

The
YOUNG CONVERT'S
PROBLEMS
A. C. DIXON

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The young convert's problem
and their solution

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THE
YOUNG CONVERT'S PROBLEMS
AND THEIR SOLUTION

BY

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AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY

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PREFACE

The object of this little book is to help young Christians, and it seeks to do so by a biblical treatment of every subject.

It begins with a chapter on the Holy Spirit, because the young Christian's greatest need is the enduement of the Spirit for power in service.

At the threshold of every Christian life stands the question, Shall I join a church, and, if so, what church? We do not discuss the question as to what church one should join, preferring to leave every one to decide that for oneself, but we do insist that every young Christian should join some church in which Christ is honored and the Scriptures believed.

The third chapter gives a glimpse of the Bible in the hope that every young Christian may be led to study it carefully, taking it as the authoritative guide of life. It is daily bread for the soul, and to neglect it is to starve.

Through the Bible God speaks to us, and in prayer we speak to God. The chapter on the Bible comes before the one on prayer, because we should let God speak to us before we speak to Him, and a knowledge of the Bible with its "exceeding great and precious promises" is essential to effective praying.

The spirit of prayer with this knowledge of the Bible will prepare one to meet temptation, and chapter five is intended to furnish both warning and encouragement; warning to young Christians to be on their guard against insidious approaches of sin, and encouragement against despair to those who have been "overtaken in a fault."

Every young Christian, rich or poor, needs to remember that the capacity to make money is a sacred trust, and that the possession of money carries with it weighty responsibility. The purpose of chapter six is to promote conscientious, intelligent and scriptural giving.

The question of amusements is one of the most important and yet difficult matters with which young Christians have to deal, and a mistake here often means the wreck of usefulness. In chapter seven we give principles by which one

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may be guided, and, believing that they are sound and practical, we commend them to all who would be useful and at the same time happy Christians.

The "Ideal Christian," whose portrait as drawn by the Apostle Paul we have tried to reproduce in the closing chapter, will, we trust, inspire every young Christian who reads this book to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

With a prayer for God's blessing upon every reader, we commit these pages to Him whose glory we seek in the growth and usefulness of His children.

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CHAPTER I

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). What was that power? Certainly not an increase of knowledge, numbers, money, social position, or organization. These are mere influences and important. They should all be used for Christ. But influences are not sufficient for the needs of the church. The word "influence" occurs only once in the Bible, and that in the question of Jehovah to the patriarch Job: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?" (Job 38:31). "The sweet influences of the Pleiades" which bring the Spring with its bloom of flowers and song of birds are to be

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welcomed and prized, but for the most effective Christian service we need more than genial influences. The need of every young Christian is in the New Testament word "power" which has in it the omnipotence of God.

The power which came on the Day of Pentecost was God Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit, who "like a rushing mighty wind filled all the house where they were sitting," and as "tongues of fire sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:2, 3). Power is God at work. He uses the Word as a sword, and the Christian as an agent. Power, however, is not in the sword, but in the arm that wields it. Nor is it in the agent, but in the Master whose servant he is. God delegates power to no one. Jesus said, "Go ye and disciple all nations, and lo, I am with you" (Matt. 28:19, 20). In other words, "I will go with you and do the work myself, provided you fulfil the conditions I impose. You are to pray, trust, preach, and live the truth, while you depend upon me for power."

The redeemed in glory sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power" (Rev. 5:12), and every Christian, however weak in

himself, has no right to give weakness in his service to Christ, for power is within the reach of all who believe. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit, the "Comforter," the "Paraclete," one who comes to our aid when we call, came to stay, and He has been with the church ever since. He is often grieved, and, like Jesus, unable to do mighty works because of our unbelief, but He is never absent.

The baptism of the Spirit is mentioned only in connection with Pentecost. Jesus said, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). And John said of Jesus, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). The baptism at Pentecost seems to have been once for all, and the endowment of the Holy Spirit for service is our entering upon the fulness of this baptism. The Holy Spirit, like the mighty rushing wind of Pentecost, is to-day the atmosphere of the church in which we live and move and have our spiritual being. But every man appropriates the atmosphere in which he lives according to his lung capacity. If he has only one lung, he appropriates only half as much as the man with

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two lungs. The consumption of unbelief, self-seeking, or any other sin may so congest our capacity for receiving the Spirit that He can occupy only a part of our being.

The sun every day fills the world with its light, and yet I may draw the curtains and shut the light from every room in my house, or admit it only to one room. So the Spirit of God, whose presence is light filling the church, may be admitted to only one or two rooms of our being.

The power-house is built once for all, and the motorman on the trolley uses the power furnished by the company according to the capacity of the wire for transmitting and the machinery on his car for utilizing it. At Pentecost the coming of the Spirit was like the building of the power-house once for all. We have not to pray the Spirit out of heaven; He is with us all the time, but the measure of His power depends upon the wire of faith and consecration through which He may work the machinery of our lives and bring things to pass.

The city builds the reservoir once for all, but the supply of water for every house depends on the pipe which connects with the reservoir, and

the water will do the people no good unless the channels are open through which it may flow into their houses. Pentecost was the building of the reservoir once for all. The Holy Spirit is to be ever with the church, but His power depends upon the channels of faith and faithfulness through which He flows into our lives.

All illustrations fail at some point, but it is clear that the Holy Spirit is the atmosphere in which we live, and abundant life is possible only when we let Him fill our being. The Holy Spirit is the sun always shining, but He will fill our souls only as we keep the windows open. The Holy Spirit is the dynamo which furnishes all the power we need through the wires of faith and consecration. The Holy Spirit is the reservoir from which we obtain constant supplies through the channels of faith and faithfulness. To drop all figures of speech and state a blessed fact, the Holy Spirit is God with us all the time, inviting us to work with Him in omnipotent power for the salvation of the lost and the upbuilding of the saved.

As soon as we receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, we ought at the same time to receive by faith the Holy Spirit for service.

