had, and he raised the gospel standard up to all the light he had: but he didn't have the full light of the gospel. You well know how that reformation has gone. They were once a plain, humble people, but now they're as worldly, proud, and fashionable as any people.

Mr. W.—It's useless for me to deny facts, but there are some good people among them.

Mrs. W.—Certainly there are, and now God is calling all those good people out, and not only out of the Methodist sect, but out of every other sect. There are some, no doubt, in every denomination who love God and are living the best they know, and God is calling them out. That's what is meant by the voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people."* It's to flee out of Babylon. I'm out. Praise God! I'm no longer under the bands and straps of man, but free to worship God according to the Bible.

Mr. W.—You say God is calling His people out of the different denominations. Is He going to call them into one big sect?

Mrs. W.—No, sir; not into one big sect, but into the church of God, which is not a sect.

Mr. W.—All the different denominations are the church of God.

Mrs. W.—In that you are mistaken. They're no part of the church of God.

Mr. W.—Well, I'll now acknowledge to you I had begun to believe pretty much all you had been teaching, and I had actually been thinking something of joining your new church, but I declare this is too much for me.

Mrs. W.—Well, I'll try to make it plain to you, the Lord helping me. In the first place, I'll say that I've no new church for you to join. If I had a church for you to join, or these preachers or any other man had a church that you could join, that would be a sect; but we have no church. God has a church, and he built it himself. Jesus said. "Upon this rock I will build my church."* Jesus built a church for Himself. It's His and I'm a member of it. Thank God!

Mr. W.—Well, tell me how you got in. How can you get into a thing you can't join?

Mrs. W.—How did our children get into our family?

Mr. W.—Why they were born into our family, to be sure.

Mrs. W.—That's just how I got into the church that Jesus built. I was born into it.

Mr. W.—Well, don't you mean when you were converted?

Mrs. W.—Yes, I mean when I was converted only a few days ago.

Mr. W.—Weren't you converted years ago in the Methodist church?

Mrs. W.—No, sir; I wasn't converted into the Methodist church. I was converted, and thus I came to be a member of the church of God, but I joined the Methodist church afterward.

Mr. W.—It seems to me I see a faint glimmer of light. Let's talk on.

Mrs. W.—Well, if I had known why, I need never have joined any church that man has built. It's those man-made churches that separate the people of God. A few are taken into one sect and there taught to believe certain doctrines, and a few taken into another sect and taught doctrines contrary to the others. In the name of common sense, how can they be in harmony with the Bible and teach doctrines contrary to each other?

Mr. W.—I don't say that the churches are just right, but some are nearer right than others. I think our church is the nearest right.

Mrs. W.—The thing that is most like the genuine and yet not the genuine is the worst deception. There's a church not only nearly right, but altogether right. Let me read you a description of it. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* Now let me ask you a question—how many churches is Jesus here talking about?

Mr. W.—Well, He's talking of but one.

Mrs. W.—If He's talking of but one, tell me then which one.

Mr. W.—You know so much Bible, you tell me which one.

Mrs. W.—I'll do so with pleasure. Listen—"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." So He's talking about the church that He gave Himself for.

Mr. W.—Well, didn't he give himself for all the churches?

Mrs. W.—The Scripture does not say He loved the churches, and gave Himself for them: but for it—only one.

Mr. W.—Maybe you can tell which one.

Mrs. W.—Let the Bible inform us. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”* Here we see it was the church of God for which He gave Himself.

Mr. W.—Yes, I see, and this brings us back to what we were talking about a while ago. I say it is the different denominations that make up the church of God, and you say they’re no part of the church of God.

Mrs. W.—Yes, I say they’re no part of the church of God. They cannot be. While some of God’s children have membership in them, that doesn’t make them a part of the church of God.

Mr. W.—I don’t see why it doesn’t.

Mrs. W.—I’ll show you. We will illustrate it this way first: nothing can be the church of God, or any part of the church of God, that a sinner can get into. Now we’ll take your church, as you call it. Are there not some in it who are not Christians at all?

Mr. W.—Certainly. There are good and bad in all churches.

Mrs. W.—Don’t be too sure of that. There isn’t a sinner or bad person in the church for which Jesus gave Himself. But it’s a fact, is it not, that if there are some sinners in your church, it is possible for all to be sinners? I mean to say, if one can be a sinner and be in your church all could be sinners.

Mr. W.—Yes; I’ll admit that all could be.

Mrs. W.—Then suppose they all were, what part of the church of God can a church be that has not a Christian in it?

Mr. W.—But there are some Christians in it.

Mrs. W.—But don’t you see those Christians don’t make it any part of the church of God, from the very fact it’s something that sinners can get into, and if sinners can get into it, then it’s possible that there be nothing in it but sinners, and such a thing can’t have any union with the church of God. It wouldn’t if they were all Christians. The very fact that they could all be sinners proves it to be no part of the church of God. Now, if your church were something so organized by God that conversion would put one into it, and none could get into it but those who were converted, then it would be some part of the church of God.

Mr. W.—It seems I can’t get you to understand. It’s like the Bible says—the different denominations are the branches of the church of God. It’s like a tree or like the human body. There are many branches on the tree, and there are many members in our body, but all belong to the same tree and the same body. Now I think you’ll surely give it up.

Mrs. W.—I’m very glad you brought up those figures; for by them I’ll prove to you that your denomination is no part of the church of God. But it’s meeting time, and I must go to meeting.

Those meetings are glorious to my soul. It's a heavenly place. Won't you come and go with me tonight dear?

Mr. W.—Not tonight. Are many being converted?

Mrs. W.—There have been quite a number saved—I think twenty or more.

Mr. W.—How long will these meetings continue?

Mrs. W.—I don't know. We're going to have baptizing next Sunday. Good night. Don't forget where we left off talking. Good night.

Mr. W. (talking to himself)—It looked to me like my illustrations would confound her, but I'm sure she'll tear them all to pieces; she always does. I must be wrong. I know I'm not saved; I'm nothing but a wretched sinner. I would be afraid to meet God in my present condition. May He have mercy on me.

01.17. Conversation 17

Conversation 17

Mrs. Wiseman (next day)—The meetings are getting better. There were several at the altar last night and nearly all found the joy of salvation. But we were talking yesterday evening on the branches.

Mr. Wiseman—Yes; I said the denominations are branches of the church of God, and you said they're no part of the church of God.

Mrs. W.—Let us illustrate it in this way: Our children are born into our family. We are the vine, so to speak, and they are the branches. They are of our blood and life. Now, we get into God's family by being "born again." Then He is the vine, and we are the branches. Suppose a man named Smith should come along and say to our children, "Now, my little Wisemans, I'm going to organize a Smith family, and I want you to come and join my family." Two of our children go and join his family. Then a man by the name of Brown says to those left of our children, "Little Wisemans. I'm going to organize a Brown family, and I want you to come and join my family." Two of our children go and join his family. Now, two of our children are known as Smith-Wisemans, and two as Brown-Wisemans. Now our children in the Smith and Brown families are members of our family and a branch of us, but are those Smith and Brown organizations a branch in us?

Mr. W.—No; they certainly are not. Only our children are the branches.

Mrs. W.—So it is with God's family. We're born into it: we're members of His flesh and of His bone; we're branches in Him; we're Christians because we're branches in Christ. Now a man comes along and organizes a Methodist family, or church, and some Christians join it. Then a man organizes a Presbyterian church, and some of God's children join it. They're known as Methodist Christians and Presbyterian Christians. The Christians in those organizations are branches in Christ. but the organizations are not branches.

Mr. W.—I see the point—I see it clearly. Well, well, it is indeed singular that one can be so blinded as I have been. When a man is converted, he is in the church of God, and he doesn't need to join any of the creeds of men. But what does your paper mean by saying, "This reformation?"

Mrs. W.—Were now in a reformation. It's the last reformation. There have been other reformations, but they were not a revival of the whole Word of God. The work of God in this reformation is in lifting the standard up to where it was in the morning of this Christian era. God is gathering His people out of the sects, and they're coming into the one fold—the church of God.

Mr. W.—That looks very good to me now, but what is going to become of all these churches?

Mrs. W.—They will go on just as they are, or will get worse. They're going along with the world and thus they'll continue to go.

Mr. W.—But can they not be reformed?

Mrs. W.—What do you mean—the sects?

Mr. W.—Yes, can the sects not be reformed?

Mrs. W.—No, the sects are evils, and you can't reform an evil thing. But there are good people in the sects, and these we hope to reach.

Mr. W.—Well, if you're seeking to benefit the good people in the sects, why not stay in there and do it?

Mrs. W.—We must forsake every evil thing. The sects divide the people of God, and therefore they are evil things. Consequently, I must forsake them, else I would be dwelling in known evil.

Mr. W.—Well, I'm learning; I see more clearly.

Mrs. W.—The Bible says we're not to be yoked up with those who love the world and don't believe the whole Word of God.

Mr. W.—One of the churches down in the city last week had a moving picture entertainment for the benefit of the young men's baseball club.

Mrs. W.—They'll go on with such things as long as time lasts; we're not expecting anything else. But God is calling His people out. That's the work these preachers are engaged in, and I expect to have a part in it. I long to help what little I can in this blessed reform.

Mr. W.—But you are not a preacher.

Mrs. W.—I know I'm not, but there's something we all can do. I shall not sit idle because I'm not a preacher.

Mr. W.—When is this meeting going to close?

Mrs. W.—Let me see—this is Saturday. It closes tomorrow night.

Mr. W.—Are you going tonight?

Mrs. W.—Yes, indeed; I don't want to miss a meeting.

Mr. W.—I want you to pray for me, Sarah. I'm not saved; I see I'm no Christian. I've been living just like people who don't profess to be Christians. I'll go with you to the meeting tonight, and if there is any salvation for me, I'm going to have it. May God have mercy on me, a sinner. Do you think I can get saved?

Mrs. W.—“Whosoever will”* may come. Christ saved the chief of sinners—He will save you.

Mr. W.—I surrender all. Let's get our work done early and be off.

01.18. Conversation 18

Conversation 18

Mr. Wiseman (the next day)—Good morning, my dear wife. Praise the Lord, I'm saved! I can't tell you how happy I am. Come, let us arise and spend this day for God. Let us arise and meet God at the altar of prayer. This is the Lord's day. The little birds are already singing praise to their Maker. Come let us join them. There's music in my soul. Who would have thought such joys belong to mortal man?

Mrs. Wiseman—My soul is humbled before God. How can I express the gratitude of my poor heart? The Lord is good. We're saved. Hand in hand we shall journey on to our sweet eternal home.

But, James, I want to bring those preachers home with us for dinner—if you don't object.

Mr. W.—I object? No, indeed. Bring everybody.

Mrs. W.—Shall I bring Mr. Smith?

Mr. W.—Yes, yes; all hatred is gone. I love him, and I'll tell him so and prove it to him.

Mrs. W.—This is the last day of the meeting.

Mr. W.—Thank God! I came in at the eleventh hour.

Mrs. W.—They're going to have baptizing this afternoon.

Mr. W.—I'll be baptized with you, dear. What a blessed privilege to be buried with Christ! Isn't that wonderful? Dead to the world! Dead to self! Dead and buried! Resurrected to a new life in Jesus! My eyes are open and I see things I never saw before. Oh, how blind I have been! But now I see. I'm going to serve God with all my heart. Let us be real Bible saints. I mean to go over my possessions, and everything that is not needed I'm going to sell and give to the work of the Lord.

Mrs. W.—I have a great many things I want to sell. Those rings and bracelets and necklaces, I can't wear anymore. My fancy hats, too, and dresses, I can sell. I don't want them.

Mr. W.—Yes, we'll make a cleaning out of things. We will lay our treasures up in heaven instead of on earth. I'll make all my wrongs right as far as lies in my power.

Mrs. W.—We must start a Sunday school and prayer meetings.

Mr. W.—Yes, we must; and we'll never be too busy to attend them. I've been living shamefully—very seldom had time to attend prayer meetings. I can remember however, back forty years ago. I was really converted; I loved the Bible and the prayer meetings. Scarcely anything could keep me at home. But I lost that precious love. I have it again, thank God! and now I'm going to abide in it. We'll make the rest of our lives count for God all we can. I wish all the world were as

happy as I am this morning.

Mrs. W.—They could be if they'd come to Jesus and be saved. But we're now ready for our morning worship and breakfast; then we shall need to hurry and get ready for meeting and the baptizing.

Mr. W.—I feel more like praising God than eating, but I suppose God would have us care for the body, which is the temple of the soul.

01.19. Conversation 19

Conversation 19

Mr. Wiseman—One week ago tonight I was born into the kingdom of God. This has been a glorious week to me. What if I had missed this blessed salvation! But, dear, there are those all around us who're lost in sin. We must do all we can to rescue them.

Mrs. W.—Yes, we'll make the remainder of our lives count for God as much as possible. Well, we're saved and have been baptized. I'm sanctified wholly. Don't you realize you have need of a deeper work in your heart?

Mr. W.—For the last two days my soul has been crying within me for more of the fullness of God. I feel the need of a pureness which I do not possess. When can I be sanctified?

Mrs. W.—God is always ready to do for us what is needed, when we come to Him in a right way.

Mr. W.—Can't I come to Him in a right way tonight? I feel the need of a soul-cleansing. My heart is hungering for God. I can never rest until I am as pure as he is.

Mrs. W.—Are you ready to kneel in the presence of God and ask Him to sanctify you wholly?

Mr. W.—I'm only eager to do so.

Mrs. W.—Then let us kneel in prayer, and you ask God for what your soul needs.

Mr. W.—O God, Thou hast forgiven my sins. Thou hast washed them away through the blood of Thy Son. Thou hast brought me into Thy kingdom. I am Thy child. But there's depravity in my nature. O God, create in me a clean heart. I am fully given to Thee. All my earthly possessions I give to Thee. They are no longer mine, but Thine, to be used for Thy glory. My life and all I lay at Thy feet to be Thine from this time forever. They are no longer mine—not for one moment. I give up all to Thee. Not one thing, O God, do I withhold from Thee. I dedicate to Thee this body and this soul. O God, I pray Thee to send the holy fire. Baptize me with Thy Holy Spirit. Thou hast said that Thou art more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Thee than parents are to give good gifts unto their children. I'm willing to give good gifts to my children and I believe Thou art willing to give me the Holy Spirit, and I believe thou dost do it.

Glory to God! Sarah, I'm sanctified! God fills me with His fullness. My heart is pure. God makes it His throne. My soul is full of light.

Mrs. W.—God is good to redeem us and bring us into such sweet fellowship with heaven. Now we'll walk with God! we'll walk above this sinful world.

Mr. W.—I'm full of joy. I can bear no more.

Mrs. W.—There's one thing more I feel we should do.

Mr. W.—I think I know what it is. I've been feeling for some time that I want my name off the sect class book. We're in the church of God, and our names are written in the book of life in heaven. That's enough for me. Here comes the preacher now. I'm sure God has sent him. We shall have him take our names off his book.

Come in. Good evening, Mr. Kent.

Mr. Kent—Good evening, Brother and Sister Wiseman. I was just passing your way and thought I would call for a moment.

Mr. W.—Very glad to have you come. We were thinking of going over to see you.

Mr. Kent—Ah, indeed. Well, those saints preachers I hear have left town.

Mr. W.—Yes, sir; they've been gone nearly a week, but their work still remains. I'm saved and sanctified and have been baptized.

Mr. K.—I'm sorry you've allowed those preachers to deceive you so, I thought you had a wiser head than that.

Mr. W.—It's not at all profitable to discuss that matter. I only wish I had found this blessed way sooner. If you only knew what I know, you would envy rather than pity me. I was coming over to ask you to take our names off your church-book, as we desire to abide in the church of God alone.

Mr. K.—May I ask you what you believe?

Mr. W.—We believe all the Bible, and expect to practice it.

Mr. K.—You believe in holiness and divine healing and feet washing, I understand.

Mr. W.—Yes, sir; these blessed doctrines are in the Bible.

Mr. K.—Now, brother, I can take my Bible and explain away every text referring to those doctrines.

Mr. W.—There's where the difficulty lies. You would explain away these things rather than believe and obey them. But we also believe in coming out of sects.

Mr. K.—Well, you'll have no trouble to get your name off our book; we wouldn't have a member that believes such nonsense. When you get over these fantastic notions, we'll welcome you back.

Mr. W.—Thank you! but I wouldn't advise you to cherish any hope of ever seeing us back, for we're out to walk with God, and have come out of the sects to stay.

Mr. K.—I must say that caps the climax! However I see you're determined; but, brother, you go beyond all reason and common sense. I fear the enemy has used those holiness preachers to deceive you.

Mr. W.—I'm just getting out of deception into the blazing light of the gospel. Praise the Lord!

Mr. K.—You should be more considerate. It's a fearful thing for a person to make such solemn obligations in the presence of Almighty God as you did when you joined our church and then break them as you have done.

Mr. W.—Jesus Christ came into this world to save His people from their sins. But the Jews, who had been the people of God, had wandered far from the teachings of His Word and were following their own traditions, and when Christ came they rejected Him. Although the old covenant law ended with the death of Christ upon the cross, yet many of the Jews continued in their traditions, but God no longer recognizes them as His children. When Paul received the light and experience of salvation, he broke away from his former religious obligations and traditions and the Lord honored him in his course. In the same manner He will sanction what I'm doing.

Mr. K.—It's preposterous! I'm indignant. Beware, lest the Lord strike you dead for your unqualified insinuations. Your name will remain where it is. I have no authority to take it off the church-book after your having so solemnly obligated yourself to be true to the church and its godly principles.

Mr. W.—According to Hebrews 12:23 and Luke 10:20, our names are written in heaven, and Colossians 2:10 says, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."

Mr. K.—Come, now, Mr. Wiseman, you're capable of exercising greater wisdom than you now manifest by your words and actions. Take ample time for consideration. You're somewhat heated and excited, and when you're in a more reflective mood, these matters will appear in an entirely different presentation.

Mr. W.—I've had all the time for consideration I need, and have made my decisions in accordance with the Word of God, and my soul is filled with His burning love.

Mr. K.—It's evident that you're actuated and influenced by a wrong spirit, or you would never leave the church which for so many years you've learned to love.

Mr. W.—I haven't left the church, but just gotten into it.

It's the one for which Jesus gave His life, it's the church of God. Read Acts 20:28. I was born into it by a spiritual birth. It's the sect to which I belonged, which you call a church, that I'm now free from and from which I'm endeavoring to sever the last cord of connection by having my name removed from the list.

Mr. K.—Brother, you know that in order to comply with your request it will be necessary to have it acted upon by conference. Our conference doesn't meet for several weeks yet, and it will be necessary for you and your wife to be present to state your case before the conference committee. By the time it convenes you'll have had ample time to consider and reconsider many things that have been disturbing your mind of late.

Mr. W.—Praise God for freedom! No, I shall not attend your conference in order to get out of your church; I'm already out of it.

Mr. K.—As you seem to be so persistent in the matter I would advise you to permit me to give you a church letter, which will enable you to go elsewhere and be received in full fellowship.

Mr. W.—With all due respect to you, I must decline the offer. I'm now in full fellowship with God and with the "saints in light,"* and am a branch in the true vine: so your letter would be of no use whatever to me. To whom would I present it? I couldn't present it to the Lord, who is the head of

the church, for getting salvation placed me in the church, and I've been a member in full fellowship ever since. I'm sure the preachers wouldn't accept the letter as evidence of my eligibility to membership; so you needn't go to the trouble of preparing a letter for me.

Mr. K.—Now, Brother Wiseman, see here: perhaps you didn't know that our church has been considering the matter of making you a deacon in the church, whereby you'll be more useful and influential.

Mr. W.—Thank you for the proposed honor, but these things don't move me.

Mr. K.—But there's one thing I'm sure you will appreciate, and that is, you and your wife have always been the main pillars in the church and considered to be the most spiritual members. Remain with us, brother, and let your light shine.

Mr. W.—If we were the most spiritual of your members, God pity the rest of them! The fact is, we haven't been saved for nearly forty years. We lost our spirituality many years ago, under the influence of your "sin-you-must" teaching; but now we're saved from sin and kept by the power of God. We only wish that you might be able to comprehend the truth and enjoy the blessings of full salvation.

Mr. K.—Those preachers ought to be stoned out of the country.

Mr. W.—That's the way the Pharisees felt about Stephen when they stoned him to death.

Mr. K.—Well, I see it's no use to waste words with you. Good-bye.

Mr. W.—Good-bye. I shall remember you in prayer, and I trust you'll not continue to fight the truth and finally lose your soul.

Mrs. W.—These are some of the sad things we have to meet, but we shall continue to pray for his salvation as long as there's hope. It's too bad that such people are so blind spiritually.

Mr. W.—You remember, dear, how blind I was to the truth, and how self-willed; but God answered your prayers and saved me, so let us not become discouraged nor weary in well-doing. I feel strong in the faith. I've something else to tell you.

Mrs. W.—What is it? Anything serious?

Mr. W.—Somehow I have such a great love for Mr. Smith, for whom I had such hatred before.

Mrs. W.—Well, you know Jesus says we're to love our enemies.

Mr. W.—The Lord surely put the love in my heart, and he's taken out all the hatred. It has come to my mind that I must straighten up my wrong-doings. I intend to go as soon as possible, confess my wrong to Widow Perkins about her cow, and pay her the ten dollars I beat her out of, and I think I'll add twenty dollars more to it for her benefit.

Mrs. W.—I'm sure it will please her, and the Lord, too.

Mr. W.—Then, there's the man who rented the farm, and I raised the rent on him. I think I'll confess to him and make him a present of the entire barley crop, which will more than make up for the loss. Also, I remember the horse trade, the hogs, and many other things, all of which must be

adjusted as soon as possible.

Well, well—saved, sanctified, baptized, out of the sect, in the church of God—it is wonderful and marvelous!

Mrs. W.—It's far better than our poor tongues can tell, and yet it's still better on before. If we daily draw near to God the glory will increase. Let us do this, dear. Let us be fervent in spirit, praying without ceasing; live alone for God; and then when these bodies fail, the angels will bear us away to our eternal home.

Mr. W.—Yes, let us go on in the good way till our Master calls us home.