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But in most cases it is an experience after regeneration, and sometimes Christians are brought by failure and humiliation to realize the need of the Spirit before they will receive Him for power in service. Charles G. Finney, D. L. Moody, Evan Roberts, R. A. Torrey, and many others, distinguished as soul-winners, passed from an experience of weakness to power with God and men by definitely receiving the Holy Spirit for service. This does not mean a "second blessing" which introduces one to an experience of "sinless perfection" and spiritual boasting. On the other hand, it means the beginning of a more rapid growth in grace, with such a realization of unworthiness and sinfulness as we never had before. The pure atmosphere to which we wholly commit ourselves cures the soul's congestion of lungs and enables it to give to the Holy Spirit a larger place in its life. The light in the house leads us to lift the curtains that all the rooms may be illuminated and, as the light increases, the shoddiness of the furniture and even the dust motes in the air begin to be revealed, leading us to seek renovation and cleansing. The wires from the dynamo supply such power

as to make easy what seemed before to be impossible, so that we cease to depend upon the hand-worked machinery in our church activities, while we seek to have all our organizations controlled by the Holy Spirit. The pipes from the reservoir bring such refreshing streams into our lives that we turn from all earthly cisterns, and commend only these life-giving waters.

The Spirit-filled life in the Christian's normal condition, and we should be satisfied with nothing less than the best God has for us. In John 7:38, 39 we **The Normal Life** read, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believed on Him were to receive, for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." In chapter four, verse fourteen, Jesus tells us that the water He gives becomes "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Now, a well is a fountain curbed in. There is no overflow. The life in us is living water springing up, but not overflowing. The Spirit-filled man, however, is a fountain of blessing to others. The well overflows its curb, and sends out refreshing and life-

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giving streams. This takes place only when Jesus Christ is glorified. "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified," and the Holy Spirit is always not yet given, when Jesus has not been glorified. He testifies of Jesus; He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. None of those, therefore, who take from Christ the glory of His deity, or refuse to enthrone Him in their lives, need expect the fulness and power of the Holy Spirit. Christ must be glorified, if we would have the Spirit of power in service.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH

In I. Corinthians 1:2 are two phrases worthy of our study. "*All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,*" means that there is a church universal, including Christians on earth and in heaven, extending through time and eternity. "*The church of God which is at Corinth,*" means that there is a local church with special responsibilities, and the word "church" as used in the New Testament refers most frequently to the local church, as in "the churches throughout Galatia," "the churches of Asia," "the church at Ephesus." While we thank God for the church universal and its millions of redeemed souls, Christ's mystical body of which each one of us is a part, we should give the local church its place as an agency for evangelizing the world without exalting it to a saving institution.

A missionary in India distributed during an

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epidemic a quantity of "painkiller" which was very useful in healing the people. After a few weeks they sent him word that they had decided to give up their gods and worship his God. He, of course, rejoiced, but his joy turned to sorrow, when, on entering one of their houses, he found the empty bottles in a row on a shelf and the heathen bowing before them in worship. They looked upon the bottles that held the remedy as gods. So one may really worship the church, which is only the medium through which God carries blessing to the world. And yet the danger with most people who have grown up in an atmosphere of protest against ecclesiasticism is that they will fail to honor the church as they should, and some of them have many excuses for not joining the church at all.

Let us consider a few of these excuses.

1. "Unworthy people are in the church. Some of them are hypocrites, and, as I admire Unworthy only honest folks, I cannot join People the church." This objection is a reason why you, if you are an honest believer, should unite with the church. The fact that you complain of bad people in the church proves that you regard the church as a good institu-

tion. And you are really not joining the bad people. Not one of the Apostles felt that he had joined Judas. The circulation of counterfeit coin should not prevent a man from using the genuine. The counterfeit is a compliment to the genuine.

2. "Churches are too exclusive." That is true of some churches, but it is untrue of others. Some churches have dwindled **Churches Too** into mere religious clubs, and **Exclusive** they seek only the congenial for members. But there are scores of others which are full of sympathy for the poorest, as well as the richest, and will welcome into their membership the humblest man or woman. You can find a church that is not exclusive, and hence this objection has no force. And if you feel that you ought to join an exclusive church, God may use you as one of its members to make it more sympathetic with all classes. Be careful, however, that you watch against the pharisaical spirit which is a subtle and dangerous form of spiritual pride.

3. "As belonging to the church does not take one to heaven, there is really no need of joining." Let us look at this objection in the light of patriotism. Apply it to citizens during

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a war. Suppose some one should say: "We are good patriots; we love our country, and we want to enjoy the benefits of victory. We would like to be among those who, at the end of the war, shall shout 'huzza' around the flag, but we do not propose to be organized into an army. We will stay at home, or engage in a sort of guerrilla warfare, but we do not care to march in the ranks." What sort of patriotism would that be? And yet that is just the attitude this objector holds to the church. He wants to go to heaven and take part in the glorification, after the battles of the church have been won, while he stays here and takes little part in the conflict. Such a disposition, to put it mildly, is not great-hearted.

4. "The church requires me to surrender my personal liberty." Liberty to do what? To commit sin? To be sure you do not want liberty to do that. "No, that is not what I mean," you reply. "There are some things that I do not think are wrong which the church condemns, and I do not feel like joining the church and surrendering my liberty to do what seems to me to be right." You are mistaken again. The church

does not call upon you to surrender your liberty to do what you believe to be right. To your own master you stand or fall. There is, however, a higher liberty than the liberty of doing what we think to be right. Paul said, "I have a right to eat flesh offered to idols and to drink wine, but if eating flesh and drinking wine cause my brother to stumble, I will surrender my liberty." The liberty to surrender liberty for the sake of a weaker brother, is a Christian privilege, and no one should stay out of the church because of some little difference of opinion on questions of causistry.

5. "I am too young." This objection is not often made by the young themselves, but by parents and guardians, and it is usually false. If such a parent or guardian should read these pages, I desire to make a plea for the child Christian. I beg of you never to say to a child that he is too young to become a Christian. Jesus said: "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not." He knew that there would be a disposition on the part of some to forbid them. The child who is old enough to know the nature of obedience to parents is old enough to know the

I Am Too
Young

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nature of sin. A child old enough to trust a parent is old enough to trust Jesus Christ. And your telling him that he is too young and had better wait a while will set the child searching after something which may never come. Many a real believer has been lost for years to the church, because advised by parents to wait until he is old enough to know what he is about. I plead for the children. Children may have fewer temptations to deceive than older people, and the fact that one is a child, believing in Christ, is a reason why he should belong to the church, for we should give, not only our souls, but our whole lives to Jesus Christ.

6. "I am too old." This is a pathetic reason, and it is sometimes given in all sincerity.

I Am Too Old Well, you are too old to do much for the Lord, but if you have but a few days remaining, you had better spend them in the church, making all you can of the time and influence that is left. Try now to make up for lost time.

7. "I am not worthy." We have reserved this for the last, because it is the real reason with scores and hundreds. They do not wish to join the church until they are good enough to

reflect credit upon it. They love Christ and honor His church, and they would not for the world bring reproach upon His cause. I sympathize with this motive, but it is not one which should keep a young Christian out of the church. The Pharisee in the temple felt very worthy. His fastings and giving tithes were to him signs of superiority, but the publican, who felt so unworthy that he could not lift his eyes, while he smote upon his breast saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," was really the better fitted for church membership. When you have joined the church, this feeling of unworthiness may increase, if, like Paul, you have a healthy growth in the grace of humility. If you have really accepted Christ as your Saviour from sin, and taken Him as your Master, you should join the church, and consider your feeling of unworthiness as the best preparation for it.

I Am Not
Worthy

Permit me now to submit seven reasons why every young Christian should join the church:

1. Because the church needs you. Not yours, so much as *you*. It will not suffice to send your check. The river needs every drop of its water, the sun every beam of its light,

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and the church needs the presence and influence
The Church of every believer in the world.
Needs You Those on the side of Satan
do not hide their darkness; let us not hide our
light. A candle is not lighted to be put under
a bushel, but on a candlestick, and joining the
church is putting the light on a candlestick.

2. Because you need the church. There is
inspiration in elbow touch. While the church
You Need is primarily an army, marching
the Church for conquest, it is also a training
school, and you should be among the disciples
and learners. Association with them will do
you good. Their sympathy, faith and hope
will both strengthen and inspire you.

3. Because the church is an institution
founded by Christ. "On this rock I will build
Founded. my church," are His own words.
by Christ If we are really spiritual stones,
we have no right to be out of the walls of the
temple. God has carved us into shape for a
place in it, and the fact that Jesus Christ
founded the church brings us under obligation
to unite with it.

4. Because by union with others you really
multiply your influence for good. Put fire

to scattered grains of powder, and there is simply a flash and smoke. Put the **Multiply** grains together in a cartridge, **Your Influence** and they will help each other to send the bullet whistling through the air. Organization greatly increases power. "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight." The union of two increases the power, not two-fold, but ten-fold.

5. Because a good man's influence out of the church may count against Christ. I remember a gentleman in a former **Influence** pastorate who was one of the **Against Christ** most cultured and moral men of the community. He took interest in religion, even taught a Sunday-school class, but his feeling of unworthiness kept him from uniting with the church. Now, do not be shocked when I say that this man did the church about as much harm as any two or three drunkards in the community. When I talked to young men about making a public confession of their faith in Christ, they would point to this gentleman, and remark that they were willing to take his chances for salvation. He did not see fit to join the church, and why should they? He was better than one-half the

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church members. So that man's morality, which he owed to the church, was a weapon wielded against the church, and the cause which he really loved he was injuring by refusing to unite with the church. If good men who believe in Christ would keep from doing immense harm, they must unite with the church.

6. Because joining the church is a public confession of allegiance. It is an act of obedience, and Christ has promised special blessing to those who confess Him before men.

7. Because the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." God wants not only individual witnesses, but an organization to witness for Him. We, as individuals, may in a sense be pillars of the truth, but certainly our influence on the side of truth will be increased, if we are known to be members of the church.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLE

Some great structures, like St. Peter's Cathedral, were centuries in process of building. Their foundations were laid by one generation, and their capstones by another. But more interesting than the erection of any structures of brick and stone is the building of God's temple of revealed truth. The five books of Moses are the solid granite layers upon which it is founded. Resting upon this foundation the superstructure rises story upon story, the historical books, the devotional books, the prophetic books, the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles and Revelation.

We invite the young Christian to walk with us through this wonderful building.

First of all, there is the library where we stop long enough to learn the facts which cannot be found anywhere else. We learn the origin of things, of matter, of sin, of crime, of arts and

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sciences, of the family, of the nation. And here are God's thoughts. If we would develop the mind, we must think after God. Great words like omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, infinity, can apply to God only, and the man who refuses to enter this divine library and think God's thoughts after Him is robbing his mind of enlargement.

And here is a great picture gallery. We have the portrait of man as he was in the image of God, and as he became through the blighting power of sin. There are some very repulsive pictures. I saw in the Art Gallery in London a portrait entitled "A Man," and on the opposite side of the room another picture entitled "A Woman." They gave the artist's view of what real manhood and womanhood meant. Greater than king or queen is a genuine man or woman. But in this same gallery I saw other pictures, which showed how men and women have been marred by sin, their beauty defaced, their features distorted, their lives wrecked. And we have in the Bible a picture of the evil forces that ruin our race. Here is the portrait of Satan himself —

cunning, deceptive, malicious. And here is the picture of every sin we are called upon to shun. Some one sent to Martin Luther the picture of a man who had threatened to kill him with poison. Luther carried this picture with him, so that he might be protected from the murderer if he should meet him.

Here, too, is the armory in which we may be equipped for the battle against sin. "Take unto you the whole armor of God," "the shield of faith," **An Armory** "the helmet of salvation," "the breastplate of righteousness," "the girdle of truth," and "the sword of the Spirit." When, at his coronation, the sword was delivered to Edward II., having received it, he said: "There is yet another sword to be delivered to me, the Sacred Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit," and with the sword of steel in one hand and the sword of truth in the other, he entered upon his high office. As followers of the Prince of Peace we may lay aside the sword of steel, but we need to take and use the sword of the Spirit in an aggressive warfare against all sorts of sin.