02.00. Christian Conduct or, The Way to Heaven

Christian Conduct or, The Way to Heaven Charles E. Orr, 1903 Copyright: Public Domain Main subject: Truth Christian Conduct or, The Way to Heaven

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Christianity

02.000. Preface

Preface “Only let your conduct be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.”*

We kindly ask the reader to compare the words of this booklet with the Word of God. What I have written has not been with an unkind nor unfriendly spirit, and I hope no one will take offense. My object has been to exalt Christianity to her rightful throne and plainly mark out the Christian way, that we all may live to the glory of God and to gain a home in heaven. Yours in Christian hope and love,

Charles E. Orr

02.01. Part 1

Part I

Introduction Christian Experience

Repentance

Regeneration

Sanctification

02.01.01. Introduction

Introduction My Dear Friend:

We have come to have a short, earnest talk with you about heaven and the way that leads to that better land. In all the realm of thought and conversation there is no sweeter theme than that of heaven. Oh, what pleasantness there is associated with the thoughts and hopes of spending an eternity in the blissful fields of that glory world. As we look upon the pale, lifeless form of some dear one whose spirit has flown away, what a comfort comes to our sorrowing breast when we have reason to hope they have gone to heaven.

There are frequent occurrences along the journey of life which remind us that we are only pilgrims, traveling to an eternal beyond, to which we may be called any day. It may be we have been in imminent danger and narrowly escaped the blow that severs the thread of life. It may be the sick chamber. It may be the news of someone who has departed this life, or the vacant seats around our own hearthstone. All these remind us that it is "appointed unto men once to die."* We cannot forbear remarking here, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not"* the call may come to you. Surely you can not fail to comprehend the necessity of living every hour in such a way that, should the summons come, you could Go softly and peacefully to rest, Like slumb'ring childhood from task set free, Or evening breeze 'mid orchard branches Separating blossoms from the tree.

There are no aching hearts in heaven; no troubled breasts nor careworn brows. There is no sorrow there; neither pain nor tears. With such a place of eternal blessedness set before us, is it not wisdom to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure"*? The Savior said, "In my Father's house are many mansions.... I go to prepare a place for you."* In the trying hours of life, when all seems to have forsaken us and the world appears unfriendly; life's burdens seem to be heavy, and a despondent feeling steals over our spirit, what a comfort to our trusting soul is the remembrance that there is a home prepared for us, "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest."* There is room enough in heaven for all who will walk in the way that leads to that desired destination.

One night, while beholding the stars and thinking of that future home with our Father, we were given these lines:

Little stars in vault of heaven, Windows you appear to be
Of my home, my home in glory.

Draw the curtain back for me, Let me see the happy angels
As they flit before the throne:

If there's room for me in heaven Let me see my golden crown.

I can see my Savior smiling, In His hand a crown I see:

You may low'r the curtain softly Since I know there's room for me.

All my soul is filled with glory, Waves of peace sweep o'er my breast
When I think of going to heaven, Where the weary are at rest.

While the thoughts of heaven are beautiful, there may be other thoughts that come like a blight over the spirit of many. Man is prone to draw a veil over the scenes that awaken thoughts of torment and woe; he invites thoughts of heaven, but banishes thoughts of hell. There is no pleasantness in the thoughts of eternal punishment. To think of spending an eternity in hell brings a terror to the soul. Whatever may be our feelings or thoughts, either heaven or hell shall be the eternal destination of all mankind. These two places are set before all who inhabit the earth. There is a way that leads from earth to heaven, and there is a way that leads from earth to hell. The way to heaven is called the way of life; the way to hell is called the way of death. These ways are set before every man, subject to his choice. He can take the way of life and gain heaven, or, he can take the way of death and make his bed in hell: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.... I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."*

It is not enough to say and to hope we are going to heaven; we must walk in the way that leads there, else our sayings and hopes will be in vain. Should you desire to go to a city, you must take the way that leads there. The way that leads to heaven is by the commandments of God. The Scriptures say: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."* The Lord said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* The Bible is the book God has given to teach us the way to that goal of eternal peace and rest. There is no promise for us in that blessed volume, nor an intimation from which we can glean a ray of hope of gaining heaven, if we are knowingly violating any of its commandments (James 2:10). Only those who do His commandments will enter through the gate into the city.

02.01.02. Christian Experience

Christian Experience An impure fountain does not send forth a pure stream; if we desire the stream to be pure, we must make the fountain pure. A holy and pure life naturally flows from a holy and pure heart. The wisdom of Solomon declares that “out of [the heart] are the issues of life.”* The state or condition of the heart determines the manner of the life. One wiser than Solomon said: “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts,”* etc. This saying illustrates the fact that the interior of man, or the heart, controls the exterior life. He further illustrates this by a cup and platter, which, he says, make clean on the inside, and the outside will be clean also (Matthew 23:26). We shall take it for granted that every reader will agree with us when we say that Christian conduct necessitates Christian experience, and that where the former is wanting the latter is also wanting.

All men naturally are in sin, and consequently without Christian experience. Christianity is not a mere profession; it is a real inward, or heart, experience. In the plan of redemption we find certain things required of man in order that he may obtain this change in his moral condition. The principal thing required, and one which covers almost the whole, is—

02.01.03. Repentance

Repentance The Scripture tells us that repentance is a godly sorrow for sin, or, that “godly sorrow worketh repentance.”* This is unlike the sorrow of the world. When a man has committed a wrong, and because this wrong is made public and he stands in danger of punishment by the law, he experiences a sorrow, his sorrow is only of the world. A child who, having disobeyed its parents, grieves through fear of punishment does not sorrow in a godly sense, and such sorrow contains but little or no merit. But when through force of temptation he disobeys his parents and sorrows because he has wronged a parent who loves him, he may be said to sorrow in a godly sense. When man wails and laments and seeks a Christian life merely to escape the torments of hell and to gain heaven, he is not truly penitent; but when in his very soul he grieves and sorrows because he has sinned against a God of love, having no thought of reward or punishment, but only sorrows because he has wronged a being who loves him—then he experiences a godly sorrow. When a man sorrows in this manner he will turn away from his sins and forsake them. It must be obvious to the reader that man cannot be said to be truly sorry for his sins when he continues in them. But when in true penitence he turns away from his sinful life, God will pardon him. “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil.”* “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.”* When a man is truly sorrowful because he has sinned against God, he not only ceases to walk in the ways of sin, but he gladly makes right, as far as he can, all the wrongs he has done. We do a kind act toward God by doing it toward man, as Jesus says: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”*; and we wrong God when we wrong our fellow man. Consequently, when a man truly repents, he will make right, as far as he can, all the wrongs he has done to his fellow man. We have this exemplified in the repentance of Zacchaeus when he said: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold.”* Jesus, upon seeing such penitence, said, “This day is salvation come to this house.”* The law governing the restitutions of wrong in true repentance is recorded in Ezekiel 33:15 : “If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.” The fruit of repentance is the forsaking of sin, of making right the wrongs we have done, of forgiving those who have wronged us, and of confessing our sinfulness to Him who sees and knows the heart; and, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”* When pardoned, man experiences a change of affections; he experiences a change in his feelings and exterior life; he is no longer a sinner but a Christian. This experience is termed—

02.01.04. Regeneration

Regeneration The work of regeneration is effected by the grace of God: "By grace ye are saved."* When man complies with the requirements made of him by the Word of God, he will then through the act of faith, by the power and grace of God be born again or brought into spiritual life. He is a new creation. The guilt and condemnation of transgression is gone and he has peace with God. He is translated from the kingdom of darkness into that of God's dear Son. He has passed from death unto life. He is a branch of the vine, and now lives a sinless life. Although he enjoys much and experiences such peace and glory he learns there is an especial promise of the Father yet in store for him (Luke 24:49). He comes as an obedient child and pleads with the Father for the promise, and God, being more willing to give His children the Holy Spirit than parents are to give good gifts unto their children, sends the Holy Spirit in His cleansing power into his soul and he receives the glorious experience of—

02.01.05. Sanctification

Sanctification

It is our purpose in this booklet to write mainly upon the manner of a Christian's life, but we thought it well to set before the reader as briefly as possible the plan of redemption, or how we came into possession of the perfect fullness of the Christian experience.

Now it is sure we must be born again (John 3:1-7). But we do unmistakably find by searching the Scriptures that this is not all. The disciples as they journeyed with the Savior before his death enjoyed the experience of the new birth. We shall prove this by a few texts. In Matthew 16:15-16 Jesus is asking the disciples whom they believed him to be, and Peter making reply said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Again in John 6:69, Peter speaking to the Savior said, "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Now by reading 1 John 5:1 we find what such believing effects: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." From this we can safely conclude that the disciples were regenerated at the time they thus confessed their faith in Christ. Now I know we are in awful times of peril and deception, but it is perfectly safe to take the plain statements of God's Word. It is thought by some that none enjoyed the power of regeneration until after the resurrection, but we learn that He gave those who believed on Him power to become the sons of God before His crucifixion: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* The disciples believed on Him: they received Him and consequently were born of God. Jesus speaks to the seventy of their names being written in heaven (Luke 10:20). They were preaching the gospel, healing the sick, casting out devils, etc., and surely they were sons of God by the new birth. But we obviously find yet an element in their nature discordant with the nature of their Savior. It is in the plan of redemption that we be restored to the image or nature of God. Christ came in the nature of God, and we in the fullness of His salvation are partakers of His nature; i.e., we are of a like nature with Him: "The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master."* Not in outward life only shall we be like Jesus, but in our very nature: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."* From this text we learn that it is not only in heaven that we shall in our nature be like Jesus, but like Him in this world as well. We are to be perfect in love as He is. For proof of this we shall quote Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." By reading a few above verses we find there is a perfection of love, and such a perfection can only result from a Christlike nature. In the fullness of salvation we are as merciful in our nature as God is merciful: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."* We are holy like Him: "Be ye holy; for I am holy."* We are to be righteous as He: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [God] is righteous."* We are to be pure as our Savior: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."* We as Christians are to be one, as Christ and God are one: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that

they may be one, even as we are one.”* From the above texts we unmistakably learn that Christians in the “uttermost salvation” are holy, righteous, and pure in their nature as God is. They are as perfect in love and merciful in their nature as He is. They are naturally one even as the Father and the Son are one.

We have heretofore by a few texts positively proved that the disciples during the ministry of Christ were converted, regenerated, or born again. Now we will as positively prove by their actions or manner of life that there was an element in their nature unlike their Master. In reading Mark 9:33-34, we find the Savior rebuking the disciples because they had disputed among themselves, who should be greatest. Here we discover an element of pride or love of preeminence in the nature of the disciples, which is not found in the nature of Christ. In Mark 10:37, we read where the two sons of Zebedee asked the Savior to grant them the privilege of sitting the one on his right hand and the other on his left in his glory. By the answer he made them as recorded in Mark 10:40, the disciples understood him to make them promise of such positions, and in Mark 10:41 we learn the ten were much displeased with James and John. Here we plainly discover an element of envy or jealousy in their nature. Thus they are found to be unlike their Savior in nature. In reading the account of the betrayal in John 18:1-40, we see manifest an element of resentment and resistance when Peter with his sword smote off the high priest’s servant’s ear. Jesus commanded him to put up his sword. Elsewhere it is said that Jesus touched the wounded ear and healed it. Peter inflicted the wound; Jesus healed it. We see the dissimilarity in the natures of Peter and Jesus. The Savior, desiring the disciples to be restored to the divine nature, prays the Father to sanctify them: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”* While the disciples were only regenerated, we discover an element of division in their nature, resulting in disputings as to who should be the greatest, and envyings and jealousies, consequently they were not one; but in reading John 17:17-22, we find that the experience of sanctification makes them one. In Hebrews 2:11, we are taught that sanctification makes all one. When was this element of division destroyed or cleansed from the nature of the disciples? We answer, at the reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In Acts 4:31-32, it is said that all that were filled with the Holy Spirit were of one heart and one soul, consequently the experience of sanctification destroys all elements of division.

Paul rebuked the brethren for this same element of division that was found in the disciples before their sanctification. They were in Christ, but they had yet a carnal or fallen nature. In Acts 8:1-40, reading from Acts 8:5, we have the account of Philip preaching Christ to the Samaritans. There were many lame and palsied healed, and evil spirits cast out. There was great joy in that city. In Acts 8:12 it is said the people believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, and were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:14 says that when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John down there, who, when they were come, they prayed for them, and laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Here we find full salvation obtained by the people of the city of Samaria in the same manner as the apostles obtained it. They first received the word of God: they believed, and were baptized and were unquestionably regenerated, and like the apostles subsequently received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10:1-48 there is recorded how God wonderfully accomplished the sanctification of Cornelius and his family. We find him a devout man and one that feared God and prayed to Him always. His prayers and almsgiving came up as a memorial before God. How beautiful! Surely he was a Christian. He enjoyed the blessed experience of

pardon, but not the glorious experience of sanctification; therefore, he was directed by an angel to call for one Simon who would tell him what to do. I would advise the reader to read the whole of this chapter. Toward the close of the chapter you will read where, as Peter preached to them, the Holy Ghost fell on them.

Thus we find that Cornelius and his family were fully saved in the same manner as the apostles and the people of Samaria. Some may be asking what was accomplished in these Gentiles when they received the Holy Spirit. We have already learned that He destroyed the elements of division and made all one. This is because he cleanses or purifies the nature or heart and consequently destroys all elements in opposition to the nature of Christ. We shall give one text to prove that the Holy Spirit purifies the heart: "And God, which knoweth the heart, bare them [Gentiles] witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us [Jews]; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."* With this one text all anti-cleansing theories fall to the ground. In all the New Testament examples we find that men and women were first regenerated and subsequently made pure in heart by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. This is the most natural and commonsense plan of restoring fallen man to his creative purity. Because of Adam's transgression sin entered into the world and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned (Romans 5:12). All have sinned. That is, all are sinful in their nature. This is proven by a saying of the Psalmist: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."* The apostle Paul says he was by nature a child of wrath, even as others (Ephesians 2:3). He not only says he was a child of wrath in his nature, but that others are also. This same is true of every child. The nature of the child in its formation in the womb is depraved. The moral condition of the parents may modify to an extent, but never wholly change that nature. The child does not inherit a depraved nature from its parents; it is not because the parents are sinful that the child is conceived in sin, but because nature is depraved. Understand me, Adam's sin caused a depravity in the whole realm of nature. The ground is cursed for his sake. Thorns and thistles shall it now bring forth. The world before sin's entrance was an Eden. Since, it is a land of sorrow, a world of vanity and woe. Man is of few days and full of trouble. It required a supernatural conception to beget a pure child, everything in nature being depraved. The child does not inherit either physical or moral image directly from its parents. In the protoplasm of human life there is implanted a physical and moral image. The child has two hands and two feet, not because its parents have, but because that is the form stamped by the hands of God in the embryo. Adam's sin struck at the root of nature, caused a change in the moral image implanted in the protoplasm of human life. When a child is born with two ears, eyes, hands, and feet, we say it is perfect in form, because that is the model stamped in the life germ. But should a child have six fingers upon one hand it is deformed, because it is not after the model. Adam's sin caused a deformity or depravity in the moral image in the life germ, and consequently every child is "conceived in sin," or in that deformed moral image. For this reason it required a conception from the supernatural world to beget the holy child Jesus. Because of this depravity in nature God's wrath hung over this world. We are all by nature children of wrath and doomed to eternal punishment had not Jesus presented Himself to the Father as a sacrifice for this depravity in nature. The sacrifice of the Son of God does not correct the deformity in nature (because after the sacrifice was offered the apostle declares we are by nature the children of wrath), we are yet evil in our nature, but the sacrifice of Christ appeases the wrath of God to the innocent. Praise God!

All children dying in their infancy are admitted into heaven through the sacrifice of Jesus. Some depart from the truth because they do not understand how the child can go to heaven and yet be depraved in its nature. They “do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”* The child is born with a depraved nature. This we have proved by Psalms 51:5; Ephesians 2:3, and it is also clearly proved by observation. Every child manifests an evil disposition. It comes natural for them to do evil things. Do they not learn evil things much more readily than right things? If so, why? Because their nature is evil. If one child is smitten by another, is it not natural for the injured one to smite back? All are compelled to answer, yes. If the child were pure in its nature such would not be the case. Christ was pure in His nature from infancy and had no disposition to resent injuries. A sanctified man is pure in his nature and has no disposition to return evil for evil. This disposition is in the nature of children. Some have asked, “What is meant by nature?” It is not wise to follow too far and deep the insoluble things of God and nature lest we be led into error. The Scriptures, however, permit us to associate it with the heart, and it affects the whole of man. The Savior said, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,”* which is the same as to say, out of man’s nature proceed evil thoughts. When the Holy Spirit purified the hearts of Jews and Gentiles by faith (Acts 15:8-9), they received a purifying of their nature. An impure heart, and a depraved nature, are synonymous terms. But how can a child go to heaven and yet be depraved in its nature? Because the sacrifice of the Son of God has appeased the wrath of God against this deformity in nature. If children were given pure souls or natures at birth, as some do affirm, then all children that die in infancy go to heaven independently of a Savior; consequently there are myriads in heaven to whom the Savior is no Savior. This is contrary to the voice of Scripture. Should the child depraved in its nature arrive to a knowledge of what was right and what was wrong and then willfully do the wrong it incurs the wrath of God, which is appeased only through repentance and the blood. When the wrath of God because of transgression is appeased by repentance and the blood the individual is returned to his childhood state; therefore Jesus says, speaking to the transgressor, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* Conversion restores man to the childhood state. Now it is the will of God that he be sanctified. Through the sacrifice of the Son of God he can obtain a correction of the depravity that was implanted in his nature by Adam’s sin, and be made partaker of the divine nature. Now he is like Jesus and lives a Christian life naturally as He did. Praise God! The purifying of man’s nature or heart is necessary in order that he be not overcome and become a transgressor. Who has known a newly converted man to live year after year without being brought into transgression? The purifying of his heart places him where he for a lifetime is victorious over sin. Glory to our God! If a justified man dies before he receives knowledge of sanctification it is with him as with the infant. But for him to be a constant overcomer along the race of life he needs the cleansing of his nature and the power of the Holy Spirit. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.”* “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.”*

02.02. Part 2

Part II Christian Conduct Christianity in Home Life Husband's Duty to His Wife Wife's Duty to Her Husband Parents' Duty to Their Children Children's Duty to Their Parents Servants' Duty to Their Masters Masters' Duty to Their Servants Christianity in Public Life The Effect of Christianity on Habit Christianity in Dress Christianity Separates from the World What Christians Must Not Do What Christians Must Do

Christianity

02.02.01. Christian Conduct

Christian Conduct By the Word of God we have very briefly laid before the reader the plan of redemption, or how we are brought into the fullness of a Christian experience. Through repentance and faith by grace we receive pardon of all our transgressions and become as little children. Subsequently through consecration and faith by grace we are wholly sanctified or cleansed from an evil nature and made partakers of the divine nature. This is a restoration to the image of God. Man was created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). Through the sin of disobedience he lost the holy imprint of God's character in his soul and instead received the imprint of evil in his nature. Jesus came into the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, consequently through Him we are changed into the holy image of God again, "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* Praise God!

Now since we have come into the glorious fullness of God's salvation and bear His beautiful holy image in our nature and life, it now remains for us to show forth His glory and praise and life by bearing the excellent fruits of righteousness on to the end of our life's journey. "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved."* What can be more blessed than the privilege of walking with God in holiness, His peace and love streaming into our soul from His excellent glory and thrilling us with a tenderness and rapture known only by the redeemed? The harmonious uniting of the sweetest-toned instruments of music ever invented by man are only an empty sound compared with the sweet songs of redemption.

I'm redeemed and filled with glory;

Streams of gladness from above Flowing, oh, so sweetly flowing, And my soul is full of love. The holy Bible is the book to guide the Christian's footsteps and govern his walk of life. When he walks in the truth, he walks even as Jesus walked; and when he strays from the truth, he departs from the life of Jesus.

You have heretofore agreed with me that a Christian life will naturally result from a Christian experience, and where the life is deficient the experience is also deficient. The Bible is the book by which our life is judged or graded. If we fall below one hundred per cent in any line of conduct, we fall that much below the standard of Christianity. It is not enough to live up to the Word of God in a few things, or in many things, but we must live according to the truth in all things. At the closing up of earthly scenes, you for your Christian experience must receive a general average of one hundred per cent to find admittance into the regions of eternal glory. If you are graded with a general average of only 99.9 per cent, you will hear the words, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting,"* and may God help you to see. A young lady recently said, after hearing a portion of the Scriptures read relating to practical Christianity, "Our preachers have not told us how to live." This remark occasioned the writing of this booklet. In the judgment day I desire to stand clear from the blood of all men. In the name of Jesus my Savior I shall do what I can to inform you how to live that you may please God and spend an eternity in the glory of His presence. Not only shall we tell you, but we shall earnestly pray to God for you. The apostle Paul tells us in one short

sentence how to live. He says, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."* In other translations the word conversation is rendered conduct, which is a better rendering. In the Revised Version we have this rendering: "Only let your manner of life be worthy the gospel of Christ."RV A Christian life is one that becomes or adorns or makes beautiful the Word of God to the world. A holy and pure life is a jewel to crown the glorious gospel of Jesus. A Christian life is a light shining forth and revealing the gospel to a lost world. Oh, what a privilege granted unto us by grace that we can so live that our life magnifies the Word of God and makes it beautiful and attractive. Glory, glory be to our God! With all my soul I appreciate the privilege of living a Christian life. We find many today who are disgusted with a professed Christianity, and disbelieve the Bible because of the imperfect lives of those who claim to be followers of the Lord Jesus. Many also, thank God, have been caused to believe the Bible and in the salvation of God by the pure and perfect lives of Christ's true and devoted followers, who walk as He walked. This is what is meant by living as "becometh the gospel,"* or, "[adorning] the doctrine of God."* By living a pure and holy life we interest others in the salvation of our God and His gospel. Praise God! To my soul this is such a beautiful point I am loath to leave it. The privilege of reflecting the glorious image of God to a darkened world by a pure life fills my soul with gratitude and praise. We have often seen a ray of sunlight passing from the keyhole through our darkened room and ending in a bright spot on the opposite wall. This reminds us of a Christian's life journey, which as a beautiful stream of light, finally ends in a bright spot upon the walls of time. By living upon God in prayer and holy thought, and by careful earnest effort, this light "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."* Every prayer and hour of holy meditation burnishes the image of God in our soul to a greater clearness and brilliancy. Every vagrant thought and hour of worldly meditation and gossip dims the features of the Christlikeness in our life, hence the exhortation, "Pray without ceasing."*

There is a way, an only way, that leads to eternal rest in the paradise of God. Jesus is the way, and He tells us to follow in His steps. The minister of a certain creed recently spoke of us in these words: "If they can do any good, very well, but I am not going that way." There is but one way (John 14:6; Jeremiah 32:39), and it is evident if he is not going our way he is not going to the same place. The Bible is the book given to guide us in the way. Who can persuade a man that he is not in the way that leads to the city when he is carefully following every signboard that points that way? Who can persuade a man he is not in the way that leads to eternal glory when he is carefully keeping every commandment of the Bible? "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."*

Now we desire to give a few commandments teaching us what should be our daily manner of life. Paul in writing to Timothy said: "These things write I unto thee... that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."* Christian behavior is our theme. Had ministers everywhere been zealous to teach the whole of the commandments of God, and nothing but the commandments, no doubt our present task would be unnecessary. But the time has come (we speak the truth in love) when people with itching ears have heaped unto themselves teachers who have turned away from the truth and turned to fables, or the telling of amusing stories, consequently it becomes necessary that we be zealous to do what we can to declare the whole counsel of God. It is true, and sad that it is true, that from many pulpits and pews Christianity at this present day is reduced to almost nothing. In many religious organizations now extant there is but little to distinguish fair Christianity

from the uncouth world. From the minister unto the most obscure layman they are jesting, talking foolishly, chewing and smoking, getting impatient and fretful, returning evil for evil, having enmity in their hearts against some fellow man, attending ball games, horse races, fox chases, etc.; engaging in politics, having membership in secret societies, loving money and laying up treasures on earth, neglecting to pay debts, etc.

Oh, what a shame! Is this not the ordinary life of many, many pretended followers of Jesus? Is this all there is of Christianity, which the Bible calls spotless and pure? We do not speak of these things to condemn you. God has not sent us into the world to condemn the world, but to preach the pure gospel, that the world might be saved. It is astonishing what little conception many a professed Christian has of Bible Christianity. They seem to think that church membership, church-going and giving, and a few outward ceremonies is all that is included in Christianity. One woman whom we met entertained hopes of heaven because she sent her children to Sunday school. Has Christianity been changed in its nature since the days of Jesus and the apostles? Is it any less to be a Christian now than it was then? Is not as much required of us today to be Christians as was required of the Christians in the first centuries of this gospel era? With love and loyalty toward God we proceed to give a few Scriptures governing a Christian's daily life and practice.

02.02.02. Christianity in Home Life

Christianity in Home Life

Nowhere is Christianity more beautiful and blessed than in the home. It changes the home of wickedness, strife, and contention into a peaceful and delightful Eden. The home of the poor it converts into a palace. It drives away discontentment, uneasiness, fear, and darkness, and showers contentment, peace, assurance, and sunlight into every heart and home it is permitted to enter. Recently we saw some people shouting in a public meeting, and speaking in their testimonies of the blessedness of salvation. They said, "It is a heaven to go to heaven in." Yet in their homes we found them irritable, impatient, and contentious, which is very unlike heaven. But, thank God, Christianity brings a heaven to the home as well as in the public life. Christianity is Christ in the heart, and where Christ is, there is heaven; consequently a Christian has a heaven within him, and he has this heaven at home as well as abroad. Praise God!

Christianity in home life makes all peace, harmony, honesty, and faithfulness between master and servant; love and kindness between brothers and sisters; love and dutifulness between parents and children; love, trueness, and faithfulness between husband and wife. Christianity makes a home a heaven. Home where all is love and tenderness and devotion is the sweetest and most sacred spot on earth. A home where Christianity is crowned a queen in every heart is an Eden. The heart of God is filled with delight as he looks down upon such a home. His presence dwells there and causes this home to be a beautiful oasis in this desert world of sin. Alas, that such homes are so few! Sin destroys the happiness of man and makes many a home a hotbed of contention, strife, and confusion. Jesus came to put away sin and establish "on earth peace, good will toward men."*

02.02.03. Husband's Duty to His Wife

Husband's Duty to His Wife The Bible tells man what should be his behavior toward his wife, and a Christian must live and do just what the Bible says, without any modifications. The reader has already agreed with me that to have a Christian experience is to live a Christian life. The husband is to regard the wife as the weaker vessel, and thus give her honor, support, and protection. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."* The husband must look upon his wife with respect, and because of her feminine sensitiveness have an especial care for her in spiritual things, and be her support in temporal things. Women have trials peculiar to their own sex, and a husband can scarce be called a husband, much less a Christian, that neglects to console and comfort them and throw as much joy and sunlight into their lives as possible. When Hannah wept because she had no son, her husband sought to comfort her with these words: "Why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?"* May God help husbands to so dwell with their wives that when the wife is in discouragement and sorrow they can cheer them by recounting their love, devotion, and goodness to them—Why is thy heart grieved? am I not good and kind to thee?

Husbands must love their wives as themselves. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."* The care Jesus exercises in nourishing and cherishing the church is illustrative of the care the husband should manifest in nourishing and cherishing his wife. "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."* All hasty, sharp, cross, unkind, cutting, bitter words are forever put away by the Christian husband, who loves his wife. Cross, hasty words are not the fruit of a Christian spirit; and if you have not ceased from them, God has better things for you.

02.02.04. Wife's Duty to Her Husband

Wife's Duty to Her Husband

Nowhere is wickedness more greatly revealed than in a wicked woman, and nowhere is Christianity more beautifully exemplified than in a pure, chaste woman. "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband."* "her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband does safely trust in her.... She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."* These words are beautiful and should encourage a wife to a life of faithfulness and devotion, that she may be a crown to her husband and be valued far above rubies. The wife that will honor and reverence her husband and seek to please him will find a joy in her own heart. "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."*

Wives should love their husbands (Titus 2:4) and reverence them: "Let the wife see that she reverence her husband."* The wife is to reverence her husband as the Christian reverences God. To reverence God is to be submissive to Him, and to look upon Him as our Lord and protector, adviser, etc.; to fear and obey Him, yet be in perfect freedom. Such should be the attitude of the wife toward her husband.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."* Too few women comprehend the full meaning of this text. Just as the Christian consecrates, resigns, and submits himself to the care and control of God, so the wife is to submit herself to her husband. Just as the Christian leans in loving confidence upon God, so the wife should lean in loving confidence upon her husband; and the husband's conduct toward the wife should be such as would encourage her to trust and confide in him, as God's conduct toward us encourages us to trust and lean upon Him. When the husband and wife are kind, loving, and gentle toward each other, when she in her weakness feels her dependence upon him, and lovingly, trustingly looks unto him as her defense, and he in his strength and delight folds her in his strong arms of protection with a feeling of responsibility to nourish and cherish her—then they can testify that they have a heaven in their home. Unless they have attained unto such a life, they have not attained to a perfect Bible Christianity, neither to perfect joy and happiness.

02.02.05. Parents' Duty to Their Children

Parents' Duty to Their Children

Most parents believe they love their children, but true Christian love of parents toward children comprises more than many have understood. They may love them in a sense, but the parent that feels provoked toward the little one and threatens to slap it, calling it some ugly name, does not love the child with a Christian love. How many fathers and mothers under provocations are making severe threats to punish their children, at the same time calling them “ugly brats,” “mean kids,” “little imps,” etc. Such parents are not Christians, no matter what may be their profession. They do not comprehend the true nature of Christianity if they believe themselves to be Christians while having such feelings and using such terms toward their children. Christianity is far more beautiful than this.

Parents are commanded to train their children up for God and heaven: “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”* They must teach them God’s Word: “Only take heed to thy self, and keep they soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons.”* “And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”*

They must tell them of the judgments of God, as given in His Word: “Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.”* Parents are to provide for their children: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”* Parents who through indolence fail to comfortably clothe and sufficiently feed and give them educational and religious advantages according to the Bible rule, such parents cannot be termed Christians. Parents cannot possibly be Christians and use their money for liquors, snuff and tobacco, and then fail to comfortably clothe and give their children a sufficiency of wholesome food, or fail to give them proper educational and religious advantages.

Now, elders and deacons are commanded to rule their children well and have them in subjection with all gravity (1 Timothy 3:4, 1 Timothy 3:12). Elders are an example to the flock; consequently it follows that all Christians must rule their children well and have them in subjection. Parents cannot have the approval of God on them, no matter how much they may pray and how active they may be in the religious life, if they allow their children to disobey them and go in the ways of sin. We have known many parents to pray for the salvation of their children, and all the while were allowing them to attend picnics, shows, parties, dances, etc. Such prayers go unanswered, and such conduct brings the wrath of God upon the parents. For the sake of your soul, and the souls of your children, restrain them from evil ways; prohibit them attending worldly places of amusement, but take them with you to the house of God. Great responsibility is laid upon the parents. They have a child whose eternal destiny depends largely upon the training it receives in youthful days. We

would love to write much more on the subject, but must forbear, only adding these words of exhortation to every parent: As you value your and your children's eternal happiness in the glory of God's presence, get your soul fully saved and filled with love and the Holy Spirit so you can set a godly example before your children, and then seek help from God to train them up in the ways of righteousness.

02.02.06. Children's Duty to Their Parents

Children's Duty to Their Parents

While it is the duty of the parent to teach his child, God makes it the duty of the child to heed the parent's teaching. "A wise son heareth his father's instruction."* Children are commanded to obey their parents: "Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise."* Obedience to parents is well pleasing to God. "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."*

Many boys and girls at the present day are found to utterly disregard their parents' commands and wishes. Such children have not yet experienced the power of regeneration, no matter how many societies and leagues they have membership in. Children, God holds you to love, honor, and obey your parents, and unless you do as He commands you have no promise of heaven.

02.02.07. Servants' Duty to Their Masters

Servants' Duty to Their Masters

We shall not use the word servant in the sense of a slave, but in the sense of a hired man or woman. They are to be subject to their employers (1 Peter 2:18); to obey them (Ephesians 6:5); to please them well in all things (Titus 2:9); should serve them with good will (Ephesians 6:7); should honor them (1 Timothy 6:1); must not defraud them (Titus 2:10); should be profitable unto them and do them good service (Philemon 1:11); should not serve them faithfully just to please man, but because it is right, in the sight of God (Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 3:22).

02.02.08. Masters' Duty to Their Servants

Masters' Duty to Their Servants

About all we care to say on this subject is to condemn the evil of oppression. It is a disposition on the part of many to secure laborers at the lowest possible price. We shall give an illustration that will enable you to see the evil practiced by many who profess to love God and their fellow men.

Mr. A. is a laborer and a poor man. He goes to Mr. B. seeking employment. Mr. B. has work he desires to have done, but he wants it done at as low a cost as possible. Mr. A., in order to support his family, thinks he should have one dollar per day. Mr. B. does a little calculating and finds he could pay Mr. A. one dollar a day and make quite a profit, but he knows Mr. A. is a poor man and could probably only find work at even less wages, so he offers him seventy-five cents per day. Mr. A., rather than lose the job and be idle, consents to do the work at seventy-five cents, although, justly earning one dollar. What does the Scripture say? "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a master in heaven."* And that "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."* It is very sinful to refuse to pay one dollar per day to a laborer for his service when we know it is worth it, and that it would be just and right.

There is a disposition on the part of many employers to secure labor at just as low cost as possible, and a disposition on the part of the laborer to get as high price for his service as possible, consequently there is contention, quarreling, and bitter feeling between employer and employee, oftentimes resulting in strikes and serious trouble. Christianity removes all such trouble and makes everything just and equal. The Christian employee is willing to labor for that which is just and right, and the Christian employer is willing to give him that which is just and right, and thus all trouble is averted. Praise God!

02.02.09. Christianity in Public Life

Christianity in Public Life

There is one text which should rule the action of every man toward his fellow man. These are the words: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."* We desire to mention a few sinful things we find practiced among men which reveal the wicked and selfish condition of the heart.

Many men are prone to misrepresent property they are offering for sale. For instance, a horse may be said to be seven years old by his owner when he knows he is ten. He may represent him to be sound in every way when he knows he is diseased, and for this very reason he desires to sell him. Of course, no man can do these things and be a Christian. The Bible says, "Lie not one to another."* "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor."* The Christian not only tells the truth as is asked him concerning his horse, but he also tells of all his defects though he be unquestioned. If a horse should be in some way diseased or blemished unknown to and unsuspected by the purchasing party, the owner instead of seeking to hide his defect, frankly tells, if he is a Christian, all about the diseased and blemished condition. This is doing as he would be done unto, and is Christian conduct.

Recently a gentleman was telling me of a man who, when having his wheat threshed, asked the men that were doing the measuring to heap up the half bushel, that he might save some of his threshing bill. Is it not a pity that man will allow a covetous heart to lead him into such awful sin? He brings the wrath of God upon his soul for a few pennies. It is much worse than Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. The salvation of Jesus saves men from such conduct; consequently a Christian desires the men to give a just and right measure, for under no circumstance would he defraud his neighbor, because he would not that men should do so to him. "By their fruits ye shall know them"*; so we know that a man that will thus defraud another is not a Christian.

Men sometimes become so greedy of gain that in order to secure the good price of an early market they will cut their melons when they have reason to believe they are too green. This is not Christian conduct, but is very sinful. It is not as you would want others to do to you, so let no man endeavor to persuade himself that he is a Christian when he has such a disposition of heart. Christianity is not merely a profession, but is an experience of the heart, and you have agreed with me that if a man has the experience he will live the life. Thus we are "known and read of all men."*

Sometimes men and women manifest a selfish and avaricious disposition at the counter of their grocer. They always want the grocer to give them down weight, just a few more ounces of meat, or a bit of sugar, or a few more inches of calico, etc. Of course, if the grocer is a Christian he will have patience with them and give them just weight and measure. Some people have the disagreeable custom of trying to get everything they buy at the very lowest price possible, and the highest price possible for everything they have to sell. This only indexes an impure heart. No

matter to them if the merchant can only get 8 cents per pound for chickens in the city, they will want him to pay 8.5 cents, and would gladly take it if they could get it; and no matter to them if his calico cost him 5 cents per yard, they want it for 5 cents. This is all shameful and has led into sinful practices. Some excuse themselves for haggling unfairly with their merchant by saying, "He makes his goods too high, and we haggle with him to get him down to a reasonable profit." It is their practice of haggling unfairly that has forced the merchant into the practice of high marking. He expects you to haggle with him and so makes ready for you. This is wrong, and things ought not so to be. Farmers and mechanics have need of home merchants, and should be perfectly willing to allow their merchant a reasonable profit, and the merchant should not ask any more. Christianity sets these things right. It has come to pass that at the present time man has but little confidence in his fellow man. Christianity restores this lost confidence. Some of the leading men in the monopolies and "trusts" are professing to be followers of Jesus, and yet are hoarding up their thousands at the expense and cry of the poor. Such profession is an abomination to God. Christianity will break up all "trusts."

Christianity will compel a man to pay his debts if he possibly can. Refusing to pay debts is sinful and a Christian will not do such a thing. Christianity will not allow a man to place the inferior potatoes in the bottom of the barrel and the very finest on the top. In some sections of the country moneyed men have a custom of requiring a "bonus" on loaned money; that is, you borrow one hundred dollars of them and they want you to give a note for one hundred and ten dollars and give a legal interest besides. In the fear and love of God we say a Christian will not do such a thing. It is not doing as he would want others to do to him. It is oppressing the poor. The legal interest is all the law of the land and the law of God allows him, but he has forced the poor man to give him ten dollars for nothing, and he ought to be ashamed of such conduct. "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven."*

Christianity will not allow a man to return evil for evil. If a Christian is smitten upon the right cheek he will turn the other. If his neighbor claims a few feet of land over the right line he will let him take it. If his neighbor abuses him and mistreats him he does him good in return. If his neighbor mistreats or kills any of his farm stock he in return will gladly rescue this neighbor's stock from injury. If this neighbor should set fire to his buildings he in return would put out a fire that was destroying his neighbor's buildings. If his enemy hungers, he feeds him; if he thirsts, he gives him drink. This is the spirit of Christianity as manifested in the life of Jesus, and as it was in Him so it will be in all who possess it. It is sometimes known that neighbors are at enmity with one another. Perhaps one or both of them profess to be Christians, yet they will not speak to each other if they meet upon the street or in their house of worship. Do you think that looks like Christianity? What shall they do in heaven should they get there? No, this is not Christian conduct, and any man that holds enmity or ill feelings, and ill wishes toward another fellow man and thinks he is a Christian is deceived, and I shall be thankful if this little book by the help of God's Spirit will help him out of his deception. Remember we are not writing for the purpose of condemning, but for the purpose of helping such ones to a real, living experience of salvation that will admit them into that glorious land of eternal rest when life's toils are over. Jesus says we should love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us and despitefully use us (Matthew 5:44).

02.02.10. The Effect of Christianity on Habit

The Effect of Christianity on Habit

Man in his sinful life often forms many habits that rule him. They grow upon him and gain such a power over him as to make him their slave. Some conclude it is no sin to indulge in certain habits as long as we do not go to an excess, and as long as we do not get into bondage. Indulgence to any extent whatever in bad habits is wrong. Swearing is a habit, and a bad one. Some men have so acquired the habit of swearing that they swear unconsciously. This excessive swearing is not only wrong, but any indulgence in such practice is wrong. Christianity breaks the power of such habits and sets man free. Such sin has no dominion over a Christian, not so much as a single indulgence. Men have formed the habit of drinking strong drink, using morphine and opium. They become slaves to these evil habits. Now it is not only a sin to indulge in them to an excess, but any indulgence in such evil practices is altogether unbecoming in a Christian. Some people have so lost sight of true Christianity that they think they can indulge in strong drink occasionally and yet be Christians approved of God. Such are laboring under a deception and will meet with a sad surprise in the judgment day. Christianity breaks the power of such evil habits and sets man free, so much so that they are not overcome by a single indulgence.

Many people have formed the habit of smoking and chewing tobacco and using snuff, and are so unconscious to the purity of a Christian life that they have never understood it to be wrong. Is it not surprising that man would attempt to worship God and gain heaven and indulge in such unclean practices? Now we do not mean to say anything harsh or unkind, for we pity all who are in bondage to such a hard master. We want you to see the evil of it and seek the Lord, who is able to set you free. Praise God! The using of tobacco is a habit, no one can deny this. The question is, is it a good or bad habit?! If it is a good habit we should advise all to form the habit. If it is an evil habit, we should advise all to cease using it. Any hygienic work condemns the use of tobacco. It is injurious to the human system. We are not our own. We should glorify God in our body and our spirit, which are His. God will hold man responsible for the care of his body. No one can abuse his own body and willfully injure his health without incurring God's displeasure. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*

God will hold man responsible for the example he sets before the world, and before his own children. Where is the father that would give tobacco to his boy or girl? Most parents endeavor to keep it from their children, and some would even punish them were they to find them using it. How wrong it is to indulge in a thing forbidden to your children. Just to think of a Christian, a follower of Jesus, chewing and smoking and using snuff. A Christian is a light in this world; but what kind of a light is a tobacco user? Could he say to his children, "Follow me as I follow Christ?" Oh, may God help you to quit its use and live as becometh the gospel of Christ. We are to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."* A man chewing and spitting tobacco or using snuff is not a very beautiful adornment. As I was driving through the country a few days ago I saw a farmer's wife emptying her husband's spittoon. She held it away out from her and turned her head as she turned

it up. How shocking that a man would impose such a task upon his wife!

Again, God will hold a man responsible for the way he spends the money he has given him. Which is more beautiful in the sight of Christ or more becoming his life and gospel—to use money and chew and smoke it up, or take the money and give it to the poor? Surely we have said enough on this subject to convince every honest reader, so we shall leave it, praying God to bless you and to help you to live and obey the truth and all principles of righteousness

02.02.11. Christianity in Dress

Christianity in Dress The Bible, in telling Christians how to live, makes mention even of their dress. Why is this? It is because extravagance in dress is indicative of a proud heart. Thefts, murders, evil thoughts, pride, etc., come forth from the heart and defile the man (Mark 7:21-22). Any article of dress put on merely for adornment can only be the fruit of pride in the heart. Some may wear adornments by way of jewels, pearls, rings, necklaces, etc., and still say that they are not proud. But the Bible says, "By their fruits ye shall know them."* These facts are plain, no matter how much man or woman may deny them.

Some have asked, "Can I not be a Christian and continue to wear my rings and plumed hats?" We would ask, Can you be a Christian and willfully disobey the Word of God? What does God's Word say? "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array."* We have heard people say that this text does not mean what it says, or is not meant for us now. What makes you say that? It is because you do not want to live to it. If I should tell my daughter not to wear gold, and she continuing to wear it, and should tell others that I did not mean what I said, I should consider it an act of very great disrespect. Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* Where is the professed Christian that does not believe that Jesus meant what He said in this text, or that He did not mean it for them? If He did not mean what He said in the former text or meant it for some other people, how can we know He meant what He said in the last text, or meant it for us? We all believe this text to mean what it says, and that it is meant for us. Why do we? Because we would love to have it that way. And why do some disbelieve the former text? Because they do not love to have it that way. Oh, the inconsistency of man! We shall quote this text in Timothy from the Syriac Version of the New Testament: "So also that women [dress] in chaste fashion of dress: and that their adorning be with modesty and chastity: not with curls, or with gold, or with pearls, or with splendid robes: but with good works as becometh women who profess reverence for God." The curling of the hair, or the wearing of gold and pearls does not become a woman who professes reverence for God. Such things give them a worldly appearance. It is really painful to the Christian heart to see men and women laboring and planning and striving to keep up with the fashion. Someone has said, "We had just as well be out of the world as to be out of style." That is just what Christianity will do for you. It separates you from the world and its fashions and styles. Many a young man is driven to dishonesty merely to keep up with the world in its pride. His clothier perhaps goes unpaid while he walks the aisle of some fine meeting house with the air of a millionaire. He takes his part in the League or the Endeavor, and considers such service entitles him to the name Christian.