In this building there is a high observatory, from the top of which we have a broad and

distant view. There is not only a record of what has been, but of what will be. The prophets with eagle eye peered into the future, and history is a record of these prophetic fulfilments. From the top of this observatory in the Book of the Revelation we look into heaven itself, and down the vista of eternity all radiant with the glory of the Lamb. Sometimes as we look about us, evil appears to be triumphant. The righteous are in the minority, darkness seems to gather, but when we climb to the top of this prophetic observatory and look into the future, our hearts are cheered by the hope that sooner or later victory will come.

Joseph S. Speed on visiting his friend Abraham Lincoln found the President reading the Bible. He said to him:

"I am glad to see you so profitably engaged."

"Yes," answered Mr. Lincoln, looking up with a serious expression, "I am profitably engaged."

Faith of Three Great Men "Well" said Speed, "If you have recovered from your scepticism, I am sorry to say that I have not."

“You are wrong, Speed,” replied this man of common sense, “take all this Book upon reason that you can and the rest upon faith, and you will, I am sure, live and die a happier and a better man.”

Lincoln in the darkest hour of his life found the promises of the Bible the light that guided and cheered him.

When Sir Walter Scott was dying, he said to his secretary, “Give me the Book.” “What book?” “There is only one Book,” replied the novelist, and the secretary handed him the Bible. Locke’s definition of the Bible has not been improved upon: “It has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and the truth without any admixture of error for its matter.” When Bishop Fisher was on his way to the place of execution, he took from his pocket a little Greek Testament, and looking up to heaven exclaimed, “Now, O Lord, direct me to some passage which may support me through this awful scene.” As he opened the book, his eye fell upon the text: “This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” The Bishop closed the Book and

said, "Praise the Lord! This is sufficient both for time and eternity."

Such a book is worthy of our reverent and patient study. Let us look into it and see what The Bible's Testimony to Itself teaches concerning itself. In John 5:39 Jesus said: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." And in II. Timothy 3:16 we read, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." In these two Scriptures are four things which every young Christian should know.

I. *A biblical definition of the Bible.* The phrase, "the Scriptures," suggests a synthetic definition of the Bible. There were other writings, but these were *the* writings; and every Jew to whom Jesus spoke knew the writings to which He referred. They had them in the Hebrew tongue and also a translation into the Greek, known as the Septuagint, made nearly three hundred years before Christ. But it takes our second Scripture to

complete this definition of the Bible — “Every Scripture is God-breathed.” A noted scholar has taken the pains to collate the texts in the New Testament where this Greek idiom occurs, and he declares that the King James version, and not the Revised, is the correct translation, and several eminent scholars on the Committee of Revision agreed with him. “All Scripture is God-breathed” is evidently what the Holy Spirit meant to write. Of course, the writers were inspired. “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II. Pet. 1:21). “The Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David” (Acts 1:16). “The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel” (Ezek. 1:3). But the writings as well as the writers were inspired, because “all Scripture is God-breathed.” God, who “breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living soul,” has also breathed into His Book the breath of life, so that it is “the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.”

There are many writers, but one Author. These writers were not automatons. Each one shows his own style and personality which the Holy Spirit uses.

II. *A biblical use of the Bible.* It is four-fold: "Profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." "Doctrine" is the teaching, not of the *man* as he may express his opinion in social converse, but of the *ambassador* who carries with him the weight of his government's authority; and in the Bible we find *God's official proclamation* of love, pardon, cleansing, righteousness and peace.

The word "reproof" comes after doctrine, because it has to do with the character which doctrine makes. The Bible is profitable not only for the doctrine which we get out of it, but it is the standard by which we try our doctrines. It proves and reproofs. It is the plumb-line that we drop by the wall to see if it is straight. It is the yard-stick by which we measure every creed.

The word "correction" means restoration, and gives a thought in advance of doctrine and reproof. It has in it the thought of making right what we have found to be wrong. The plumb-line may show that the wall leans, but it cannot straighten it. The yard-stick may reveal that the cloth is too short, but it cannot

lengthen it. The Bible, however, not only shows us wherein we are wrong, but it can right us. When Canova saw the piece of marble which, at great expense, had been secured for a celebrated statue, his practiced eye discovered a little piece of black running through it, and he rejected it. He could discover the black, but he could not make the black white. The Bible discovers the black *and* makes it white.

The fourth word, "instruction," means literally "child-culture," and has in it all that the parent needs for the growth, development and maturing of the child. The Bible is a training school *in righteousness*. Other books give training in music, rhetoric, oratory, but the specialty of the Bible is training in righteousness.

III. *A biblical method of Bible study.* It is suggested by the two words "search" and "profitable." Whatever is profitable is apt to cost labor. The Method of Bible Study worthless we can get without effort. Hence the strength of the phrase "search the Scriptures." It means to "look through and through." It is the word used in the Scripture, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the

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deep things of God." As God searches our hearts, so let us search the Bible.

The Bible unsearched is a mine unworked, the difference between the Klondyke years ago **The Unworked Mine** and the Klondyke enriching its industrious owners to-day. To learn the Word of God requires diligent and persistent searching. A man who died in an English almshouse several years ago gave to his relatives an unproductive piece of land, so worthless that he did not have to pay taxes on it. The relatives searched it, and as a result they are to-day millionaires. The pauper was rich without knowing it, and he was ignorant of the fact because he did not search his possessions.

Every Christian with the Bible in hand is rich whether he knows it or not. Let him search and find hidden treasures. This search implies sight and light. There is need of spiritual discernment. "The natural man discerneth not the things of God." And hence the need of inspiration which comes from trusting the Holy Spirit as the Revealer of Truth. When Galileo turned his little telescope to the heavens, he found that he really had a new pair of eyes. He could now see the mountains of

the moon, the satellites of Neptune, and the ring around Saturn. So we read the Bible in the light of the Bible and as more light comes, better sight is imparted; while, on the other hand, as better sight is imparted, more light is revealed.

The Christian with spiritual discernment can afford to "search the Scriptures" with the Holy Spirit alone as his guide. Diogenes and Commentaries are good, but not Alexander good as substitutes for independent search. When Alexander the Great stood before Diogenes as he sat by his tub, the general asked the philosopher what he could do for him. The rather grim reply was, "Simply get out of my light." And any searcher has a right to say "Get out of my light" to every one whose shadow comes between him and the Truth.