Many a husband is working hard to support his wife and children, while the wife is spending his hard-earned money for fashionable and costly array for herself and children. The new spring hats and bonnets must be purchased, and that in the latest style, if debts go unpaid. Many a mother is

working late at night, and goes to her bed with an aching heart and head because of her desire to clothe her children after the world so they may attend Sunday school, etc. Oh, where is the plain and humble Christianity of primitive days! Let us take a look at the life of the lowly Nazarene and His devoted followers. Here we behold the humble and self-sacrificing Christian virtues.

While it is wrong and contrary to the Scriptures to spend money for gold and pearls and costly apparel, it is equally as wrong to make an unnecessary expenditure of money in the erection of buildings. When we see dwelling houses with their fancy carvings and domes and decorations, we conclude that vain is the heart of the owner; and when we see a meeting house with its towering steeple and stained windows, our heart is grieved. In the name of Jesus we affirm that it is wrong and contrary to the spirit of Christianity to make such an unnecessary expenditure of money in the building of a house of worship. We have seen many a meeting house that cost fully enough to build three plain houses that would seat as many people and fully as durable. The unnecessary expenditure of money in the building of these houses is often double the amount required to build a good comfortable plain building. Frequently meeting houses are remodeled when the old one was plenty good enough, but not fine enough. Why those colored windows with their drawings? Are they the result of love to God, or are they the result of pride? At this present writing there are thousands of human beings starving, not in foreign and heathen lands only—in our own beloved land many feel the pangs of hunger. With this suffering of human beings around us we say in the fear of God that no man nor society can expend money for costly colored windows and rich fancy carvings and ornamentation without incurring the displeasure of the Almighty.

Dear reader, I appeal to your commonsense and reason (if you do not know anything about the Bible): which is more congenial to the spirit of right and of Christianity and more commendable to God—to use money in buying feathered and flowered hats, laces, ribbons, necklaces, beads, jewels, gold rings, chains, studs, buttons, etc., or the giving of this money to some poor man or woman who is struggling hard to keep the wolf from the door? May God help us to see.

02.02.12. Christianity Separates from the World

Christianity Separates from the World

Christians are not of this world. Jesus, in speaking of His followers, says, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."* The apostle 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."* The apostle James says: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, 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."* The apostle Peter says, "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries."* Salvation of God saves people from the sins of the world. The apostle Paul says: "Among whom [those who walked according to the course of the world] also we all had our conversation [conduct] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* When he was in sin he walked as the world walked, but when he became a Christian he was saved, or separated, from such a life. The spirit of Christianity and the spirit of the world are directly opposite in their nature. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"*

Surely every reader is convinced that Bible Christianity saves men and women from a worldly life. Now how is the world going? We see them striving, planning to lay up treasures here upon earth. Christian conduct is to lay up treasures in heaven. We see the world joining secret societies and trusting in life insurances for protection. Christians with any degree of light do not do such things, but trust wholly in God, who has promised to care for them. We see the world dressing in feathers, flowers, laces, ribbons, beads, pearls, jewels, gold, and costly array. Such is not the Christian's dress. They are commanded to dress in modest apparel with shamefacedness, as people should who profess godliness. We see the world chewing and smoking tobacco and using snuff, opium, etc. Such is not Christian conduct, neither is it becoming to the gospel of Christ. We as Christians must live clean, pure and holy lives.

We see the world trusting in omens and signs, or a kind of witchcraft, such as a horseshoe bringing good luck, and hundreds of other very foolish signs very unbecoming a Christian, but is a fruit of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). We see the world returning evil for evil; when wronged they seek revenge. Christians do not act that way; they love their enemies. They are not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. We see the world engaging in foolish and slangy talk, the telling of stories, and saying funny and amusing things. Such is not a godly nor Christian conversation. Christians are to be sober minded, to have a sound speech; every word must be seasoned with grace, that it may minister grace to the hearers.

We see the world going to shows, fairs, picnics, card parties, ball games, horse-races, theaters, etc. Christians do not love the world nor its revelry. There is too much for a lover of the Lord to do in this sinful world to spend time in such worldly amusements; besides he has no desire for such

things. His affections are set on things above. What do you think of a professed Christian sitting along side of a worldly man watching the horse-races? When the race is becoming very close they both get nervous, and both cheer with equal enthusiasm. What kind of a light is this professed Christian? What is there here noble or beautiful for Christianity? While the professed Christian and his unprofessed companion are cheering over the horse-race the true Christian is visiting the sick, or encouraging the discouraged, or helping the needy, or about his honest toil. The reader can at once see which is more Christlike. I pray God to make every professed Christian who thus enjoys the world to blush with shame as he reads this. Sometimes we see a company of young men and young women walking down the street, maybe the greatest number of them belong to church, and it goes out before the world that they are Christians, but along with their unprofessing companions they are jesting and laughing, and giddy and frivolous, and fashionably dressed, so you cannot tell the life of the one from the other. Ah, tell me where is the separation between the Christian and the world if this be Christianity.

Alas! how sad that the standard of Christianity has been so lowered that you are in many instances unable to distinguish it from the world. Thank God! true Christianity retains her exalted seat far above this world. She reigns a queen of light and peace in her robes of spotless white. She is beautiful. "She... looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."*

02.02.13. What Christians Must Not Do

What Christians Must Not Do They must not steal (Ephesians 4:28).

They must not lie (Ephesians 4:25).

They must not return evil for evil (1 Thessalonians 5:15).

They must not talk foolishly (Ephesians 5:4).

They must not speak idle words (Matthew 12:36).

They must not dress in gold, or pearls, or costly array (1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:3-4).

They must not get angry (Ephesians 4:31).

They must not murmur (Php 2:14).

They must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11).

They must not love the world (1 John 2:15-17).

They must not engage in idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditious, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, nor such like (Galatians 5:20-21).

They must not speak evil of any man, and be no brawlers (Titus 3:2).

They must not be lovers of self, proud, boasters, covetous, disobedient, unthankful, unholy, fierce, despisers of the good, heady, highminded, nor lovers of pleasure (2 Timothy 3:2-4). In short, they must not be nor do anything the Word of God says they must not be nor do.

02.02.14. What Christians Must Do

What Christians Must Do They must love God (Mark 12:30).

They must obey him (Acts 5:29).

They must love their enemies, and pray for them (Matthew 5:44).

They must be meek and gentle (Titus 3:2).

They must be kind and tenderhearted (Ephesians 4:32).

They must be merciful (Luke 6:36).

They must do to others as they would that others should do to them (Luke 6:31).

They must count it joy when they fall into temptations (James 1:2).

They must abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). When smitten on the right cheek they must turn the other (Luke 6:29).

They must have a sound speech (Titus 2:8).

They must deny self (Matthew 16:24).

They must be a light (Php 2:15).

They must pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). In short, they must keep all the commandments of the New Testament.

We therefore kindly advise everyone to search the Scriptures, that you may know what God requires of you.

02.02.15. Christianity

Christianity Christianity—Stately Queen—

Virgin—loveliest ever seen, Fairest art thou upon the earth, And of a nobler, higher birth. When King Agrippa heard thy name And how abroad was spread thy fame, And saw thee, lovely as thou art, Thou almost won his heathen heart. When bound in dungeon's cruel stock Thou gavest earth one mighty shock, The prison-keeper felt thy power, And trembling in the midnight hour, Fell humbly at thy feet and craved A knowledge how he could be saved;

Thou didst send pardon from above, In turn he washed thy stripes in love. When kneeling down beside the dead In solemn accents thou hast said, "Dorcas, in Jesus' name arise"; When opened were the woman's eyes, By gentle hand thou led her forth, A monument of thy great worth.

Weeping beside the dead man's tomb, With a loud voice thou bid'st him "come,"

Though he four days in death had lain, Thou call'dst him back to life again. When beside the Beautiful gate, Where halt and maimed for alms did wait, To one who from his birth was lame, Thou did'st say, "Arise in Jesus' name"; And he by trusting in thy word Arose and leaped and praised the Lord. When woman did her sin deplore;

Thou whispered, "Go and sin no more." A palsied man thy power would know, Then was he healed, washed as white as snow. When Simon saw thy wondrous power, He sought to win thee with a dower, Within his wicked heart he thought Thy fame with money could be bought; But earthly treasures glittering bright Are worthless in thy virtuous sight:

Thou spurned his offer, and made bold To bid him perish with his gold. So pure art thou, O Christian fair, No sin can thine own presence bear;

They lied to thee and lost their life, Both Ananias and his wife. A rich man with a haughty heart, From out his gate bid thee depart;

He loved his wealth, but one day dies— In hell he lifted up his eyes. A beggar full of pains and aches, Thy offered hand in welcome takes;

Enduring pains he one day dies— Is borne by angels to the skies.

Fairest art thou 'mong the fair, Thy graces none but thee can wear; As bridegroom decked with ornaments, Or bride with jeweled hyacinths, So thou adorned in robes of white Art on the earth a gleam of light.

Thy cheeks are comely as the rose, Thy neck as white as winter snows, Thy lips are like a scarlet thread, Thy locks like silver on thy head, Thy fingers set in diamond rings, Thy voice in sweetest music sings;

Thy teeth are like an ivory ball, Thy stature like the palm tree tall;

Thou art more gentle than the dove; To him who with thee is in love, No spot or blemish can there be, Fair Virgin, found at all in thee; With crowns of glory on thy brow, Beauty's perfection, Maid, art thou. With thy banner of love unfurled, On thy mission throughout the world Thou goest, scattering precious seeds Of gentle words and kindly deeds To the sad heart and troubled breast, Thou bringest peace and joy and rest, Man's humble home is truly blest, When thou art crowned a royal guest;

Sorrow and sighing flee away On that sweet coronation day.

Thy beauty more and more I see.

Thy love grows dearer unto me; My heart thy throne, oh, let it be Through life, and when I've reached the end.

Together let us quick ascend To heaven's bright and shining shore, There dwell together evermore.

03.00. Food for Lambs

Food for Lambs Helps for Young Christians

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03.000. Preface

Preface

There is much more I should like to write, but I do not think a large book is accepted by the general reader as readily as a smaller one. So lest this grows to too great a size, I have concluded to close it with what I now have written. The selections I have made from other writers are "Seek First the Kingdom," "Victory," "The Little Foxes," "Spiritual Declension," "On Dress," "A Solitary Way," "Stirring the Eagle's Nest," "Sometime," and the "Closing Exhortation."

I pray that the sayings of this little volume will animate many a soul to a higher, nobler, holier life. Although it is written to young Christians, it may do some good to older saints. I hope it will. I commit it to the public with no other motive than to do good.

Charles E. Orr Federalburg, MD September 15, 1904

03.0000. Introduction

Introduction

Out upon the sea of human life sails many a bark. But, alas! how few are sailing tranquil waters. Ascend with me to some solitary height and let us take a view of the innumerable human crafts as they sail out upon life's broad ocean. Many are being tossed to and fro upon the angry billows. Hope is almost gone. As they look forward into the distance all is dark and uncertain. In the early days of their voyage all was peaceful. They looked out over the broad expanse and saw only calm, contented waters, and hope beamed bright. They fancied themselves anchoring, in a ripe old age, in a beautiful haven of rest somewhere behind the setting sun. But they sailed only in the strength of human art. Storms unexpected arose, and winds adverse beat upon them. The high, wild, angry billows threaten their destruction, and they despair of ever entering their fancied golden port. Above the blackness of the raging storm there is extended a delivering hand, but they see it not. Their eyes are not upward; they are upon the turbulent waves. Oh, how sad! How transparent would have been the waters and how serene in glory their voyage, if they had embarked in the strength of Him who at their request would have said to the angry waves, "Peace, be still,"* and all would have been at rest.

Yonder in the distance we see gay, glittering crafts sailing about in a state of unrest. Some are sailing out upon the sea of worldly pleasure in search of happiness. See them rush wildly about. Yonder they seem to see bright, golden waters and hope that true pleasures are to be found there. But, alas! just beneath the surface all is dark and murky and bitter. Some are sailing out upon the highways of worldly fame and honor, others upon the wild stream of worldly riches, all searching for rest and finding none. See the surging, tossing mass of human barks and hear their wail of disappointment as the sweet, golden waters turn to bitter wormwood and gall. The rainbow-colored bubbles, from their hoped-for fountain of joy, burst upon the air, leaving them empty-handed and restless-hearted. Above the wild din of their clamor speaks a soft, tender voice, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* But their ears are not turned to catch sounds from above; they hear only the siren song of an enchanting goddess—the world.

Down toward the setting sun we see many shattered vessels going down in a wild vortex. The waters are closing over them. They found that human strength was inadequate to life's voyage. They, having weathered many a storm, hoped to gain the peaceful harbor. But, alas! they are overcome at last, and, lamenting the day they ever set sail, they go down without hope. From the ethereal heights of inspiration I hear a chiding voice saying, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."*

You, my dear young Christian reader, have just embarked upon life's untried ocean. You have laid hold upon One who is mighty to save and strong to deliver. Underneath you are the everlasting arms. Push out, then, boldly into the broad expanse, fearing nothing. You can escape the perils of

the deep only by making God your refuge. Anchor your faith in Him and see to it that your faith never breaks anchor. The billows may threaten, the storms may rage; but by faith you can beat them back, and sail out on unruffled seas. God pity the one who attempts life's voyage without the aid, cheer, and comfort that Heaven gives.

Make the Word of God your compass, and obedience the rudder that steers your little bark in all the ways God's commandments point you; and make faith the mighty cable, and you will be towed safely past the dangerous rocks and reefs and threatening billows into the peaceful haven of eternal rest.

Across the deep and wide unknown The bark of life sails on: Who thinks to trust to human art Shall perish 'mid the storm. The other shore far distant lies, Wild billows intervene, And dangers little known arise To try the strength of men.

Man lays his purpose and his plan, He fixes sail today; But winds adverse sweep o'er the main And turn him from his way.

Man's wisdom cannot know the end, Nor future courses see:

Whoever sails in human strength Sails mid uncertainty.

Man has a strong invet'rate foe, So subtle in his art;

He tries the strength of human craft And finds the weakest part. By human strength man cannot sail O'er ocean's troubled breast:

God's hand alone can e'er prevail And bring him into rest.

03.01. Mortality

Mortality In plant, animal, and spiritual life mortality is greatest in infancy. The plant in the first few days of its existence is very tender and delicate. It will succumb to the winds if they be slightly too cool, or to the sun's rays if they be too warm. The smallest insect feeding upon one of its tiny roots will cause it to die. After it has formed more roots and they have gone deeper into the earth and the plant becomes stronger and coarser it is far less liable to destruction. The chilly winds may blow or the sun's rays may pour upon it; it now has the power of resistance, and so lives on. The same is true of animal life. Mortality is far greatest among children in the first few hours of life, and lessens as they grow older. Only a slight current of cold air upon the newly born infant is likely to cause its death. The new life is not yet able to resist opposing elements, so it must be carefully guarded. As it grows stronger and becomes capable of adapting itself to the elements of the outside world it can with comparative safety be brought into contact with them.

What is true in the plant and the animal world is also true in the spiritual world. You who have but recently been born of the Spirit are not as able to resist the cold winds of persecution or the heat of fiery trials as those who have been deepening and widening in the grace of God. Guard carefully the newborn life of Christ in your soul. Seek an establishing grace in sanctification, and you will be strong in the Lord and fully able to cope with the dark powers of sin, Satan, and the world, and triumph over all in Jesus' name. In the days of your infancy we offer you our help in this little volume, and assure you a frequent remembrance in fervent prayer.

03.02. Feeding the Lambs

Feeding the Lambs

Some years ago, when attending to the work to which the Lord had called me in one of the sunny southern states, it was my happy privilege to enjoy for a few days the kind hospitality of a generous Christian farmer. One balmy afternoon while walking over the pleasant fields of his large farm, with my heart in sweet communion with God, I came upon the most beautiful flock of sheep it had ever been my privilege to behold. They were quietly grazing in a rich green pasture, near by which silently flowed a deep, broad river. To me it was a fair reminder of the “still waters” the Good Shepherd gave promise to lead His sheep beside, and the “green pastures” He promised to make them to “lie down in.”* From beholding this beautiful fleecy flock I learned a lesson which I hope never to forget. The principal cause of their well-developed frame and handsome appearance was, they were well cared for when they were lambs. Since then I have often remembered, and felt the import of, the command the Savior so tenderly gave His shepherds—“Feed my lambs.”* Over and over has it in all its strength and beauty been breathed anew by the Spirit in my soul, animating me to greater assiduity in caring for the precious lambs of His fold. And, thus, I shall prove my love to Him by doing all I can in caring for His lambs.

Lambs need something more than feed; they must be sheltered from the cold wind and cruel storm. Feed them ever so well, but if you expose them to the wintry storm, they will die. In John 21:15 the word feed is translated from the same Greek term as is the word feed in John 21:17; but in John 21:16 the word feed is translated from an entirely different Greek term. In this verse the Greek does not mean simply to feed, but to protect, to shelter, to tend. The shepherd’s duty is not only to feed the lambs, but also to guard them from the wolves that are seeking to devour them.

03.03-00. The Evening.

Part III. The Evening.

Or, Christianity In The Closing Days Of This Gospel Era.

We have now come to consider the evening time of this gospel day. The morning was light because of the truth being experienced and taught. The noonday was dark because traditions and theories and vain philosophies of man became substitutes for the Word of God. This evening time was seen by prophetic eye. "But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." We are nearing the close of this gospel day. The sun of time hangs low in the western horizon. The gospel light is now shining in peaceful splendor like the clear setting of the sun after a dark and cloudy noonday.

"Misty fogs so long concealing
All the hills of mingled night
Vanish, all their sin revealing,
For the "evening shall be light"

"Lo, the ransomed are returning,
Robed in shining crystal white,
Leaping, shouting, home to Zion,
Happy in the ev'ning light."—Sel.

03.03. Christ's Lambs

Christ's Lambs

It is those who are young in Christian experience whom the Savior calls lambs. The shepherds that are to feed them are His ministers. A lamb is one of the most meek, tender, and tractable of all the young animals, and very fittingly represents one who has received the meek and tender spirit of Christ. Christianity in its nature is meek and mild. It converts the wolf into a lamb and the leopard into a kid. Young Christians are, therefore, beautifully spoken of as lambs, whose nature is mild and gentle. Christ's lambs are those who have received into their hearts His lamb-like spirit. They are those whose hearts and souls have been touched and thrilled with the mildness and tenderness of divine life; those in whom the "hidden man of the heart"* is robed in righteousness and adorned with "a meek and quiet spirit,"* which is precious before God.

You might robe a wolf with a lamb's skin, but it would still be a wolf. A person may profess to be a Christian: but unless he has a change of heart and affection; unless he has been made meek and gentle by the Spirit of the Lord coming into his heart, he is only a wolf, after all, and not of the Savior's fold. Jesus speaks of some who put on "sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."* By "wolves" He means men and women with wicked hearts. They profess to be Christians; but in their hearts are envy, pride, hatred, jealousy, love of self, and love of the world. They may appear quite lamb-like in public life, but in their hearts no change has been wrought by the transforming power of God's grace. To be "Jesus' little lamb" is not only to have a profession of Christianity, but to have the heart cleansed by the blood of Jesus from envy, pride, malice, love of the world, etc., and filled with meekness, gentleness, and love. A good old prophet in olden time, looking forward to when Jesus should come to save people from their sins and speak peace to troubled hearts, said, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."* When you were wandering in the deserts and mountains of sin, Jesus, the true shepherd, came seeking for you, and now that you have given yourself to His loving care, always confide in Him and yield to His guidance. Ever keep your hand in His and follow where He leads, and your life will be full of joy and end at last where there will be pleasures forevermore.

03.04. Food for the Lambs

Food for the Lambs Of course, it is very important to know what foods are most conducive to the growth of lambs. The apostle to whom Jesus gave the command “Feed my lambs”* has said to those lambs, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”* Milk is the aliment which the nature of the newly born infant demands. The infant instinctively receives it with a readiness. It is the natural and most proper food. It is the food above all others for the sustaining of life and the promotion of growth. So the glorious doctrines of the gospel are the natural and most proper food for the Christian. The newly created life in the regenerated soul instinctively turns to the word of God for nourishment. It is the natural food for the new life. Nothing else can be substituted for it and growth go on unhindered. Without this food the Christian will die. “Man shall not live by bread alone,” says the Great Shepherd, “but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”* The Christian has a twofold life: he has both physical life and spiritual life. As bread sustains physical life, so the word of God sustains spiritual life. I beseech you most earnestly, my dear young Christian reader, to ever remember that you can no more live a spiritual life independently of the word of God than you can live a physical life independently of bread. If growth in grace is worth anything to you, and eternal blessedness in the sweet fields of heaven of any value, keep this ever in mind and act accordingly. As with the physical being, so it is with the spiritual. There must be appetite, eating, digestion, and assimilation, that the word of God may impart life.

Remember, it is “the sincere milk of the word” that you need that you may grow thereby. Sincere is from the Latin sincerus, which is derived from sine, meaning without, and cera, meaning wax; honey separated from the wax. Milk to which has been added chalked water may yet have much the appearance of milk, but it has lost its nourishment. So the word of God with the slightest adulteration will not meet the demands for spiritual growth. The word of God, without modification or exaggeration, without taking from or adding to, is the only wholesome food for your soul, and may you “eat in plenty”* and “grow up as calves of the stall.”*

03.05. On Fruit Bearing

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

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

Delicious fruits are brought from the tropical clime to this land of ours, and they awaken in our hearts an admiration for that delightful country. We long to travel through those sunny lands. You are God's fertile field. In your life has been placed the beautiful fruits of the heavenly land. As this world looks upon your life and beholds these fruits admiration will be awakened in their hearts for the fruitful fields of heaven. They will be influenced by your life to seek the kingdom of God and its riches, that they may taste of its fruits now and forever. If you will walk with God and live devoted to Him, those precious fruits of the Spirit will become more plentiful and beautiful in your life as you journey down the way, making you a greater blessing to the hearts of others. To this end you must live.