Any method of searching is good, though some may be better than others. The "grass-hopper method" by which we take a word or subject and jump from one place to another, collating the texts which have the word or subject in them, is not to be despised. God shook the world through Dwight L. Moody, who was fond

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of this method. I have learned to love what, for lack of a better word, I call the sectional method, by which one begins at a certain place and goes through paragraph, chapter or book, gathering and classifying every thought. It reminds one of Mr. Spurgeon's saying suggested by the worm-eaten Bible which he found on the table of a Scottish wayside inn. Holding it up to the light, he noticed only one hole through which the light shone. One worm, it seems, had begun at Genesis and eaten through to Revelation, and Spurgeon prayed, "Lord, make me a book-worm like that." Such a book-worm never turns into an earth-worm. It will have wings by and by.

But whatever be your method, do not fail to read the Bible by books. Read Genesis at a sitting. You can do it in less than three hours. Then take Exodus; then Leviticus, and so on through the whole library of sixty-six volumes. The astronomer should look at the heavens as a whole before he takes to his telescope. The botanist should look at the fields and gardens before he takes to his microscope. If you have not read the Scriptures, a book at a sitting, you may

take it for granted that you do not know your Bible.

The study of words yields a rich harvest of knowledge and blessing. Every Bible student should, if possible, have some knowledge of Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written. Cato learned Greek at eighty years of age, and any one of average intelligence can learn enough of this beautiful language to greatly assist him in his studies by devoting an hour a week for a year or two. In Brooklyn an ex-pastor taught a New Testament Greek class one evening in the week, and a woman over seventy joined the class. He said to her: "You are going to rub up on Greek?" "Rub up nothing!" she replied, "I do not know the alphabet, but the pastor said from the pulpit Sunday morning that Cato learned Greek at eighty, and what a man can do at eighty a woman can certainly do at seventy." And she persevered for two years, till she could read the Greek Testament with pleasure and profit.

Take the English word "minister" which represents three words in Greek, one of which means a private servant, like John Brown, the

Study of
Words

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private servant of Queen Victoria; another means official servant, like Lord Pauncefort, who was the official representative of the Queen at Washington; still another means an "under-rower." We have in it a picture of the captain of an ancient trireme standing in front of his oarsmen and giving them the stroke. As they strike with him, they, of course, strike with each other, and keep in perfect harmony. So we are to take the stroke from Christ. We are to learn what He is doing in the church of which we are a member, in the community where we live, or in the world, and when we have a conviction that He is leading in any movement, religious, moral, social, or political, we take the stroke from Him, and do all we can to advance the cause in which He is interested. Without a knowledge of Greek, this does not appear.

Luther said that he studied the Bible as he gathered apples. First, he shook the whole tree, that the ripest might fall. Then he climbed the tree and shook each limb, and when he had shaken each limb, he shook each branch, and after each branch every twig, and then looked under each leaf. Let us search the Bible as a whole; shake

**Luther's
Method**

the whole tree; read it as rapidly as you would any other book; then shake every limb, studying book after book. Then shake every branch; give attention to the chapters when they do not break the sense. Then shake every twig by careful study of the paragraphs and sentences, and you will be rewarded, if you will look under every leaf by searching the meaning of words.

IV. *A biblical motive for Bible study.*
This is two-fold.

1. That we may have right thinking about eternal life. "In them ye think ye have eternal life." In Christ we have eternal life, but in the Scriptures is our thinking about it. We have the blessedness of the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night." My arch of salvation rests upon two pillars. The first pillar is what Christ did for me, and that is always the same length. Time was when the second pillar was assurance of salvation through my feelings. If I felt well and happy, that pillar was of the right length, and seemed solid enough, but when dyspepsia gave me depressed feelings, the pillar seemed

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shorter and threatened the arch. One day, however, I read I. John 5:13. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." And I saw that I was expected to trust the Scriptures and not my feelings for assurance. From that day the pillar of assurance has been all the time of the same length, for God's word never changes. Feelings may come and go, but "I keep on believing" the promise. I think I have eternal life, not because I feel so and so, but because God says so. Now, the pillar of Christ's merit and the pillar of His promise are of the same length, and the arch of salvation is no longer threatened by changing feelings.

2. That we may learn of Jesus. "They are they which testify of me." Few things are more interesting and none more profitable than tracing the Messianic idea through the Bible. It begins with the curse upon the serpent in Genesis, and closes with "the Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne" in the Revelation. In Christian character the image of Christ is marred by imperfections, if not by sins, but in the Scriptures the portrait is per-

feet. A friend described to me a painting which hung on the wall of his boyhood home. When you first saw it, it was a beautiful landscape with trees, streams, houses and people, but, while gazing upon it, all these beautiful things began to form into a human face. On a closer inspection you perceived that the whole picture was intended to give the face of Christ. The devout student of the Scriptures is constantly having experiences like this. He sees in the Bible trees of faithfulness, streams of truth, landscapes of loveliness in deed and character, but they are all so arranged in their relation to Christ as to bring out the features of His character. While we thus see Him as He is, we become more and more like Him, until by and by we shall see His unveiled face and be completely transformed into His likeness. "Search the Scriptures" with a view to seeing Jesus.

CHAPTER IV

PRAYER

The disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray," and His message concerning prayer is five-fold: no part complete without the other four parts.

The first part of the message is that in prayer we ask for something and receive it. Prayer

i. Definite is petition. "Ask and it shall
Petition be given you" (Luke 11:9).
"Whatsoever ye shall ask, that will I do." "If ye shall ask anything I will do it" (John 14:13, 14). Prayer is not meditation on the good. Prayer is not living right, though living right has a relation to prayer. Prayer is not quietly doing the will of God. As defined by Jesus, it is asking of Him and receiving what we ask.

Our Lord uses four words in the Greek which are translated by the English word "to pray"

and a study of these will reveal the impulse that prompts the asking. One word has in it the thought of inquiry. We go to God in prayer to ask questions and learn of Him what we ought to do. We are ignorant. There are many things we cannot understand, and through prayer we seek an explanation. This is the word which Jesus uses when He says of the sin unto death, "I do not say that he shall pray for it" (I John 5:16), which simply means, "I do not say that he shall inquire about it." Leave the matter entirely with God. Seek the salvation of all without reference to any unpardonable sin.