03.06. A Gazingstock

A Gazingstock In Hebrews 10:33 it is said that Christians are “a gazingstock.” The world is looking upon your life. You have taken upon you the profession of Christianity. If you live a pure and holy life, God will be honored; others gazing at you will see that Christ lives in you, and many will give to God the glory. You must be willing to be gazed at by the world. You must let your light shine. Your holy life will be a savor of life or a savor of death unto those before whom you live (2 Corinthians 2:16). So do not think you are living to no purpose. Someone is looking on every day, and if you will walk uprightly, it will tell for God. What a privilege you have of living a life that God will use to the salvation of some and to the condemnation of others! You must be interested in living a pure, clean life, and live your very best each day, so that you will not be ashamed before God to be a gazingstock for the world.

03.07. The Will

The Will

Among the different faculties which God gave to man in His creation is one called the will. It is because you have this faculty that you become a responsible being. Before the first man and woman in the garden of Eden God placed two laws—one was the law of obedience, and the other, the law of disobedience. These were subject to their choice. They could will to obey God and live forever, or will to disobey and die. Before all men are placed two ways—one is called the way of life, and the other, the way of death. These are subject to their choice. Therefore, the will is called that faculty of the soul by which we choose or refuse things. The will is capable of cultivation. By the exercise of your will you can refuse to do wrong things, and thus strengthen your willpower. Men have attained extraordinary heights of morality by the exercise of the will in right-doing and refusing to do wrong. This is noble and beautiful, but there is something more noble still and more beautiful. The moral man wills to do right because it is right, while the Christian wills to do right because it is the will of God and pleases Him.

Although man cannot by the exercise of his willpower in right-doing evolve into a Christian, the will plays an important part in the formation of Christian character. It is true, the will is most usually led by the affections of the heart; therefore the writer of Proverbs said, "Out of [the heart] are the issues of life."* The heart must, however, get consent of the will before its desires are fulfilled. Here is a truth of vast importance to the Christian.

Many people's wills have become so in bondage to the impure affections and desires of their depraved hearts that they have no will to do right and shun the wrong. The desires of the heart sway their scepter of power over the will, and it acts to the granting the heart its wishes. This is a sad picture. A human being created to be free, but now a wretched slave. When he wills to do good evil is present with him; the good he would do, he does not do; and the evil he would not do, that is what he does (Romans 7:15, Romans 7:21). O miserable man! A person who has rejected the mercy of God and has yielded to the inclinations of an unholy heart until he has no power to accept the offers of mercy and shun the ways of sin, is an object of the greatest pity. To him there is no hope of escaping the damnation of hell.

There is a time in the life of every rational young man and woman when they can accept the blessed offers of salvation which God extends through His Son, if they will. God gives the Holy Spirit to operate upon the depraved heart, making it to feel something of the realities of a Savior's love and goodness, and something of the awfulness of sin. The Holy Spirit does not take hold upon the will and compel it to serve God, or force it into right action. He just takes hold upon the heart, suppressing its love for sin, and awakening desires for a better life, thus removing the unrighteous scepter the heart swayed over the will, giving the will freedom and power to accept or reject the mercies of God. While the impure affections and unholy desires of a depraved heart are being restrained by the power of the Holy Spirit, before the will is set the way of life and the way of death, each subject to choice. Now is the time for whosoever will to come and "take of the water of

life freely,”* and whosoever will now “call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Not only does the will act an important part in securing the salvation of the soul through the offered mercies of God, but it is the purpose of God that the will act an important part all along the Christian way. After the Christian enters through the “strait gate” and steps out upon the “narrow... way”* that leads to eternal golden glories, he is not carried forward in a “chariot of fire”* through the journey of life and crowned at the end with eternal blessedness irrespective of his will. Often it is true that the soul is carried blessedly onward in the way of life on the wings of joy, without any apparent exercise of the will; but how often Good seems to have deserted or forsaken us, Joy has hid her smiling face, and Good Feelings have departed, and we are left to serve God and attend to our Christian duties from choice of will. God wants our life service to be a willing service. It is necessary, therefore, that He apparently forsake us and permit dark powers to engage us. It is that our wills may be exercised. The Psalmist says, “I will run the way of thy commandments.... I shall keep thy testimonies,”* and let us all say amen. The blessings and joys the Lord bestows upon us are the rewards of willing service, for which things you should be very thankful; but never let them influence you in your conduct toward God. There have been those, who, in the hour of seeming desertion, refusing to use their willpower, have turned back to the world. This is faint-heartedness and cowardice, ignobleness and unmanliness.

Every faculty of the body or soul that is unused or unexercised will weaken and die. The muscles if unused will weaken, the mind if unused will grow lax, and the will if unexercised will lose its power. Should God always keep us soaring aloft on the wings of peace and joy and blessings, without the exercise of the will, this important faculty would degenerate into weakness and slavery. Oh, may my young readers arise in the strength of their manhood and womanhood and use, in choosing and doing the right, the will God has given them. The tempter may come, yea, will come, and endeavor to get some of the affections of the heart set upon the world; but you must reject all such temptations, and by the force of your will set your affections on things above. God does never will for us, but He gives us power to will if we will but use the power He gives us.

You are exhorted by the Scriptures to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”* The “crown of life”* lies at the end of the Christian race. When we step over the boundary between time and eternity our salvation is then eternally secured. Praises be to God! It is for this crown of amaranthine glory, or blessed eternal salvation, that we are to watch and labor with fear and trembling. Oh, may you be very careful! Be watchful, lest something should hinder you in your Christian race, and you miss at last the blessedness of heaven. Guard the affections of your heart with the strictest vigilance.

I said above that God would always give us power to will, if we would but make use of that power. For proof of this I shall refer you to Php 2:13, which in our common version is rendered thus: “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” The meaning of this text is not so readily comprehended by this version as it is by some others. By Conybeare and Howson it is translated in these words: “It is God who works in you both will and deed.” Upon examination of the different translations we find the meaning of this text to be this: “It is God that gives us power to will and to do His good pleasure.” In the verse preceding this one the apostle tells us to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling,” and then he adds for our encouragement, “God will work in you the power to will and to do that which will secure your eternal salvation.” Never say, “I can’t.”

Here is something which will prove very valuable to you in your Christian life if you can only get to fully comprehend it: You can do nothing; your will is powerless without God and his grace, and God can do nothing in you without the consent of your will. God does everything, and we do everything: we are to purify our hearts, and yet it is God who purifies our hearts; we are to make us a new heart, and yet it is God who gives us a new heart; we are commanded to work out our salvation, and God gives us power to do it. God furnishes the power; we are to do. Do not think that God will act for you. He will give you power to act, but He will not do the act for you. Do not, therefore, say, "I can't." You can do "all things"* through Christ, who strengthens you. You can serve God in a way acceptable to Him; you can keep your mind stayed on Him; you can pray; you can resist the devil and temptation and be an overcomer; you can endure unto the end—you can do "all things" by the grace and power of God, and He will always give you power to do His pleasure. Do not serve and praise God only when He gives you blessings and joy, but serve Him and praise Him when the way is dark. Have a fixed decision of the will to serve God no matter what the feelings may be. Be thankful to God for the willpower He has given you, and use it manfully, nobly in His service. Do not cower and tremble before temptation. You are to fear and tremble before God, but never before trials, temptations, sin, nor the devil (Deuteronomy 20:3). God will cause you to triumph by giving you power to will. Be steadfast, be faithful, fix your will unswervingly to serve God, and "in due season [you] shall reap if [you] faint not."*

03.08. God Our Guide

God Our Guide This is a dark world of sin, error, and uncertainties. It is weak and transitory. Man, God's chief and highest work in the things of creation, is weak, ignorant, and can of himself do absolutely nothing. Though he may have a most scholarly mind, he cannot peer with any degree of certainty one hour into the future. Who knows what the morrow may have in store? Life may run about the same as today, or fortune may come, or misfortune. Man may plan for the future, but the plan may never be carried into effect. "It is not in man... to direct his steps."*

There is one, however, that knows all future things and shapes the destiny of man. We are invited to commit our way unto Him. He has promised to guide us with His eye (Psalms 32:8). Life lies before us like an unknown sea, none know how many days' journey it is across, nor how much sunshine and shadow there may be on the way. With the unknown expanse before me, and I, in my ignorant finiteness, not knowing which way to take, rejoice exceedingly in my heart to be permitted to commit my way unto Him who makes the clouds His chariots, and rides upon the wings of the wind, and stills the wave. He knows the best way and will direct in tender care my every step. He guides me with His eye, and leads me by His own right hand beside the still waters and into green pastures.

Why are there so many anxious hearts, so much unrest, so many discontentments and fears? It is because man is attempting to direct his own way. He feels his weakness, and fears; he knows his ignorance, and becomes anxious. How blessed to walk out upon life's way trusting in God and casting every care upon Him! The waves may sometimes dash around our feet, but we are looking up unto Him who shall guide us continually. The secret of a happy and successful life is to let God lead us. When we get in a hurry and pass on ahead of the Lord, devising, contriving, planning over our work and way, then come fears and failures.

Many Christians find it difficult to know the will of God and understand His leadings. Many hearts are longing to know God's will and way. You may always know. Do not hurry, only wait, pray, and trust, and God will plainly and unmistakably teach you His way and give you a sweet consciousness in your soul of His guidance. Sometimes it may require long waiting. I have for months been almost daily praying and sometimes rising a great while before day to seek God beneath the stars to know His will in a certain matter. Sometimes it seems I must act, but God whispers in sweet stillness, "Only wait." The Word Our Guide In many affairs of life we need no guidance other than the Word of God. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."* Much reading of the Scripture will impart wisdom and knowledge, and be a help to us in directing the affairs of life. You may have a difficult matter to settle with your neighbor. Open your Bible and read: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."* Quite likely this will enable you to settle the matter in perfect satisfaction to all. Someone may have done you much harm, now what must you do? Open your book of guidance and read: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves... Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."* Thus, much of life's duties and affairs can be determined and decided by the Word of God. The Spirit's Impressions

The Holy Spirit is given us for a guide. With respect to our conduct and our duty, we often feel the impressions of the Spirit. The Word of God tells us to give of our goods as the Lord has prospered us, but the Spirit may often impress us as to where to give.

We feel impressed by the Spirit to give, we feel impressed to go to a certain place, we feel impressed to pray for such a one, we feel impressed to fast and pray, etc. Many a precious soul that once was full of joy and fatness is today in unrest and leanness because these impressions have been resisted. But are there not impressions given by an evil spirit? Most certainly, and these impressions have led many an honest soul into the wildest of fanaticism. Thank God, by living very humble, with all our motives very pure, and by acquaintance with the Word of God, we may know the voice of the Spirit of God and that of the evil spirit. I have known people to receive and obey impressions to fast and pray that were given by Satan. God's Word and God's Spirit favor fasting and praying, but both are bounded by sound judgment; and in such matters we should not follow a spirit beyond what common sense would approve.

It is blessed and beautiful to be led by the Spirit of God. If its impressions are not resisted, but encouraged by cheerful obedience, they will lead us into a blessed felicity with God and a deep acquaintance with Him. An evil spirit's whisperings can be very easily detected by one who has much communion with the Lord. Recently, while standing on a steamer's deck, it was whispered to me that the steamer was an ill-fated vessel, and that I never should see home again. At first I did not know but that it was the voice of God, but soon I felt attempts being made to cast over me a tormenting fear; this aroused my suspicion that it was not God speaking, and to be convinced I allowed the spirit to talk on. For a while it tried to torment me with fears that I should never see the dear ones at home again, and then said, "You may as well cast yourself overboard into the deep." Ah! now I knew the Satanic spirit and I rebuked it in Jesus' name. I reached my home in safety. Praise the Lord! Try the spirits by the Word; Satan will soon expose himself.

God's Providences In the sure guidance of God we have His Word and His Spirit and also His providences. Again, we would say, oh, how blessed to await the providences of God! His providences are always in favor of the righteous. "All things work together for good to them that love God."* How many can look back through their lives and see how the providences of God have directed their ways. They may have planned, but God's providence overthrew and brought better things to pass. Trust in the providences of God, commit your way unto Him, patiently wait, and He will guide you into the way that is best. Never get in a hurry, but wait on the Lord, and He will always make the way plain before you. I have learned never to take a step until I know it is ordered of God. In the providence of God, Joseph was sold to a company of Ishmaelites and cast into prison and thus brought to be ruler over all Egypt. In the providences of God, Kish's asses went astray and Saul being sent in search of them was led to the prophet Samuel, who anointed him king over Israel. You may meet with losses, all things may seem decidedly against you; but be patient, trust in the providence of God, and in time you will see His kind favor.

If you value your happiness and success in life, wait on God. If you do not know which way to go or what thing to do, wait until you do know. God will surely guide you; He will open the way clear and plain before you. When He has given you full assurance, then go forward in all security. Mountains may rise before you, but He will pluck them up and cast them into the sea. Rivers and seas may lie across your path, but He will divide the waters and let you pass through. Live humbly

and only for the glory of God. Trust in Him with all the strength of your soul. See that all motives are as pure as heaven. Prayerfully seek a knowledge of God's will, patiently wait on Him, cheerfully and promptly obey when His will is known, and He will lead you in the path of security, strewing the way with blessings and glory, and make your life one golden gleam of light across this dark world to lead others to the Lamb.

03.09. Fragrance

Fragrance

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

03.10. Seek First the Kingdom

Seek First the Kingdom

Selected

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* An injunction of much importance is here given. Matthew 6:24-34 show how beautifully it is in the plan of God to care for His own. We are taught to have our trust in God for what we eat, for what we drink, for what we wear—for all the necessities of this life. We are referred to the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field, which take no thought for their life, but live in their happy, independent way, without care or trouble. These God cares for and says we are of more value than they.

What a valuable lesson we are to learn from this! But is it really true that we are to have the same degree of freedom from care or anxiety that the fowls or the lilies have? We shall also ask, Is it really possible? This lesson surely teaches that we are to have such a trust in our Maker, and therefore it must be possible. The apostle Paul instructs us to “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”* And in another place, “I would have you without carefullness.”* Our lives are to be free from worry or anxiety about anything and everything. This feature alone of the divine life, or this principle alone in the economy of God’s gracious plan, ought to represent salvation as a thing greatly to be desired. But in the face of this people fail to see anything desirable in it, because by their unbelief they hold such a life to be impracticable. By this kind of unbelief the enemy of souls deprives many of their privileges in Christ and hinders the world from seeing the real nature of the salvation experience.

How the world is estranged from the principles of righteousness! How it holds light to be darkness and darkness to be light! Instead of accounting that there is any reasonableness in such trust in God as is shown in this lesson, they would fain be selfishly taking upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining their own existence, and thus everyone seek for his own gain. Thinking that they thus have an excuse for not devoting their time to God’s service and their spiritual welfare, the things of the Lord are forgotten and neglected, and their souls consequently are lost. When will individuals learn that they have a spiritual as well as a physical existence, and that the spiritual is the more important of the two? Seek first the kingdom. But the fact that we wish to bring out most prominently is that many Christian professors, who are supposed to be examples of the Christian life, do not comprehend the import of the text “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.” The mistake is made on the word first. They think to obey this scripture by first gaining the profession of salvation, presuming then that the blessings of the kingdom will follow, while they live as selfishly as before and dig deep into the things concerning the unrighteous mammon. In so doing they fail to experience the blessings of the kingdom, and also misrepresent the kingdom to the world. The word first means not only first in time, but first in importance; and this idea of importance must ever be held before us, not only when we enter the kingdom, but throughout our

whole Christian life. We are to hold the kingdom of righteousness first in all our lives. If we hold God first in everything and consider what will be to His glory before we consider our own, we give God a chance to fulfill His word, and His own good pleasure in us will be accomplished. We then place ourselves in the order of His plan where it will be possible for Him to do as He has promised. The salvation life means an unselfish life. We are not to seek selfish glory in anything, but seek the glory of God first—above everything else. It has been remarked concerning certain ones who were struggling for an earthly existence, that if they would only get saved “all these things” (all earthly necessities) would be added unto them. But it is not those who merely get saved that can claim this promise; it is those who keep saved and carry out the principles of the plan of righteousness. “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” in everything. Lose your own individuality in God, consign your all to Him, live for His glory in all your life, then “all these things shall be added unto you.”

03.11. Prayer

Prayer

Upon this subject and the one following I have written in other works very similarly to this; but since these subjects are so well adapted to a work of this nature I can hardly feel willing to leave them out. If you have read very similar words to these in other productions of mine, I hope the rereading of the subjects will be time spent in continued profit. The value of prayer can hardly be estimated. Unless you are willing to take up a life of prayer and keep it until the close, you had just as well not take up the Christian profession. Without prayer you will die. Someone has expressed it thus:

“Prayer is our life, our soul’s triumphant wings,
The arm that holds the shield and hand that takes the crown;
Along the line on which a thousand faithful prayers ascend,
Surely God doth send ten thousand blessings down.”

What an honor it is to have audience with the King of glory! He extends the golden scepter to us, and we come hopefully, confidingly, into His presence and tell Him all that is in our hearts. It is only because we comprehend something of His great love to us that we venture to come into His presence. Who would not consider it a great honor and blessed privilege to be admitted into the courts of the lords and the kings of earth? The greatest honor bestowed upon man is the privilege of coming into the presence of God and conversing with Him. Alas! how few appreciate the privilege of prayer! How few can properly estimate its true worth! Jesus by His example has taught us something of the worth of prayer. His rising a great while before it was day to hold communion with the Father, and His spending all night in prayer to Him, teach us something of its importance. If it was necessary for Jesus to spend so much time in prayer, how much more necessary for us.

Prayer is the energy and life of the soul. It is the invincible armor which shields the devoted Christian from the poisoned missiles shot forth from the batteries of hell. It is the mighty weapon in his hand with which he fights life’s battles unto victory. He who lives in prayer reigns triumphant. His soul is filled with the peace of heaven. Power is given him over sin and the world. By prayer all storm clouds are driven away, mountains of discouragement are cast into the sea, chasms of difficulties are bridged, hope is given wings, faith increases, and joys abound. Hell may rage and threaten, but he who is frequent and fervent in prayer experiences no alarm. By prayer the windows of heaven are opened, and showers of refreshing dews are rained upon the soul. It is as a watered garden, a fertile spot where blooms the unfading rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley; where spread the undecaying, unwithering branches of the tree of life. By prayer the soul is nourished and strengthened by the divine life. Do you long for deeper joys? For a greater sense of the divine fullness? For a sweeter balm of hope to be shed upon your soul? For a closer walk with God? Then live much in prayer. Do you desire to feel the holy flame of love burning in all its

intensity in your soul? Then enkindle it often at the golden altar of prayer. Without prayer, the inner being will weaken, famish, and die; the fountain of love dry up; the spring of joy cease to flow; the dews will fail to descend; and your heart will become a parched and dreary desert waste.

Look upon the character of Jesus. Behold His lowliness, His meekness, gentleness, and tender compassion. Have they any beauty? And would you love to have them grace your own soul? Then draw them down from the skies in all their glorious fullness by the fervent prayer of faith. As through the process of assimilation food is transformed into an active, living being; so through the medium of prayer the character of Jesus in all its transcendent beauty and glory becomes the character of man.

If you desire victory during the day, begin it with prayer. Not a few hurried words, but minutes of deep, intimate communion with God. Linger at the sacred altar of prayer until you feel particles of glory drop in richness into your soul, scattering sweetness throughout the whole and relating you to the world above. In the early morning hour, when the still, balmy breath of nature plays around, let your soul fly away on the wings of prayer with its message of love and praise to its Maker. Jesus went out a great while before day to hold communion with God. There is no time better suited for prayer. The world is hushed in slumber. There is less sin being committed, and if the world ever is innocent, it is in the early morning time. We thus get an advantage of the devil and have sweet converse with God before the devil can come in full strength.

If you desire to be more deeply and sincerely pious, seek it in prayer. If you desire heights in God's love, depths in His grace, fullness in His joy, richness in His glory, seek it in prayer. Did you say you had not time for prayer? What a pity! Your happiness and usefulness in life depend upon it; your eternal welfare depends upon it—then, oh, what a pity you have no time for it! But you must find time. You cannot afford to listen to Satan; there is too much at stake. This is an excuse that many allow Satan to make for them. Time for rest, time for eating, time for sleeping, time for friends, time for books; but no time for prayer. This is a device of Satan to rob souls of the love of God. You must not give him such an advantage of you. In love for your spiritual welfare I beseech you in Jesus' name, live much in prayer. Go often into your closet, and then, with the loins of your mind girded up, in all earnestness of soul pray until the love of God and the light of heaven fills your being. Satan will try to make you listless and indifferent; he will try to make your thoughts to wander; he will tell you of many other things that need to be done that very moment; and many other things will he tell you to deprive you of the blessings of prayer. But you must resist him and go the more earnestly in prayer; and continue to pray until a rapture from the skies sweeps over your soul, making the place of prayer the dearest spot on earth to you. When the shades of night come softly stealing,

Softly stealing o'er the window sill;

When the busy day is slowly ending,

Slowly ending peacefully and still—

Christian, with thy heart adoring Heaven,

Sweetest glories falling from above,

Go to God in secret, silent pleading,

Tell to Him the wondrous tale of love. When the morning light is gently dawning,
Gently dawning in the eastern sky;
When the darkness fast away is fleeing,
Duties of the day are drawing nigh—
Down before the sacred, hallowed altar,
Christian, bow before thy God in fervent prayer,
Giving thanks to Him for life's sweet blessings,
For the day imploring His kind care.

To be overcome today makes tomorrow's battles harder.

If you would be a better Christian tomorrow, live your very best today.

Like as the warming rays of the autumn's sun melt the early frost, so the warmth of Christian love in our hearts will melt the coldness in the hearts of sinful men.

Begin the day with prayer: it will fortify you against the tempter's power. The result of neglecting prayer is to be tossed furiously about upon the billows of temptation.

Time is of too great worth to waste one precious moment. An hour lost is that much of life lost. For all the time spent in idleness, you had just as well not have lived at all. By rightly using each moment you will build up a character that will stand a monument upon the tomb of the dead past. Moments misspent are life and character gone, and no imprint is left on the hearts of men to tell that we have lived. How many golden moments are flying away into eternity unladen with any fruit from your life? Learn to value time. Redeem it because these days are evil. Seize upon each passing moment, and send it up to the glorious Author of time laden with golden deeds.

03.12. Meditation

Meditation The Scriptures invite Christians on to greater depths in the love of God and greater heights in His joy as they journey on through life. It is the will of God that you grow in grace and become more spiritual each day of your life. That meditation does affect one's spirituality is an undeniable fact. Meditating upon God and His law is an excellent means of increasing spiritual life in the soul. Vagrant thoughts dull the finer sensibilities of the spiritual being, thereby rendering it less capable of impression by the Holy Ghost.

“Keeping in touch with God” is an expression much used in these days by people professing holiness, but what does it imply? We are all at sea when not in touch with Him. To be so kept is to have everything in us fully alive to God. Every Christian grace must be in a perfect state of health and vigorous growth. If there be any dwarfed condition of the spiritual being in any part, it will be less sensible to God's touch. The blind have been known to cultivate the sense of touch in the physical being to the amazing acuteness of being able to distinguish between colors. The sense of touch in the soul can by careful, earnest cultivation be refined to such a degree as to make it susceptible to the slightest impressions of the Spirit of God. By an electric cable America is brought in touch with Europe. Were this to become divided, communication would cease. Sin divided the life-giving cable from the presence of God to the souls of men. In Jesus the divided cable is taken up and united, and man brought into communion with God. So cultured may become the sensibilities of the inner being, and so thoroughly impregnated by God's enlivening power, that one empty thought causing the slightest ebbing of life's current flow is keenly felt. To keep in perfect touch with God is to live where there is a soul-consciousness that He is pleased with every act of your life, and where there is a clear, definite witnessing of the Spirit to your inmost soul that the words of your mouth and the meditations of your heart are acceptable unto Him.

Useless thought makes the soul coarse, and difficult of impression by good influences. Pure and holy meditations are an excellent means for the refinement of your moral being. Praying to God is talking to Him, telling Him the desires of the heart; whereas meditating upon God is contemplating His goodness, love, mercy, greatness, and wonderful works. Meditation prepares the heart for that deeper communion with God called prayer. Whoever gives attention to His meditations, and has learned to fix His mind upon God; to whom “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge”*; to whom “the heavens declare the glory of God,”* and who hears God's voice in nature and sees the goodness of His hand in all creation—finds no difficulty in drawing to God in prayer. If you allow your mind to wander vaguely about upon the vanities of the world, you will find prayer a difficult and rather an unpleasant task. Learn, therefore, I beseech you, to stay your mind upon the Lord, and great will be the peace and quietness of your soul. Precious moments spent in idle chit-chat with your companions or indulging vagrant thoughts are time worse than wasted. As your mind acts once, so it is disposed to act again. The mind forms habits of thinking. Then, how careful you should be to direct it in proper and useful channels.

Some people have found it difficult to prevent their thoughts from wandering while they were reading the Bible or in secret prayer. The wonderful works of God hardly awaken any admiration within them; they cannot elevate the soul into a profound awe before His awful presence, and there is but little conscious depths of inner reverence and devotion to His name. There is a blessed and sure remedy for this serious trouble. Carefully watch your meditations. Call the oftener upon God in some silent, secret place. Select some secluded, hallowed place, where nature is most inspiring for meditation. Isaac, the son of Abraham, went into the field at eventide to meditate. The evening is a time well suited to draw the soul out into deep, intimate communion with God. The the setting of the sun is a reminder of life's setting sun. You will be brought face to face with the fact that you must someday stand before Him who created all things. Your meditations will become serious. Oh, may you adore the Creator, and learn to admire His wondrous works! Go forth in the starry evening, when Nature is most inviting, and through her let your soul adore the Almighty, and let all within you be awed to solemn stillness at His footfall.

Idle, careless thoughts generate a stupidity that will rob you of joy. The sensibilities of your inner nature will become deadened, and you can no more hear the solemn footsteps of the Lord, nor the whispers of His voice. Meditating upon pure and holy things and seeing God in all, will elevate the soul to a plane all radiant with light and love, and put a meekness and modesty in your life and a sweet gentleness in every expression that will seem to make you akin to angels. Are you concerned about the peace of your soul? Is a happy life worth anything to you? Do you have any desire to become more like Jesus? Do you want to do all you can for Him? Do you want to dwell in heaven with Him forever? Then let your meditation be upon Him, and your soul sipping at the fountain of Heaven's love as the flower drinks up the dew. I cannot be too earnest in my exhortation to you in this matter. I know how important it is. I want to see you prosper and your soul increase in God; therefore I exhort you to meditate upon His law day and night (Psalms 1:2).

03.13. Reverie

Reverie Down beside the rippling river, 'Neath the weeping willow tree, Viewing nature sweet and lovely, Wond'ring what must heaven be.

List'ning to the merry songsters In the nearby leafy world;

Such sweet music seems to bear me Nearer to the gates of gold.

Breezes murm'ring through the branches, Waters rippling o'er the stone, What, oh, what must be the anthem Ringing round the great white throne?

Songs of birds and streamlet rippling, Meadow, flowers, and leafy tree, Make of earth a land of beauty—

What indeed must heaven be?

If you love scenes of great grandeur, And to hear sweet music ring, Come, oh! come with me to heaven, To the land where Christ is king.

03.14. A Theater

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

03.15. Rest of the Soul

Rest of the Soul

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”* Wonderful words of love and hope! Never did a sweeter nor richer invitation than this reach mortal ears. A whole world of humankind groaning under a burden, tossing in unrest, laboring under pain, sighing with sorrow, roaming in discontent, filled with fear, sinking in despair. But One appears upon the scene and says, “Come unto me... and I will give you rest.” Oh, may the humble followers of the lowly Nazarene echo and reecho this invitation of love among the haunts of men as long as time shall last! Amid a world of sin and trouble, a soul at rest; how blessed!

You remember the day you came to Him. Your sins with all the burden of guilt were taken away and you found rest. Later you dedicated yourself fully and forever to the Lord and entered into the fullness of His rest. Canaan’s fair land is the soul’s sweet home of rest. What heaven will be we cannot know now. Doubtless scenes and experiences will arise of such a nature as to greatly enhance the felicity of our hearts; but the revelation of heaven upon a sanctified soul and “The enjoyment of heavenly bliss E’en in a world like this” can never be told. Storms will arise and threaten you; but if the cable of faith remains unbroken and the anchor of hope unshaken, your little bark can sail on sweetly at rest. Doubts are very destructive to soul-rest; therefore they must be dispelled at their first approach. By faith your soul can be kept in the precious realization of heavenly enjoyments; you can have sweet walks with God and tastes of His love all along your journey of life. By living in the vale of humble submission to God, fully and freely yielded to His control, upon your soul the sweets of heaven’s graces will be distilled like the gentle siftings of the evening dew upon the flower, transporting you to wondrous felicity in God all along your pilgrim way.

Behold the fowls of the air:

They sow not, neither do they reap;

Yet kings have not more healthful fare, Nor rest in calmer, sweeter sleep.

They have no barns nor hoarded grain, Yet all day long a soft, sweet strain They warble forth from forest tree;

Ever happy and ever free, Teaching a lesson dear to me. So free from care, O sylvan band;

Fed by a heavenly Father’s hand. Your freedom, O ye fowls of heaven, New courage to my soul hath given;

I no more can doubt or sorrow:

God will care for me tomorrow.

Behold the lilies how they grow:

They toil not neither do they spin;

Yet kings in all their pomp and show Are not arrayed like one of them;

Smiling and free in breezes sway, Yet clothed by heavenly hand are they.

Meek lilies of the quiet fields, Your growth instruction to me yields. The One who clothes the lily fair And gives it tender, earnest care— Will He not hear my fervent prayer? The One who notes the sparrow's fall— Does He not love His creatures all?

If He so clothes each tuft and tree And gives the birds such liberty, Will He not clothe and care for me?

I no more can doubt or sorrow:

God will care for me tomorrow.

“A merry heart hath a continual feast.”* It is the will of God that you be always happy.

If you are not contented with such things as you have, you would not be contented had you ever so much.

Those who are always contented and happy are a most gracious contribution from God to a discontented world. This sin-darkened world is dotted here and there by beautiful Christian lives, which are to the world's weary wastes what the oasis is to the parched desert. The Christian has the blessed privilege of proving to a covetous, discontented world that man can by the grace of God be contented under the most adverse circumstances.

Oftentimes people conclude that they would be happy if their surrounding circumstances were different. True happiness consists not so much in the environments, as in the dispositions of the heart.

After a day of labor, what a pleasure it is to meet at home the warmth of hearts we love! After a life of toil, what will be the pleasure of meeting all the loved in heaven?

I am told that the language of the Algonquin Indians of North America contained no word from which to translate the word love. When the English missionaries translated the Bible into that language they were obliged to coin a word for love. What must be a language without love? And what must be the heart! The Christian out upon life's sea can, by faith, hope, and love, weather the wildest storm that ever the winds of adversity blew. Hope is the anchor fastened to the eternal word of God; faith is the cable attached to the anchor hope.

03.16. Happiness of Life

Happiness of Life
Down, down in the depths of infinite love,
Filled with all the fullness of God,
Joy's cup every moment filled from above,
As adown life's pathway I trod.
No sin sways its scepter over my soul,
God's righteousness fills every part,
His fullness of glory keeping the whole,
And I love Him with all my heart.

Sing not to me of the pleasures of earth,
I have found a much happier way;
The joys of the Lord, of far greater worth,
Are filling my life every day.

Sorrow and sighing have flown away,
From trouble and care I am free,
The peace of God over my heart holds sway;

I am as happy as I can be.

You are tempted, you say, and sorely tried;
Of that I have nothing to say—
The victory is mine whate'er may betide;

I'm happy each hour of the day.
My pathway of life is now paved with peace,
The flow'rs ever bloom bright and gay;
A halo of light is shed around me
As I walk the beautiful way.

03.17. The Hidden Life

The Hidden Life

You have experienced a resurrection. You once were dead in sin; now you are alive unto God. You have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. You are a new creation; you have a new life. Though you have existence in this world, yet the world does not discover your true life. With Christ it is hid in God. The world knows nothing of you except as they see you in the life you live in the flesh. You have a higher life to which they are as insensible as the inanimate stone is to the life of the bird. You are one of God's "hidden ones," and a stranger on the earth, because you are unknown. You are not found in the halls of worldly pleasure, but instead are to be found by the bedside of the sick, reading the Bible, praying, or speaking words of cheer and comfort, and the world wonders how you can enjoy yourself in such a way. You have a joy that is unknown to them, because you have a life that is hidden from them. That life of yours which is hid with Christ in God finds no enjoyment in the pleasures of the world. When adversity comes the world does not understand how it is that you can rejoice; and when circumstances are very unfavorable, how you can be happy is a mystery to them. It is because you do not live in the things of the world, but in a much higher realm. If your life is hid with Christ in God, your heart's longings will be for the things above; all your affections will be on things above. Those who live upon earth are seeking the things of earth; but those who live above in God seek the things which are above (Colossians 3:1-3). Nothing of earth has any charms for them. Christ has won their hearts. They love Him intensely. They live in Him. They are sojourning here upon earth for a time, but their hearts are with Christ in heaven. Their home, their love, their treasures, their hopes, their thoughts, their life—all are there, and they are seeking with eagerness for more of that sweet, precious life which is from above. They walk here almost like one in a dream, as concerning this world; they know but little of earth, but much of heaven. This earth is not my home,

I live above, Where peace and joys abound—

Sweet land of love. My life is hid in God With Christ the Son, Though here on earth I am By earth unknown.

I dwell in worlds above, By thought and prayer—

Oh, blest eternal home! My heart is there.

03.18. Consciousness of God's Presence

Consciousness of God's Presence

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

It is the privilege of the saint so to walk in the presence of God and live in holy communion with Him as to draw God's glory and life into his own, and give him a feature very distinguishing for ordinary natural man. If we wish to be like Jesus and enjoy the sweet consciousness of His presence, we must live with Him in prayer. As we improve the health and strength of our physical being by proper food and exercise, so we improve the strength and beauty of our spiritual being by proper meditation and prayer.

03.19. Reflection

Reflection

How often when walking down the country lane in the twilight of a summer's evening you have looked upon the round, full moon and exclaimed, "What a tender, beautiful light! How soft and mellow is the glow!" But you must remember the light is not its own. Of itself it is a cold, dark body. The great luminary that so recently sank behind the western hills is the real light. It pours its brilliant rays upon the moon and the moon reflects the sun's light upon your pathway. The moon, therefore, is only a reflector. You stand before a mirror and behold your face and form imaged in the glass. The glass acts as a reflector, reproducing the objects that are placed before it and shine upon it. The unregenerate heart is dark and reflects no light; but God can take it and cleanse, purge, and polish it, and make it capable of reflecting the virtues of heaven's grace.

1 Corinthians 13:12 is rendered thus by Conybeare and Howson: "So now we see darkly, by a mirror; but then face to face." While here in this life we cannot see the real and true glories of the eternal world; but we can see some of its beauties and glories mirrored in the face of nature and the Bible. The starry worlds above us, the verdant hills, the swaying forests, the waving grain, the fleeting cloud, the blooming flower, dimly shadow forth the glory that awaits our expectant souls in that bright world where angels dwell. The Greek text of 2 Corinthians 3:18 is beautifully rendered in these words by the above mentioned translators: "With face unveiled we behold in a mirror the brightness of our Lord's glory, are ourselves transformed into the same likeness; and the glory which shines upon us is reflected by us, even as it proceeds from the Lord, the Spirit." These words are full of grandeur to my soul. Their wondrous beauty and sublimity cannot fail to awaken admiration in every Spirit-quickened and purity-loving heart. You will see, Christian reader, the position you occupy as a follower of the Lamb of God. You are a reflector; you have no light of yourself. God shines His glory upon you and you reflect it to the world, and thus you become the light of the world. In one translation "character" is used instead of "glory." God's character is shined into your soul, and you are to reflect it to the world.

There is another clause in the above quotation too full of riches and too well adapted to this work to pass by unnoticed. It is this: "We behold in a mirror the brightness of our Lord's glory, are ourselves transformed into the same likeness." We do not grow into salvation, neither do we grow into sanctification; but after we receive this glorious experience there is still a continual transforming into a more perfect likeness of Christ. While in the Museum of Art in one of our large cities last spring I saw an artist reproducing on canvas a painting which hung upon the wall. I looked upon the painting on the wall and upon the reproduction before the artist. So far as I could see the reproduction was in exact imitation of the original; but the eye of the artist could see farther than mine. He kept on applying the brush, giving a slight touch here and a slight touch there, and soon I discovered that the features stood out in more perfect imitation. So let us stand before the original and let the Holy Spirit work in us that which is pleasing to God, and we shall be continually transformed into a more perfect likeness of God. This must be your daily life. Attend strictly to

every Christian duty, be obedient to the Word and Spirit of God, and you will become more and more like Him and your soul will be rich in grace.

03.20. Becoming

Becoming

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

03.21. Love of Home

Love of Home

There are but few sweeter words in the English language than the word home. I have thought the three sweetest words are mother, home, and heaven. Home is the dearest place in all the world to the Christian heart. To have a fond love for home is not at all injurious to Christian character. Those who have but little love for home will never succeed well in the Christian life. It may sometimes occur that some of the home members are so disagreeable that the Christian for the sake of peace will quit the home roof; but he still loves home. Sometimes young people think that to enjoy life they must get out from under parental rule and roof. We have an instance of this nature recorded in the Bible (Luke 15:11-32). How soon we learn of the prodigal's longing for the comforts of home. How often he thought of his father's house, that place so dear to him now. The love of home is a high mark of integrity. Show me one who has no love for home, and I will show you one who has but little true manhood or womanhood. The Bible command to young Christians is to be "chaste, keepers at home."* When our duty and service to God demand our absence from home we submit and go in the strength of His grace, but lose not our love for home, and return in joy at Father's will.

You can nowhere find more of heaven upon earth than in a Christian home. Look at the picture: A father with the Holy Bible, the mother and children listening in reverence to the heavenly message. Where, I say, can you find more of heaven? Such a scene is most sweet and sacred. Methinks the angels bend low to catch the chants of praise that arise from those devoted hearts to the gates of heaven. "Such a picture," you may say, "is very beautiful and inspiring to look upon, but where is the reality?" Thank God, such a home can be real in life, and it is your duty as a Christian to help make it so. God is pleased with such a home. It is much to His praise. Since such homes are so rare they are all the more glorifying to God, and we should strive the more earnestly to have them real. In your home is the place to shine for God. It is the place to shed forth the radiant beams of Christian light from your grace-laden soul. If you hope to prosper in the divine life, be your best at home. Do not think you can be careless at home and then shine in the splendor of Christian virtue when before the public. Your life at home leaves its mark upon you. Shine in Christian beauty at home, and you will shine in beauty in public; but attempt away from home to be more than you are at home, and you will miserably fail. A few years ago, while in one of our large Eastern cities laboring for Jesus and souls for whom He died, I wrote a few lines to the dear ones at home, which perhaps will not be out of place to insert here. When the light of day is dying And the shades of night steal on, Voices to my mem'ry whisper Of the dear loved ones at home.

Ere the chandelier is lighted, Ere the day's last ray is gone, O'er me comes a fond remembrance Of the dear loved ones at home.

Far above in arch of heaven Lamps are lighted one by one, But I only see the bright eyes Of the dear loved ones at home.

Far away beyond the region Where I see those shining stars, Somewhere in the land of angels,
Dwells a little boy of ours.

Years ago, one wintry evening Heaven's gate was opened wide, And an angel swift descended,
With a sickle at his side.

Paused he at our boy's low trundle In the evening twilight hour, Caught away his happy spirit To its
home beyond the stars.

How my heart adores the Giver Of all good o'er land and sea, But I praise Him more than ever For
the dear ones left to me. As I think of her he gave me In my happy youthful time, How he bound
our hearts together At love's pure and sacred shrine; As I think of her this moment, Given me by
love divine, Seems I almost feel the pressure Of her gentle hand in mine. In the arms of night I'm
folded, Soon in dreamland I shall roam;

Then I'll go and see the dear ones—

See the dear loved ones at home.

03.22. Victory

Victory

Selected When you are forgotten or neglected, or purposely set at naught, and you smile inwardly, glorying in the insult or the oversight, because thereby counted worthy to suffer with Christ—that is victory. When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your taste offended, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you take it all in patient, loving silence—that is victory. When you are content with any food, any raiment, any climate, any society, any solitude, any interruption by the will of God—that is victory. When you can lovingly and patiently bear with any disorder, any irregularity, any unpunctuality, or any annoyance—that is victory. When you can stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, and endure it all as Jesus endured it—that is victory. When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation or to record your own good works, or to itch after commendation, when you can truly love to be unknown—that is victory.

When, like Paul, you can throw all your suffering on Jesus, thus converting it into a means of knowing His overcoming grace, and can say from a surrendered heart, “Most gladly therefore [do] I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake”^{*}—that is victory. When death and life are both alike to you through Christ, and to do His perfect will, you delight not more in one than the other—that is victory, for, through Him, you may become able to say, “Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.”^{*} “Death is swallowed up in victory.”^{*} The perfect victory is to “put... on the Lord Jesus Christ”^{*} and thus to triumph over one’s self.

“In all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”^{*}

03.23. The First Love

The First Love

You may wonder why we write so much about love. It is for the very best reason in the world. Nothing is so great as love, and no way so excellent. It is difficult to bind people together where love is lacking. A religious people may resolve to live in peace and confidence with one another; but this they will find to be very difficult if there is a deficiency of love. Love solves the problem; it removes every difficulty, and is the perfect bond of union. Nothing can separate hearts that are full of love. Love must be suppressed before division can be admitted. The most earnest exhortations and entreaties and the strongest reprovings fail to get men to attend to every Christian duty where love is wanting; but it is not difficult to persuade men to obey God and do all they can to glorify Him when they love Him with all their hearts.

There was much in the life of the angel of the church at Ephesus that was praiseworthy; but something was lacking. He had left his first love (Revelation 2:1-7). But, what is the first love? There is no difference between first love and last love if it be love. Pure, genuine love is the same always—first, last, and all the time. The overseers of this church, and doubtless the church in general, had lost the ardor of the love which they had at the first. Oh, the warmth, the sweetness, of first love! Do you not remember it, dear reader? When you were so clearly and wonderfully born of the Spirit of God, how ardent was the love in your heart! It thrilled you with delight. There was a delicious, sweet taste all through your soul. How gladly you would have taken wings and have flown away to the arms of Him whom your heart loved. The word of God was to your soul like honeyed dew upon your lips. How delightful it was to labor for Jesus! How precious sweet to make the greatest sacrifices for His sake! And to go away into some secret place and pray was dearer to you than can ever be told. You found the greatest pleasure in attending to every Christian duty. I should be glad if I could describe to you just what that first love was in your heart. I cannot do this, neither can you; but you know how it felt, and how joyful was your soul. Oh, blessed, happy day, when your sins were washed away, and love sang its sweetest song within your soul!

Now, if you do not have the same ardor; the same warmth; the same sweet relish for prayer, for the word of God, for a meeting; the same thrilling sense of sweetness in your soul; that same precious drawing toward God and toward the brethren; that same delight in laboring for Jesus; that same joy and happiness in making sacrifices for Him and for your fellow man: if you do not feel those symptoms of love as deeply and as delightfully, and if they are not in you as actively as they were at the first—you are like the church at Ephesus—you have left your first love. In Wilson's excellent translation this text reads, "Thou hast relaxed thy first love." They had lost the intensity of their first love. It had relaxed, or lost tension, and had become languid. It does not matter to what you testify, or who you are, if you have not the same ardor and deep intensity of love that you had at the first, you have relaxed love. Do not deceive yourself. Do not make any excuses. There is no necessity of losing this fervency of love. The leaping, thrilling, bounding love can be kept in the full

blaze of its intensity in your soul as long as you live. I can never encourage a cessation of love. No matter what the circumstances, we can increase and abound more and more in love. You may have works, you may have labor, you may have patience; so did the church at Ephesus; but they had relaxed their first love.

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

03.24. The Little Foxes

The Little Foxes

Selected One little fox is, “Some other time.” If you track him up, you come to his hole—never.