Another word has in it the sense of need. It is the word used in describing the prayer meeting after Pentecost: "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled" (Acts 4:31). There was a deep sense of need which appealed to God and moved "the arm that moves the world." Mr. Potts, the Quaker, walking about Valley Forge in the snow, heard the voice of prayer in the neighboring woods, and on approaching he found George Washington on his knees, expressing to God the great

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need of the army and the country. That was prayer prompted by a sense of need.

Another word has in it the thought of calling to one's aid, and was used by Christ when

Aid He said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:53). This implies that God in answering prayer comes to the aid of His people. A little boy on board a ship understood this. He was ordered by the captain to perform the very dangerous feat of going up into the rigging during a storm. Before going up, he went down into the hold for a few minutes, and then did successfully what he was commanded. On being asked why he went down into the hold, he said: "I went down to ask God to go with me up there." He believed in a God who is a "present help" in time of need, and this God would have us pray for His aid.

The remaining word has in it the thought of thanksgiving and praise. This is the word most frequently used by Christ.

Gratitude "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41), as if a

grateful, praiseful spirit in our petitions makes a sort of double shield of safety.

All of these words have in them the primary thought of asking that we may receive, whether the asking be prompted by a spirit of inquiry, a sense of need, a desire for help, or a spirit of praise, and we rejoice that God never wearies with our petitions. He delights to "give good things to them that ask Him" (Matt. 7:11).

But we need more than gifts from God. Our greatest need many times is that He shall *act* for us rather than give to us, and it is comforting to learn that God *works* in answer to prayer. "Ask and it shall be given unto you," is not plainer than the other promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask that will I do." God's doings may be more precious than His gifts. In this connection Jesus tells us how difficulties great as mountains may be removed. The man who prays can face the difficulties and by the power of prayer remove them. He can "say to this mountain"; but he must first learn to speak to God in prayer, if he would speak to the mountain in power. There is no ignoring difficulties as if they were insignificant. But while we recognize the mountain

**God's Gifts
and Acts**

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as high and heavy, we believe in a God with power great enough to cast it into the sea. Tennyson is right when he sings:

“ More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let
thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves, and those who call them
friends?
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

And yet I sympathize with Dr. Lorimer's criticism of the last line. “Bound by gold chains about the feet of God” implies subjection, if not slavery, and does not savor of the familiar relations between child and father. A better figure would be “Bound with silken cords about the heart of God.” “Ye are my friends,” said Jesus, “if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14), and He delights to be our friend by doing what we ask Him. There is more in prayer than abject submission.

Reginald Heber, I think, sings the truth more clearly than Tennyson:

“ There is an eye that never sleeps,
 Beneath the wing of night;
 There is an ear that never shuts,
 When sink the beams of light.
 There is an arm that never tires,
 When human strength gives way;
 There is a love that never fails,
 When earthly loves decay.
 That eye is fixed on seraph throngs;
 That ear is filled with angels’ songs;
 That arm upholds the world on high;
 That love is throned beyond the sky.
 But there’s a power which men can wield
 When mortal aid is vain.
 That eye, that arm, that love to reach,
 That listening ear to gain;
 That power is prayer, which soars on high,
 And feeds on bliss beyond the sky.”

The second part of the message of Jesus concerning prayer is that we should ask in His name. “Whatsoever ye shall ask *in my name*, that will I do,” He tells us. And again, “If ye shall ask anything *in my name*, I will do it.” This, of course, means for the sake of Christ, but

2. In His
 Name

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“name” in the Bible stands for character, so that when we pray in the name of Christ we are praying in the character of Christ. We ask for what can be given us according to His character. I cannot, therefore, expect my selfish prayers to be answered any more than the prayers of James and John for fire upon the Samaritans were answered. It was not according to the character of Christ. It would be unfitting to ask a man to steal in the name of an honest man, or to lie in the name of One who is Truth, or to be impure in the name of the Most Holy One.

“If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us,” we are told and so the model prayer is the standard of His will. “Our Father who art in heaven” means that His will is for us to be filial towards God and social towards each other. Whatever a loving father would give to his children we may ask of God, but we come, not saying “my Father,” but “our Father.” We ask for what is best for the whole family. “Hallowed be thy name” shows that His will is that we should be reverential, for adoration is an element of prayer. “Thy kingdom come” reveals His will that

we should be missionary in spirit. "Thy will be done on earth as in heaven" tells us that His will is for us to be submissive, while we seek to transform earth into heaven. "Give us this day our daily bread" plainly shows that it is His will for us to have the necessities of life for body and soul. "And lead us not into temptation" indicates that it is His will for us to be cautious and wary of evil. "But deliver us from the evil one" assures us that it is His will for us to be victorious over Satan, however severe his assaults.

The third part of the message of Jesus concerning prayer is that in prayer we ask in faith for something in His name. He says in Mark 11:24, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Again in Matt. 21:22, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive." "Dost thou believe?" was the test question. "All things are possible to him that believeth." To the blind men who had confessed their faith Jesus said, "According to your faith be it unto you," and their sight was restored. Unless a patient has faith in the physician he is certain

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not to commit himself unreservedly to his treatment. Unless men in business trust each other, they cannot successfully transact their affairs. Faith is the foundation of the home, of the state, and of commerce. Without confidence there can be no home, no state, no system of trade. So that when we think of praying for a thing we have need to ask one question. Is it within the circle of God's will? If so, believe that God will grant it, and with holy boldness press your petition until He does so. The fact that I desire it is permission to pray, for "What things soever ye *desire* when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." And prayer is the crucible which tests the quality of our desires. After we have brought them to God in prayer, we are not long in discovering whether or not they are according to His will, and if we have a desire which we cannot bring to God in prayer, we had better take the advice of Coleridge when he says:

"If for any wish thou darest not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away."