Another little fox is, “I can’t.” Just set on him a plucky little “I can,” and he will kill him for you.

Another bad little fox is, “Just a little”—pride, self-will, worldly conformity, etc. That little mischief will strip the whole vine if left go.

Another malignant little fox is “I haven’t faith.” He slips into the vineyard through a knothole called “self.” You can shut him out by removing the self-plank and filling up with Jesus only.

Another bad little fox is, “I haven’t power.” Be sure and catch him. If you will take the pains to dig him up, you will find his nest some where beyond the end of your present consecration. It will pay you to take him, if you have to “dig deep” and work hard.

Another devouring little fox is, “My church.” “Salt” and “fire” is the sure and only antidote for such nasty vermin.

We will point out one more little fox, and he is able to devour all the fruit of the vineyard and kill the very vines. His species is “Fear.” One good dose of “perfect love” will kill him stone-dead. And a constant application of the blood of Christ will prevent this one, with all other little or big foxes, yea, and all other animals, from ever coming to life again.

03.25. Spiritual Declension

Spiritual Declension

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

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

might easily have foreseen their strength of principle would be liable to be put to the severest test. They keep company in which it is nearly impossible that their moral feelings should not be defiled. They allow themselves to assort with the idle, the frivolous, with those who are given to foolish talking and jesting; they indulge idle thoughts, repeat amusing stories, read books and papers that do not gender to piety, etc. But he who is willing to go as far toward evil as he can with safety, has lost one of the greatest safeguards of virtue. He who is ready to tamper with temptation is on dangerous ground and in a sad state of declension. O reader, turn ye about, shake loose from the world, draw nigh to God, let the deep breathings waft your soul upward and upward to greater heights in God's joy and love, and this world will only be a dim specter in the distance.

03.26. Diligence

Diligence

“Oh, for a closer walk with God!” This is the inward pleading of many a precious blood-washed soul. I beg leave to tell you that that fullness of God, that deep and perfect satisfaction of soul, that sweet feeling of deep reverence, that hushed and sacred feeling of awe, that close walk with God, is obtained and retained only by the utmost diligence. Slothfulness in the Christian life is a sure source of degeneration. Too frequently when saints reach “fair Canaan’s happy land” they think they have nothing now to do but to sing and shout and praise God and go to heaven “on flow’ry beds of ease.”* To every newly arrived Christian in Canaan is given the command, “Go in and possess the land.”* To do this battles must be fought, giant foes must be defeated, and the greatest diligence must be practiced. God promised ancient Israel to drive out all the nations of Canaan from before them, and that every place whereon the soles of their feet should tread should be theirs, if they would diligently keep all the commandments that the Lord commanded them, to love the Lord, to walk in His ways, and to cleave unto Him (Deuteronomy 11:22-24).

If we will diligently obey God and go forward at His command He will lead us where the milk and honey flow, and where the pastures are green. Our walk with Him will be sweet and our souls perfectly satisfied. Since the term diligence is so frequently used in Scripture and such emphasis placed upon it, it is well worth our time to learn its meaning. We often, among the saints, hear testimonies like these: “I am living up to all the Word of God”; or, “All the Bible requires of me, I am doing”; “I love God and find delight in doing all His will,” etc. Such expressions are very full of meaning and may sometimes mean more than the witness comprehends. Let me ask you, Are you as diligent in every respect as the Bible commands you to be?

Diligence implies an earnest and constant effort to accomplish a desired end—a carefulness, a heedfulness, an industry, a close and fixed attention.

Many a heart has been robbed of the love of God because it was not kept by diligence. Many a beloved saint can look back to a few years ago when his soul was more fully satisfied and his heart abounded more in the love of God, and all because diligence was not given to “keep thy heart.”* In Joshua 22:5 the commandment is to take diligent heed to love God, to walk in His ways, to keep His commandments, to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all the heart and with all the soul. May the Lord help the reader to comprehend the strength of this commandment. Oh, how precious! To take diligent heed to love God, implies a careful avoidance of everything that would have a tendency to suppress His love in our hearts and to eagerly seek all possible means of increasing that love. All company whose spirit and conversation have a tendency to destroy love is avoided as far as possible without violating the command, “Be courteous.”* Reading amusing stories; telling amusing, worldly incidents, the happenings of bygone days; fondness for the general news of the day; gossiping; admiration for the pomp and show of the world; careless, idle thoughts; fondness for society—all serve to extinguish the love of God in our hearts. Talking with others about God and His works, reading His Word, meditating upon Him, praying, attending

meetings, doing “good unto all men,”* giving of our means to advance His cause—all these increase the love in our hearts toward Him. To be diligent, to serve the Lord with all the heart and with all the soul, is to be industrious in doing all we can for Him; seeking opportunities of doing good, carefulness in obeying all His commands, testifying to the works of God, and showing forth His praises continually. Your soul may long for a closer walk with God, and well that it does; But if you do not keep your heart with all diligence from the world, you will never enjoy the blessed experience. But by giving diligence you can have such a walk with God as to fully satisfy your soul.

03.27. Lowliness

Lowliness But few traits of Christian character are more lovely than lowliness. Humility, meekness, and lowliness are terms nearly synonymous, but not wholly so. It is somewhat difficult for the mind to grasp the shades of difference in their meaning. It appears, however, that lowliness is the deepest depth of humility and meekness. Meekness is the opposite of impatience, harshness, or irritability, and has for its fruit gentleness and kindness. Humility is the opposite of pride, and has for its fruits modesty, unforwardness, etc. Lowliness is simply the opposite of highness in self in any respect, and has for its fruits meekness and humility with their fruits. To us this command is given: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness."* If you have the experience of "all lowliness," you will go on in your vocation without discouragement and disappointment, though you are unnoticed and wholly ignored. And though God promotes others and honors them and they are loved and praised by men, you are glad for them and rejoice. If you have the experience of "all lowliness" in your soul, you will not have the least disposition to lift up self. All you do and say will be in godly sincerity. Now look closely.

If God heals someone through your prayers, be careful when you tell of the healing that it is to lift up the Lord only. If you have composed a song, and sing it to a company who do not know that it is your song, then you tell them the Lord gave you the song, what is your motive? Do you want them to know how good and great the Lord is, and nothing more? Or do you want them to know that you are the author? I say, look closely into your motive. If, from the lowliness of your heart, you desire in all you do and say, only to exalt the Lord, it will be felt in the depth of your speech, and God will be honored. But if there is the least inclination or feeling to exalt self, it will be felt in the gracelessness of your speech, and God will be dishonored. Go humbly on in life attending to the work God has assigned to you, doing it well and in all lowliness of heart before Him, and be content.

03.28. On Dress

On Dress

Selected

If you could be as humble when you choose rich apparel (which I flatly deny), yet you could not be as beneficent, as plenteous in good works. Therefore every shilling that you needlessly spend on your apparel is in effect stolen from the poor! For what end do you want these ornaments? To please God? No!—but to please your own fancy or to gain the admiration and applause of those who are no wiser than yourself. If so, what you wear you are in effect tearing from the back of the naked; and the costly and delicate food you eat, you are snatching from the mouth of the hungry. For mercy, for pity, for Christ's sake, for the honor of His gospel, stay your hand! Do not throw this money away. Do not lay out on nothing, yea worse than nothing, what may clothe your poor, naked, shivering fellow creatures.

Many years ago, when I was at Oxford, on a cold winter's day, a young maid (one of those we keep at school) called on me. I said, "You seem half starved. Have you nothing to cover you but that thin gown?" She said, "Sir, this is all I have." I put my hand in my pocket, but found no money left, having just paid away all that I had. It struck me, "Will thy Master say, 'Well done, good and faithful steward. Thou hast adorned thy wall with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold'? O justice! O mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of the poor maid? See thy expensive apparel in the same light; thy gown, hat, head-dress!"

Everything about thee which costs more than Christian duty required thee to lay on, is the blood of the poor! Oh, be wise for the time to come! Be more merciful; more faithful to God and man; more abundantly clad (like men and women professing godliness) "with good works."*

It is stark, staring nonsense to say, "Oh, I can afford this or that!" If you have regard to common sense, let that silly word never come into your mouth. No man living can afford to throw away any part of that food or raiment into the sea which was lodged with him on purpose to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. And it is far worse than waste to spend any part of it in gay and costly apparel. For this is no less than to turn wholesome food into deadly poison. It is giving so much money to poison both yourself and others as far as your example spreads, with pride, vanity, anger, lust, love of the world, and a thousand "foolish and hurtful lusts"* which tend to "pierce themselves through with many sorrows."* O God, arise and maintain Thy own cause! Let not men and devils any longer put out our eyes and lead as blindfolded into the pit of destruction.

God demands of His people that they dress modestly as becomes people who profess holiness. The putting on of apparel for adornment and the wearing of jewelry are not consistent with Christian modesty. The nude and lewd art of dressing which is becoming so prevalent among professors of Christ is an abomination in the sight of God, and a practice which no virtuous man or woman can countenance. If professors would stop and consider the character of women who invent popular fashions of the age they might well blush with shame at their eager attempts to

follow the modern styles of dress invented by the wicked leaders of fashion in London and Paris, whence the latest styles of this country generally emanate. It is indeed sad to behold the young of today making themselves unfit to fulfill the sacred functions of wife and mother by the use of the modern corset, as well as laying a foundation for years of misery, dragged out in this life by diseases brought upon them by catering to the creed of millions who worship at the shrine of Fashion. The pride of their hearts, pampered and fed by the foolish practices of the age, blinds them to their obligations to God as a Creator and Savior; and amid the whirl of earthly vanity they hasten to the awful doom that awaits all who fail to obey the gospel of Christ. The Word of God gives plain directions to Christians as to how they should dress. In olden times God permitted His people to wear some jewelry; that is, there was no law against it; but there came a time when He promised that He would cleanse the hearts of His people from all pride and vanity, and they should find no pleasure in putting on ornamental dress and jewelry, and costly array. In Isaiah 3:16-23 we have a clear prophecy of the gospel age, and how God was going to have His people dress modestly in accordance with their profession. "Thus saith the Lord, because the daughters of Sion are haughty, and have walked with an outstretched neck, and with winking of the eyes, and motion of the feet... therefore the Lord will humble the chief daughters of Sion, and the Lord will expose their form in that day; and the Lord will take away the glory of their raiment, the curls and the fringes, and the crescents, and the chains, and the ornaments of their faces, and the array of glorious ornaments, and the armlets, and the bracelets, and the wreathed work, and the finger-rings, and the ornaments for the right hand, and the earrings, and the garments with scarlet borders, and the garments with purple grounds, and the shawls to be worn in the house, and the Spartan transparent dresses, and those made of fine linen, and the purple ones, and the scarlet ones, and the fine linen, interwoven with gold and purple, and the light coverings for couches."*LXX

We shall now quote from the New Testament: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."*

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."* The wearing of feathers, artificial flowers, frills, flounces, unnecessary tucks and trimmings, is not in harmony with the gospel standard of modest apparel. Queer-shaped hats, such as we see worn by the people who follow the fashions of the world, should be avoided by the saints as they would every other thing unbecoming to a Christian; not fashioning themselves according to their former lusts in their ignorance. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."* The all-wise God who gave these commands knows what is for the good of His people, and if we love Him, we will obey. When the heart is cleansed from all pride there will be no difficulty in measuring up to the gospel on the matter of modest apparel. We trust all who read this may realize it is truth.

03.29. The Elixir of Life

The Elixir of Life

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

03.30. Rules for Everyday Life

Rules for Everyday Life “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt.”* “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.”* “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.”* “Do all things without murmurings and disputings.”* “Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth.”* “Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks.”* “Eat so much as is sufficient for thee.”* “Be not wise in your own conceits.”* “Abstain from all appearance of evil.”* “See that none render evil for evil unto any man.”* “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.”* “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”* “Be content with such things as ye have.”* “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”* “Let all things be done with charity.”* “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”* “Keep thyself pure.”* “In everything give thanks.”* “Keep yourselves in the love of God.”*

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”*

03.31. A Holy Life

A Holy Life

What, in its true sense, is a holy life? It is the life of Jesus. His whole manner of life was truly holy. His life is the ideal life. If we would live holy, we must live as He lived. We must walk as He walked. The artist has his ideal before him, and with touches of the brush here and there upon his drawing he forms a picture in an exact image of the ideal. The life of Jesus is what we are to imitate. He sets the example of holy living and calls us to the same holy life. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."* This text has a better rendering in the Revised Version: "Like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living."RV We, as Christians, are God's offspring and as such are like Him.

Holiness in the life of Jesus is found not only in the greater miracles which He performed, but also in the lesser happenings of His life. The restoring of life to the dead is no more beautifully holy than the laying of His hands upon the heads of children and blessing them. His memorable Sermon on the Mount no more portrays the loveliness of His character than the conversation with the woman by the wayside well. It is the little things in everyday life, if attended to and kept in the meekness and solemnity of the Spirit of Christ, that make life truly beautiful and holy. It is not the eloquent sermon that makes a life so sublime; but it is the tender smile, the kind word, the gentle look, that is given to all. It is the patient manner in which all the little trying and provoking things of life are met.

You may preach or write ever so forcibly and eloquently, and bring out the sublime truths of the Bible in great beauty; but if, in the privacy of your own home, there are little frettings, a little peevishness, a little crossness, a little levity, a little selfishness, a little distrust, your life is not as truly holy as it should be. If you desire God's holy image to be stamped upon your soul, your countenance, and your life, carefully avoid the little sprigs of lightness, the little bits of sloth and indolence, touches of forwardness, rudeness, coarseness, and crossness, and acts of selfishness, etc.

Pure words belong to a holy life. You should use the very choicest words. Words that are wholly free from vulgarity, slang, and the spirit of the world. Untidiness, uncleanness, carelessness, and shabbiness are not at all beautiful ornaments in a holy life. But quietness, modesty, and reticence are gems which sparkle in a holy life like diamond sets in a band of gold. Give attention to your words, your thoughts, your tone of voice, your feelings, the practice of self-denial, of little acts of benevolence, of promptness, of method and order. These are auxiliaries to holy living. Are there not many little things in your home life that you can improve upon? Seek God for help and be truly holy.

03.32. A Solitary Way

A Solitary Way

Selected There is a mystery in human hearts, And though we be encircled by a host
Of those who love us well, and are beloved, To every one of us, from time to time,
There comes a sense of utter loneliness. Our dearest friend is "stranger" to our joy,
And cannot realize our bitterness.

"There is not one who really understands, Not one to enter into all I feel,"

Such is the cry of each of us in turn.

We wander in "a solitary way,"* No matter what or where our lot may be;

Each heart, mysterious even to itself, Must live its inner life in solitude. And would you know the
reason why this is?

It is because the Lord desires our love. In every heart He wishes to be first, He therefore keeps the
secret key Himself, To open all its chambers, and to bless With perfect sympathy and holy peace
Each solitary soul which comes to Him. So when we feel this loneliness it is The voice of Jesus
saying, "Come to me"; And every time we are "not understood,"

It is a call to us to come again: For Christ alone can satisfy the soul. And those who walk with Him
from day to day Can never have "a solitary way." And when beneath some heavy cross you faint
And say, "I cannot bear this load alone,"

You say the truth. Christ made it purposely So heavy that you must return to Him. The bitter grief,
which "no one understands,"

Conveys a secret message from the King, Entreating you to come to Him again. The "Man of
sorrows"* understands it well, "In all points tempted,"* He can feel with you;

You cannot come too often, or too near. The Son of God is infinite in grace, His presence satisfies
the longing soul; And those who walk with Him from day to day Can never have "a solitary way."

03.33. Stirring the Eagle's Nest

Stirring the Eagle's Nest

Selected

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.”* That picture is full of poetry, full of life and truth and beauty. Mark it. Have you ever seen an eagle stir up her nest? You know what happens. There in the nest, right upon the rocky heights, are the eaglets. The mother eagle comes and, taking hold of them, flings them out of the nest. They were so comfortable there, but she flings them right out of the nest, high above the earth. They begin to fall straightway. They never have been in air before; they have always been in the nest. Is not that mother bird cruel? Why does she disturb the eaglets?

Watch her and you will understand. As long as you look upon the struggling eaglets in the air you miss the point. Watch the eagle. Having stirred up her nest, she “spreadeth abroad her wings,” the wings that beat the air behind her as she rises superior to it. Where are the eaglets? Struggling, falling; she is superior; they are falling. Then what does she do? She “beareth them on her pinions.” She swoops beneath them, catches them on her wings, and bears them up. What is she doing? Teaching them to fly. She drops them again, and again they struggle in the air, but this time not so helplessly. They are finding out what she means. She spreads her pinions to show them how to fly, and as they fall again, she catches them again. That is how God deals with you and me. Has He been stirring up your nest? Has He flung you out until you feel lost in an element that is new and strange? Look at Him. He is not lost in that element. He spreads out the wings of omnipotence to teach us how to soar. What then? He comes beneath us and catches us on His wings. We thought when He flung us out of the nest it was unkind. No; He was teaching us to fly that we might enter into the spirit of the promise, “They shall mount up with wings as eagles.”* He would teach us how to use the gifts which He has bestowed on us, and which we cannot use as long as we are in the nest.

Fancy keeping eaglets in the nest! It is contrary to their nature, contrary to the purposes for which they are framed and fitted. There is a purpose in the eagle. What is it! Flight upward. There is a purpose in your life, newborn child of God! What is it? Flight Godward, sunward, heavenward. If you stop in the nest you will never get there. God comes into your life and disturbs you, breaks up your plans, and extinguishes your hopes, the lights that have lured you on. He spoils everything; what for? That He may get you on His wings and teach you the secret forces of your own life, and lead you to the higher development and higher purposes. The government of God is a disturbing element, but, praise His name! it is a progressive element.

03.34. Some Things You Should Not Do

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

03.35. Purity

Purity

There are but few words in the English language sweeter and more beautiful than the word purity. What tender, mellow light beams out from its depths through its crystal clearness! What a halo of glory encircles it! What a sweet melody is contained in the sound, which, as it falls upon the soul, awakens all that is manly, noble, and godly there! Purity! Who can repeat this word and not feel and hear a sweet rhythm reverberating through all the avenues of his spiritual being? "Keep thyself pure."* Is there a soul so deep in slumber, so stupefied by the opiates of sin, as to know no awakening by the sweet melodious chimes that ring out from this heavenly command! Dismal, indeed, must be the heart in which no aspirations for a pure, devoted life are awakened by these glorious words.

Listen, O my soul, to the sweet music, "Keep thyself pure." Tuned by the Spirit and sung by the voice of inspiration, in the bright morning of this glorious gospel day, it comes ringing down through the ages and is awakening desires and aspirations for the truest nobility of manhood, the deepest piety, and the highest plane of moral purity to which man can attain through the redeeming grace of God. The command to you, young man, is, "Keep thyself pure"; and to you, young lady, "Keep thyself pure"; and to all who are farther down the stream of life and hastening on to the boundless ocean of eternity, "Keep thyself pure." If you desire to comprehend something of the true meaning of purity, think of heaven: what purity is in heaven, so it is on earth; what it is in the life of Christ, so it is in the life of man. Here upon the shores of time we look away, by an eye of faith, and behold the purity of heaven and its inhabitants. We behold the angels and the great white throne, upon which sits the King of glory; but who, of all mankind, will really be eye-witnesses of that fair scene? The Lamb, who is the light over there, makes answer, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."* From that golden throne of God and the Lamb, the "beloved disciple," from the land of visions, saw flowing a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal; and he heard the Lord of heaven and earth saying, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely"*; and the Spirit and the bride repeat the invitation, saying, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* But what is this pure river of water of life? It is the wonderful river of God's saving grace, issuing forth from out His throne and flowing throughout all His kingdom. The Son of God extended His Father's kingdom to this earth and set the glorious stream of salvation flowing here. This wonderful stream is just as pure and its waters just as sweet in their onward flowing here, as they are when they come sparkling forth from out the throne. If you will come and wash in this crystal stream; if you will drink of its delicious waters—they will make you as pure as the throne from which they flow. If you will allow them to ripple over your soul, they will cleanse you and make you pure, so that purity in your heart will not be inferior to that purity which encircles the throne of God. Glory to His name! The Psalmist says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."* White is an emblem of purity. When John beheld the multitude of all nations standing before the throne and the Lamb, clothed in white robes, he asked whence they came. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have

washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

Purity of soul and heart and mind and conscience and thought and life is an experience to be attained to and enjoyed in this life. Peter says, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.”* Jesus says, “Blessed are the pure in heart.”* Paul says, “I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience.”* Peter says, “I stir up your pure minds.”* Paul says, “Whatsoever things are pure... think on these things.”* Christ is the standard of purity. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”* Purity in all the affections, in all the desires, in all the motives, and in all the thoughts. The heart that is made pure in the light of God reveals nothing contrary to heaven. Nothing can be more noble and beautiful upon earth than a pure life. Oh, how many unclean and impure thoughts and desires are filling the minds and hearts of men and women in these awful iniquitous days!

Dear reader, “Keep thyself pure.”

03.36. Means for Growth

Means for Growth

You have started out fairly upon the Christian way. You have been “born again”*; you have been immersed in water, or buried with Christ in baptism; you have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. With such an experience you are admitted to the contest for the “crown of life.”* Now since you are thus started out upon the Christian way, it is a fact that you must “grow in grace.”*

There are certain means for you to use that will promote growth. If you neglect these, you will not, you cannot, grow. You must live much in prayer; you must read the Bible; you must attend meetings that are ordered of God; you must partake of the Lord’s Supper as you have opportunity; you must wash the saints’ feet. You will be blest with grace to your soul if you do these things as unto the Lord. You must give of your means to God’s cause freely and cheerfully; you must diligently follow every good work; and you will “neither be barren nor unfruitful”* in the knowledge and grace of God.

03.37. Lay Hold on Eternal Life

Lay Hold on Eternal Life The “crown of life”^{*} lies at the end of the race. Some run well for a time, and then because of slight hindrances turn from the way. You must endure unto the end. You must follow the example of the zealous apostle who said, “I [reach] forth unto those things which are before,”^{*} and, “I press toward the mark for the prize.”^{*} The prize was the “crown of life.” He bends forward in the race with all the energy of his soul. Down at the end of the race he beholds the crown. Neither Sin, Satan, nor the world shall hinder him in securing it. You must be just as much in earnest. You must strive, and that lawfully, lest someone take your crown.

Some years ago a number of boatmen off the coast of New England raced for a prize in single boats. As they were nearing the end of the race it was discovered by the spectators that a special favorite was a half-boat’s length ahead of all its competitors. His friends began to cheer him, and he, animated by their cheers, gave a responsive cheer, and, in doing so, lost a stroke of the oar. A competitor, seeing his opportunity, bent to his oar with all energy, shot past him and won the prize. The apostle Paul warns you against youthful lusts, and tells you to flee from them; to follow peace, righteousness, godliness; to fight the good fight of faith; and to lay hold upon eternal life.

We are in days when the love of many is waxing cold because iniquity abounds. You must keep the ardor of love glowing in your heart. Allow not the world nor aught else to extinguish the tender flame. Everything that has a tendency to suppress love, to cool its ardor, to dilute its sweetness in your soul, to lessen the yearnings of your heart for more of God, to deprive you of the sweet realization of constantly leaning on his breast—consider all such things your bitter foes and rout them at any cost.

Run life’s race with all the energy of your soul, never relaxing effort until the prize is in full possession. The dying testimony of the apostle Paul may be yours. When he had come down to the end of his journey he said as he stood, as it were, one foot upon time and the other in eternity, “The time of my departure is at hand.”^{*} Then taking a last retrospective view of his life, he said, “I have fought a good fight.”^{*} Taking a look at inward conditions, he said, “I am now ready to be offered.”^{*} And looking out into the future’s prospect, he said, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.”^{*} O beloved young saints, run well your race. Keep your eyes upon the goal, fight the good fight of faith, be in earnest, live every moment for God, and you can have a dying testimony like the above.

03.38. Crucifixion of Self

Crucifixion of Self

It requires no little courage, coupled with the grace of God, to go to Calvary. There are many Christians who will follow Jesus so long as it is “Hosanna to the Son of David,”* who fail to follow Him to Calvary. Most persons love the sweets of grace, and thus many follow the Lord for the loaves and fishes; but when it comes to following Him for His own sake, even unto judgment, where our earthliness is revealed, then too often we follow “afar off.”* Many will serve for reward, who refuse to serve for righteousness’ sake. Satan understood this in the case of Job; so he said to the Lord, “Doth Job fear God for nought?”* Job endured even unto the end, and proved by actual test his devotion to God and not to His gifts.

Saints are like soldiers—many there be who enlist, but few who fearlessly face death. All like life, though it be a life out of harmony with God. Satan said of Job, “All that a man hath will he give for his life.”* So Christians’ last surrender is their own earthly life. They love the earthly, the dust; and to die to all that is not divine is a price that few will pay.

Many talk of crucifixion, yea, claim to be crucified, who know hardly the first step away from self. To let self, the flesh, and all evil within perish; to draw the last drop of earthliness from our veins—is a price but few will pay for all the life of God. God through Moses gave to the children of Israel a heritage; but never in their greatest conquest did they attain all of that heritage. So with Christians: how few ever attain all of that God-life offered them through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Israelites made a league with certain of the inhabitants of the land whom they should have destroyed. How many Christians spare those enemies within which should die. They may force the death of many, perhaps most of their earthliness; but somewhere there is that with which they will not part. Of course, the earthliness may not be manifest as before; “hewers of wood and drawers of water”* they become, yet they are there and live there. “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”* Wholehearted devotion to God is a rare quality, and only the fewest of the few ever attain it. An idol somewhere, a desire, a wish, a preference, a hope not born of God, but of man or of the flesh, is the separation line. Yea, to cease from our labors as God did from His, and thus reach true rest, is a haven but few ever reach. To literally cease, that Jehovah may be the beginning and the end, means blood, and thorns, and nails in the hands. Yes, it means Calvary and the tomb. This is too much for many who go part way with Jesus. How few realize that perhaps the most of our religious aspirations are born not of God, but of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of man; and this is why our efforts are so barren, futile, and earthly. Yes, to hide away so that every act, every purpose, every hope, centers in God and points to Him and away from man—what a rare spiritual attainment! Many who are said to be very spiritual and leaders in the work of God, if robbed of this glory, would cease. To work for the eyes of God alone is not a sufficient reward for very many who have climbed well up the gospel ladder. To know when we are dead in the highest light. Self-abnegation cannot be discerned so long as we want to live. If we never reach the point where we literally “hate [our] own life,”* we shall never

know how much there is in us not divine. The flesh is ever the veil that separates between the holy place and the holy of holies. Until we have reached that place where we have lost sight of all that is human, and hunger and thirst for all the life of God, Christian perfection is an impossible attainment. This little book has been written for your success in the divine life. We have hoped and prayed for your wellbeing in the grace of God; but unless you are dead to self our prayers are but in vain. Oh, the beauties and the blessings and the rich glories, and happiness and usefulness for you in life, if you are fully possessed with life of God! Be dead indeed to self, and let God live in you to His praise.

03.39. Love Not the World

Love Not the World

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

03.40. Have a Care

Have a Care The world has many gaudy wings— Have a care!

She flits among the flow'rs and sings—

Many a snare.

Beware Of the hidden poisonous stings.

Earth's pleasures are a golden cup— Have a care!

She bids you take one little sup—

Many a snare.

Beware Of the hidden sting in the cup.

Earth's riches have a charm most rare— Have a care!

She bids you seek a goodly share—

Many a snare.

Beware—

She will sting with many a care.

Vain worldly fame's a painted flow'r— Have a care!

She dwells in an enchanted bow'r—

Many a snare.

Beware—

She'll chide you in an evil hour. The world is but an empty show— Have a care! Of true joys a dangerous foe—

Many a snare.

Beware— Her greatest gain's oft deepest woe.

03.41. Affinities

Affinities By the term affinity I mean that enamored feeling which arises in the hearts of those of opposite sex for each other. This Satan may take advantage of; and in this awful snare many a soul has gone down into the darkness; many a heaven-born and happy soul has received its awful blight, and gone down to an eternity of woe. Someone may ask, "Is not marriage honorable? And does not God join hearts together in love?" He certainly does; but when He does and all is kept in God's order the parties in love will not suffer any loss of spirituality. Courtship can be carried on in the will and order of God, and the parties engaged have a constant growth in grace. But so many times they become silly-headed and allow their love for each other to carry them out of God's order, and consequently they will soon be graceless-hearted.

Now I speak the truth when I say that by far the greater number of saints who fall in love suffer spiritual loss. This need not be so. In the first place, the love for each other must be genuine; but, though God is calling two together and the love which springs up is in the order of the Lord, this does not insure them against spiritual loss. If they are not watchful they will lose their heads, so to speak, and step away beyond the bonds of propriety.

There is many a young man and young woman united in marriage these days, even young saints, whom wisdom has not directed. Such may succeed in getting through and escaping the damnation of hell, but they will have trouble in the flesh.

Now, dear young saint, if you desire to be successful in life and gain heaven, if you will keep your senses you can keep clear from all the meshes of unholy affinities. You desire to have a life companion if God selects you one. I cannot blame you for this, neither does the Bible condemn you; but the utmost caution needs to be exercised. Be careful your desire for companionship does not turn your head and render you incapable of knowing or understanding the will of God. Whenever you find yourself losing love for God, you had better beware. Whenever the object of your affection is getting so upon your heart and mind that you think less of God you are going beyond His ordering. If your last thoughts in the evening and your earliest thoughts in the morning are of the loved one, you are being estranged from God and losing spiritual life. I feel like giving you warning and counsel you to move very cautiously and prayerfully in these matters, lest you make a mistake and suffer a loss that neither time nor eternity will ever make up.

Young saints must not keep company with the unsaved. Those who do, lose spirituality. If you love God and desire to live a spiritual life, wait on God and let Him select your life companion.

03.42. The Guardian Angel

The Guardian Angel When you entered the Christian race God gave an angel to guard and guide you in the way. You need have no fear of this world.

Live in God's service and do His will, and this guardian angel will keep you. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."*

It was this angel that stood with Daniel in the den of lions and with the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. It was this angel that led the weeping Hagar to the well of water when her child was dying of thirst; and that led the righteous Lot out of the wicked city of Sodom and saved him from its awful burning. When Elijah was hunted for his life and sat down to weep and to starve under the juniper tree, it was this guardian angel that brought him a cake and a cruse of water. It was this good angel that unbolted the prison doors and set Peter free. When Paul and Silas were lying fast in the stocks singing praise to God at midnight, it was the angel of the Lord that shook the earth and opened the prison doors.

You once were lost, but the Son of man came to save you. Now you are saved; you have entered His fold; you have become one of His "little ones." Once lost, but now saved. Jesus says to this cruel, mocking world, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."* As you journey along the way of life, Christian reader, there is an angel of mercy guarding you by day and night. Naught in all the world can harm you. "Their angels do always behold the face of God." By this we understand that your guardian angel has constant access into the presence of God to bear Him an intelligence concerning His little one under His charge. Glory be to God!

If you will but live holy and confide in God, He will guide you safely and triumphantly through this world and bring you in a ripe old age to an eternity of rest. Trust not in the world, trust not in man, trust not in yourself; but give up all; give up your life to God and trust in Him. You are safe in His care; nothing can harm you. You need not have a fear. What a blessed life to live! How peaceful! How secure! How full of rest! And when the last hour has come those guardian angels will be gathered round, waiting for your spirit to come forth from the tomb of clay, and they will waft it in rapture to the God who gave it.

03.43. Fledging the Wings

Fledging the Wings The inspired Word of God abounds in evidences of the twofold nature of man's being. Man, entire, consists of an outer physical being and an inner spiritual being. The one is for time, the other for eternity. The physical being is the transient home of the spiritual being, and is, therefore, called an earthly house. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."* When the earthly house in which the soul is tabernacled comes to dissolution, we (the spiritual beings) pass to our eternal home, a building not made with hands, but built by the Lord of heaven. The passport from the earthly house to the home in the heavens is spoken of by the Psalmist as a "flying away." "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."* The physical being is cut down, or comes to dissolution, and we (the souls) fly away, when redeemed by the blood, to our eternal home of rest.

Since it is spoken of as a flying away, the idea of wings is suggested, from which we derive our subject. The inspired apostle said, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."* As the outward, physical man, day by day, becomes more feeble, the furrows on the brow grow deeper, the locks more silvery, the steps more tottering, the voice weaker and more husky, the cheeks more sunken, the ear more deaf, the eye more dim, and the heartbeats more slow; the inward man is gathering strength, or fledging his wings, ready for his upward flight to his beautiful mansion in the sky. Oh, how often the redeemed soul, full of life, love, and hope, looks out through the fading windows of the crumbling house of clay, to its fair home on the Elysian shores eternal, and longs to take its flight! May you, dear reader, and I, as we travel along life's swift journey, so live in prayer and devotion to God, walk in such purity, so feed upon the divine life, that we shall gather strength to our souls day by day and be ready for the hour of our departure. Amen.

03.44. Sometime

Sometime

Selected Sometime, when all life's lessons have been learned, And sun and stars forevermore have set, The things which our weak judgments here have spurned, The things o'er which we grieved with lashes wet, Will flash before us out of life's dark night, As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue; And we shall see how all God's plans are right, And how what seemed reproof was love most true. And we shall see how, while we frown and sigh, God's plans go on as best for you and me;

How when we called, He heeded not our cry, Because His wisdom to the end could see. And e'en as prudent parents disallow Too much of sweet to craving babyhood; So God, perhaps, is keeping from us now Life's sweetest things, because it seemeth good. And if, sometimes, commingled with life's wine, We find the wormwood, and rebel and shrink, Be sure a wiser hand than yours or mine Pours out the potion for our lips to drink; And if some friend we love is lying low, Where human kisses cannot reach his face, Oh, do not blame the loving Father so, But wear your sorrows with obedient grace. And you shall shortly know that lengthened breath Is not the sweetest gift God sends His friend, And that, sometimes, the sable pall of death Conceals the fairest boon His love can send.

If we could push ajar the gates of life, And stand within and all God's workings see, We could interpret all this doubt and strife, And for each mystery could find a key. But not today. Then be content, poor heart;

God's plans like lilies pure and white unfold;

We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart, Time will unfold the calyces of gold. And if, through patient toil, we reach the land Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest When we shall clearly know and understand, I think that we shall say, "God knew the best!"

03.45. The Precious Ointment

The Precious Ointment In the Bible we learn of a woman who took “a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus.”* This spikenard was very rich in perfume. It was the very best gift she could bring to Him whom she loved. This is a very beautiful symbol of the life work of a Christian. We, as Christians, are a sweet odor unto God in Christ Jesus. Everything you do for Jesus scents the air around the throne of God with a sweet fragrance.

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

talking to Him.

Jesus has given you the purest love of heaven; He has clothed you with the whitest robe; He gives you the very best heaven affords; and, O beloved, will you not give Him the very best life? Live with all your soul for Jesus; serve Him every moment. Bring the best of your life, its love, its service, its perfume, and pour them upon the head and feet of Jesus.

03.46. The Tree of Life

The Tree of Life

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,”* says Proverbs. How wonderful! How inspiring! The fruit borne by a Christian is a savor of life to many. If you live a true Christian life all the way through, God will use the fruit you bear to bring another soul to life. Your Christian life will not be lived in vain. That “beloved disciple” said, “On either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month.”* Your life is compared to a river; and if you travel along down its course in the fullness of God’s grace, upon its banks will grow the tree of life, of which others may eat and live forever. Such thoughts are almost too wonderful for me; they overwhelm my soul.

Jesus said, “I am the bread of life,”* and, “He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”* This same Jesus has come into your life. You are dead, but Jesus lives. He lives in you. The fruit you bear will be eaten by others and be life to their souls. O my young reader, will you not be watchful and prayerful and let God live in you and bring forth fruit to His own glory? Cultivate the Christian graces, and see to it that there is never a withered leaf on your life’s tree, but be ever green and full of fruit, scattering a holy influence everywhere. May your life stand out upon the shores of time heavy laden with the fruits of the Spirit, of which others may eat long after you are gone to your reward. You can make it so. Will you do it? As for me, from the fullness of my soul I answer, “I will.”

03.47. Eternity

Eternity Did you ever attempt to look to the end of eternity? Have you endeavored to comprehend its duration? Alas! it is something beyond the conception of the finite mind. Look into it as far as you can and no less of it lies beyond the end of your vision. Eternity is something never begun and something that will never end. It is a circle which has no end of beginning and no end of closing. It goes on and on and on until millions upon millions of ages have passed away, and then on and on to other millions upon millions of ages, and then still on, being no less in duration than before. When you have been there ten million years you will be no nearer the end than when you first entered this boundless duration.

What a vast and awful thought! Eternity! I stand upon the shore of ocean and looking out upon the broad expanse I see nothing but ocean; I see no other shore. I stand and look out upon the ocean of eternity, and see nothing but eternity. I can see out for millions and billions and trillions of years, and yet it is eternity. Where shall I spend it? My soul answers, "In heaven through the blood."

03.48. Nearer to Thee

Nearer to Thee Nearer to thee, O my Savior, Nearer I would be each day. As I cross life's stormy ocean Never from Thee let me stray.

Nearer, nearer, ever nearer, Is the language of my soul As I journey down life's pathway, As I near bright heaven's goal.

Lead me through this world of sorrow, Let my hand in Thine e'er be;

Throw Thy arms of love around me, Savior, let me walk with Thee. When the storm clouds round me gather In the clefted Rock I hide; When the surging billows threaten, Fold me closer to Thy side.

There's a home for me in heaven, By the crystal, silvered sea;

Some sweet morn the golden portals Opened wide will be for me.

There in amaranthine glory I will sit at Jesus' feet;

There I'll sing the sweet old story As I walk the golden street.

O my heart, wait on in patience, Each day brings me near'r the goal; In some blissful dewy dawning Heaven will receive my soul.

03.49. Conclusion

Conclusion Our introduction is upon the subject of Life; our conclusion is upon Death. To many people the word death is full of horror. Thank God, it holds no horror to the pure in heart. Death has no sting for those whose souls are in fellowship with God. Those who love God hail with joy the hour in which they are to meet Him. Death to a Christian is only his removal from earth to the paradise of God. If some man of wealth were to tell you he had a rich home prepared for you in a distant land, where you could have all your heart could wish, and be happy as long as you lived, if you had confidence in the man, you could say goodbye and cheerfully go to your new home. Death is nothing more.

Some may shudder at the thought of the pain in death. How often we hear remarks like this: "This pain is almost like death," or, "it's like taking one's life." Have you not stood beside the infant's crib and watched it go peacefully to sleep? Where was the pain? Death to a Christian is only a going to sleep. You have had far more pain in life than you will have in death.

There may be pain just prior to death, but none in death. Death to a saint is as peaceful as going to sleep. Have you not often been in some solitary place and given yourself into the arms of Muse? You have fallen to thinking about heaven and the angels and the Savior and your crown. You seemed as your soul was wafted upward on the wings of meditation, to lose consciousness of all on earth. Such will it be in death. Your soul will begin to see the glories of heaven; you will hear the sweet strains of music; you will begin to lose consciousness of earthly things and comprehend more of heaven. Then soon you will draw your last breath on the shore of time and sound your first note of praise on the shore of eternity. This is all there is in death. It is precious to fond parents to see their little children, with folded hands, go peacefully to sleep. So also, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."* In fancy I can see many of my young readers, after a well-spent life, gathered in ripe old age on the banks of old Time's river, waiting in bright hope to be summoned over to their rich possessions in the verdant fields of heaven.

There is nothing more of death than this to a Christian. I pray that the life of many of you will end like this. I believe it will be so. Amen. A strange, sweet vision fills my soul, A glimpse of glory and of God;

Am I not near life's final goal? My feet scarce touch this mortal sod. The zephyrs blow divinely sweet, With fragrance fill the balmy air; Are heav'n and earth about to meet? Who can this vision bright declare?

I hear the notes of seraph song, The rustle of an angel's wing; Do signs like these to earth belong? Do men and angels meet to sing?

Life's journey seems about complete;

I feel it so, yet know not why. My heart with longings is replete, And yet I do not long to die. A holy calm my bosom fills, And silence like the hush of morn;

Such joy through all my being thrills As swept men's hearts when Christ was born.

Amid the crowds I look around To see who bear love's fragrant flow'r;

I fain would walk on holy ground Made sacred by the Spirit's pow'r.

God has the keeping of my ways, His laws I rev'rence and obey; My prayers seem almost turned to praise, And yet I cannot cease to pray.

If this is death, I do not dread To lay me down in peace to die— To be with all the sainted dead, Far, far beyond the arching sky.

03.50. Closing Exhortation

Closing Exhortation

Selected

God has forgiven you all your sins; He has sanctified you wholly. You stand today in the way of life; you are fully out upon the Christian way. You have on the whole armor of God. You possess the power of God's Spirit in your soul, the love of God is in your heart as a burning flame. You are tasting the sweet joys that flow from heaven's throne. In your soul is imprinted the image of Jesus. Your heart is a garden of opening buds, which emit the sweet fragrance of heaven. But, notwithstanding all this blessedness of experience, I want you to remember you are just starting on the pilgrim's way.

I thought of bringing this little work to a close with the preceding letter, but it seems that I am loath to say the last word. I wonder if there is one word more I can say to help you in your Christian race. It is impossible for me to express how my heart yearns in love and tenderness for you.

God wants to use your life on earth to His glory. He wants you so to shine in the glory and splendor of His grace that you may light others in the way. He wants the opening buds of grace in your soul to burst into full bloom. He wants to lead you higher up the mountain of joy, to the very fount of blessings. He wants to lead you down into the lowly vale where there are greater riches than gold. He wants His image in your heart to stand out in greater beauty and perfection; the features are yet too dim.

While in this life your immortal soul is wrapped about with a veil of mortality; but God wants to shine such a radiant light and amaranthine glory into your soul that the veil of mortality will not be able wholly to obscure it. It will shine out through the material part and glow in transparent beauty upon the surface.

If you will follow where He leads, He will lead you on from virtue to deeper, truer virtue; He will lead you on to fountains of sweeter joy. It may be through the vale of sorrow; but never fear nor distrust, and you will find your joy rising higher in the cup. If you will follow, He will lead you from peace on to broader, deeper rivers of peace. It may be through angry billows and past rough rocks; but if you trust Him and follow on, He will bring you to yet calmer and more peaceful waters. If you will stay in His presence, He will impart unto you His own lovely character, and you will grow up into a holier life, into sweeter fellowship with God, into richer beauty and greater usefulness.

He will sometimes call you where the flowers are blooming and sweet fragrance fills the air, where the birds sing sweetly and the zephyrs blow gently; He will lead you along the rippling streams, and delight your soul with the music of the wave; He will lead you through the shady glens and leafy bowers—until your soul will sing, "Is not this the land of Beulah?"* But He may sometimes lead you through the desert, or over the rugged mountain, or across the stormy seas; He may lead you away from all that is dear to your heart; He may lead you into paths where the shadows lie

deep, and thorns spring up on every side. He will lead you on to duties that may oftentimes seem too hard for you to do; but this one thing I assure you in Jesus' name: He will never call you to a duty or a sacrifice but that will prove a blessing to your soul and enrich you in His grace. You must follow on. To get the sweetness out of your life, He may sometimes bruise you. There are flowers that emit but little fragrance until they are bruised. Many trials, no doubt, are awaiting you; but do not live them until you get to them, then His grace will be sufficient for you. In closing, I beseech you from the fullness of my heart to follow Jesus all the way. Let nothing turn you back. Never mind the storms and cruel winds. What if the thorns prick your feet? They pierced His brow. What if the duties do seem hard and the way seems weary? Follow on, linger in His presence, breathe in of His fullness, live in humble submission, never murmur, but in every sorrow draw the closer to Him, never falter, labor on, and you will find joys in every sorrow, blessings in every sacrifice, and delights in every duty. He will perfume your life with the odor of heaven and make you a blessing on earth to man. He will make your life a well of water where many a weary traveler may drink and thirst no more; He will make it a tree of life where they may eat and hunger no more. And when life is done He will bring you with all your golden sheaves through the gates of glory into the haven of eternal rest, where I hope to meet you. With this, I will say farewell.

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