The fourth part of the message of Jesus con-

cerning prayer is that in prayer we ask in faith and fellowship for something in His name. “If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). These words occur in the “vine” chapter of John’s Gospel, and we have in them the relation of the branch to the vine. Child-life is one thing, and branch-life is another. The child is born and then grows away from its mother. Children can live after the mother dies, but the branch is dependent every moment upon the vine. If the vine dies, the branch dies; and the branch dies, if separated from the vine. Just as the branch receives its vitality all the time from the vine, so we are to receive our life every moment from God, if we would be fruitful, for this abiding in Christ refers directly to the fruit-bearing life. The verse which follows says: “Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.” The prayerful life is the fruitful life. If we abide in Christ, while His words abide in us, it will be easy for us to “pray without ceasing,” for the life of Christ in us gravitates toward God.

The full message of Jesus concerning prayer

4. In Fellowship

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is that in prayer we ask in faith and fellowship

5. In God's for something in His name, that
Glory God may be glorified. "Whatso-
ever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do,
that the Father may be glorified in the Son"
(John 14:13). James therefore gives the secret
of so many unanswered prayers. "Ye ask and
receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may
consume it upon your desires." God does not
allow us to abuse prayer by making it a means
of gratifying the self-life. If so, it would be
more of a curse than a blessing.

The week night devotional meeting in which
the church assembles for praise, prayer, and
The Prayer testimony, is not only the ther-
Meeting mometer which indicates the de-
gree of spirtual life, but it is indispensable for
the development of young Christians, and the
young people's meeting, though important,
should not be permitted to take its place. The
mingling of old and young is necessary for the
ideal devotional meeting. The young need the
ripe experience of mature Christians, while ma-
ture Christians need to keep in touch with the
enthusiasm and inspiration of youth. Young
Christians can help the pastor make the devo-

tional meeting a success, and we are persuaded that many pastors are more concerned about these meetings than about their Sunday sermons.

Byron wrote:

“ Society now is one polished horde,
Formed of two tribes, the bores and the
bored.”

Sad to say, these lines describe too many of our prayer meetings. The pious brethren and sisters go to them expecting to be bored, but feeling that, for the sake of the cause and the pastor, it is their duty to bear this cross.

It is evident that the Apostolic prayer meeting described in Acts 4:22-30 was brimful of life. “ Being let go ” the week following, not one of them would have thought it a cross to go to such a prayer meeting. Now what was the secret?

1. They told their recent experiences. “ They reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.” Some good people have experiences of many years which they delight to tell, and it is well to tell them, but not too often to the same company. After they have been told about three times, the

Fresh Testimonies

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people know them by heart, but God's recent dealings with us are always fresh, and the young Christian has such experiences. The Psalmist said, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." The great deliverance from sin we may never cease to speak of. Paul's story of his experience on the way to Damascus never grew old. But God does more for us than deliver us. He leads and comforts and strengthens. Of these recent experiences let us not be slow to speak.

2. They prayed. Not to fill up the time, but because they had something to pray for. Busy **Earnest** with their Master's work, their **Prayer** faithfulness had provoked bitter persecution. They prayed for boldness because they felt the need of it. They were more solicitous about the success of the cause they loved than about their own safety or comfort. They yearned for power to heal and do wonders "by the name of thy holy child Jesus." Their desires were not self-centered. The burden of souls was upon them.

Many of our prayer meetings die for the want of an object. Pastor and people have met simply because it is customary to meet once a

week. "The signs and wonders" of conversion are among the things of the past.

The brethren thank the Lord for the privilege of meeting "where prayer is wont to be made," when, if the bare truth were told, they would be just as thankful for the privilege of staying at home. They ask of God that "all things may be done with an eye single to His glory," and it would take a microscope to see really what is being done to glorify Him. How different our prayer meetings when the joy of salvation fills every heart, and the cry for saving power is as the voice of one man. The songs, talks, and prayers then have life, and "being let go" people are anxious to be in such company.

Too many church members fancy that they belong to an institution whose duty it is to give them social and intellectual enjoyment, and to benefit them; whereas the idea of Christ, when He founded the church, was to make it a channel of blessing to others. It receives only as it gives. "To minister, not to be ministered unto" is the genius of Christianity. Could we infuse that thought into our prayer meetings, we should save them from lifelessness. To pray for others and for ourselves that we may help others; to

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talk for the comfort of others, to live for others — a body of men and women met with such an object in view cannot have a dull time.

Though these Apostles were so earnest and wanted so much, their prayers were not long.

Be Brief The one reported can be repeated in half a minute. Prayers are short in proportion to their earnestness. Men are not wordy when they feel a pressing need. "Lord, save, I perish," cried sinking Peter. "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil," was a mother's earnest prayer, while the publican poured out his penitent soul into one short sentence.

"Bless mamma, and papa, and John, and Mary, and James and everybody," prayed a little boy at his mother's knee. "If you had said 'everybody' first," said the younger brother James, "you need not have made such a long prayer." And we agree with James sometimes, when a good brother closes a ten minutes' prayer with the petition, "Lord, if we have failed to ask, fail not thou to give." If he had said that about ten minutes sooner, he might have saved the life of a good prayer meeting. God would

have us to be definite in our praying, but definiteness does not demand length.

And prayer is more than begging. Praise should always mingle with petition, for God answers praise. Many prayers are powerless, because they do not praise God for what He has already done. Our Father expects at least a "thank you" from His children for gifts already bestowed before He lavishes others. "Gimme a cent," said an urchin on a street in New York. The gentleman to whom he spoke gave him a cent. "Gimme 'nuther," was the quick response, and the gentleman wished that he had not given a cent to the ungrateful little beggar. "Give, give, give," we say, while God waits for some recognition of the gifts already bestowed. "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your bequests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4: 6).

But we are not called upon to thank God for everything every time we pray. In private devotions let us pray and praise as long as we wish, but in public prayer be brief, and the interest of the meeting will not suffer.

3. Scripture was freely quoted. The second Psalm expressed their feelings. A religious meet-

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ing where God's Word is not honored will be a failure. "Did you have a blessing to-night?" asked a wife of her husband on his return from church. "No," was the curt reply, "there was nothing there for God to bless; not a sentence of the Word was in sermon or prayer." If all young Christians would be careful to come to the prayer meeting with a text of Scripture and give it with or without comment, the interest and power of our meetings would be multiplied. Speak to God in prayer; let God speak to you through His Word, and blessing will follow, as we see it followed this Apostolic prayer meeting.

CHAPTER V

TEMPTATION

Standing by a river and watching the water near the shore we may think that it is flowing up stream, but looking out to the center we see that the current is in the right direction. The eddies near the shore have deceived us. So with good men. The current of their lives is all right, but looking at only a part of their characters we may sometimes think that they are all wrong. Abraham was a good man with the current of his life toward heaven, but he sinned, and if Abraham, "the father of the faithful" and "the friend of God" was led by insidious temptation into sin, we are all in danger. A study of Abraham's temptation and sin, as recorded in Genesis 12:10-20, will, I hope, put us on our guard and make us strong to overcome.

It is evident that Abraham's sin grew out of some roots that were in his character at first.

Abraham was afraid that he would lose some-

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thing. It is evident that he did not ask God if he might go down into Egypt.

Selfishness

The famine was sore in the land; there was danger that the people should be in want. Abraham was rich. He could preserve his property as well as his life by going down into the land of plenty. He was led by his self-interest. He might have done good in Canaan and won some people to his faith, if, like John Clough in Telugu, he had remained and shared with them his plenty; but not he. Without consulting the Lord he decided that the best thing to do was to leave the place of famine and go to the place of safety.

We are in danger of being led by our interests rather than by the Lord. Christ was thus tempted. He was hungry and the tempter suggested that He make stones into bread. But Jesus repelled the tempter. He chose hunger rather than obedience to Satan. "But we must live." "Not so," said the martyrs. If John Huss had acted upon the principle which the Devil announced to Job, "All that a man hath will he give for his life," he would never have been burned at Constance. His friends tried to persuade him that, under the circumstances, it was

necessary that he should modify his views. But Huss stood for the truth. There never could have been martyrs, if they had accepted the principle that they ought to be led by their worldly interests rather than by the Lord. They chose deliberately to sacrifice their bodies to their principles. Abraham was led into this temptation by selfishness. He was immature in his faith; had just come out of paganism, and this fact may be something of an excuse for him; but all the same he ought to have consulted God, and we believed that if he had, he would have been led to stay in Canaan, and do what he could for the starving people.

Prudence is not among the graces of the Spirit. There is a holy recklessness, a spirit that does the will of God, let the result be what it may. It was very **Prudence** prudent in Abraham to agree with his wife to lie, that he might protect himself, but it was not true nor honorable; and, when we make prudence our guide, it is very difficult to be true. Carelessness as to results, when we are doing right, is a virtue to be coveted.

Abraham, it seems, was afraid to die for the truth. He preferred the sin of lying, even, to

the danger of being killed. And he tempted Sarah. We blame Eve for tempting Adam, but in this case the woman was not the transgressor. Sarah obeyed her lord, and remained true to him. She might have remonstrated against his sin; but she did not. Selfishness and prudence are the parents of cowardice. When a man wants to save his own skin at whatever cost, his prudence will suggest that he may commit sin in order to do it. Abraham at this juncture was a moral coward. He showed afterwards that he was physically brave. He knew how to organize an army and make conquest, but here he fell before the possibility of being killed for his wife. There are men who can rush into the cannon's mouth without a tremor, but quail before their moral enemies. They are strong in the excitement of the rush of battle, but in the quiet of their lives, when sin comes in subtle form, they are not heroic enough to resist it. Better for Abraham to have boldly died than to have ignominiously lied.

Sarah was the half-sister of Abraham, and he told a half-truth which was to Pharaoh a whole lie. It was the truth with a mental reserva-

tion. He acted a double part, and such sin is very common. When a man wishes to make a trade he is tempted to tell the favorable things and to keep back the unfavorable. On Wall Street thousands of lies are told daily just because it would be against the selfish interests of men to tell the whole truth. It may be that no outright lie is told; what is said may be true, but it is not all the truth, and is therefore practically a lie. It is possible to utter the vilest slander without telling an outright falsehood. The slanderer simply tells a part of the truth; the part that is damaging, while the whole truth would change the moral phase of the case entirely. Abraham did not speak as before God; he spoke as before Pharaoh. To Pharaoh he was the brother of Sarah; to God he was half-brother and husband. God is our umpire of right and wrong, and a thing is bad or good, lie or truth, just as it appears to God. All through the New Testament we are urged to live as before God, and the man who does that will never be a hypocrite.

Let us now draw some lessons from this sin of the "father of the faithful."

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1. We may make our greatest blessings occasions of sin. It was something for Abraham to have a wife like Sarah. She was held forth by Peter as the model woman, "whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well" (I Pet. 3: 6). Beautiful, industrious, faithful, she was such a woman as a husband might well be proud of. It was her beauty, so greatly prized by Abraham, which led him into sin. If she had been ugly and deformed, he would not have thought of acting the double part. And so the very blessings of life we may turn into curses through our selfishness, prudence, cowardice and diplomacy. We have known a parent led away from church by a beautiful daughter. He wished to please her; he began to live for her; every whim of hers he would gratify. Her beauty was his pride, her intelligence his joy. And these things that were indeed blessings he allowed to be occasions of temptation. Instead of seeking to consecrate her beauty and intelligence to the Lord, he allowed himself to be led off by her into the world. And so a man's wealth, a real blessing if properly used, may become occasion for sin. In order to hold it or increase it, he yields to selfish

prudence; becomes a moral coward, and, it may be, practices deception. How careful we should be to make the blessings of God really bless us, and in order that we may do so, we must live as before God, doing His will, and more anxious to have His smile than to keep any temporal blessings.

2. God takes the part of His sinning child. He plagued Pharaoh. His very silence and tender dealings were a rebuke to Abraham. God never condones or excuses sin. He forgives the penitent, but sin, whether in His children or others, grieves Him. However, He did not cast off Abraham because of his sin. He knew that the current of His child's life was right, and He would take time to correct the eddies. We had the pain of being present at the hanging of three criminals. The public was very indignant against them, cursing them for their crimes, but there was one old woman in the vast crowd who had nothing but blessing in her heart for one of them. It was her son, and the more the crowd cursed, the more she loved. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him." He corrects them; He chastises them;

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He teaches them better, but He never forsakes them.

3. It is better to be a weak, struggling child of God than a strong son of Satan. Look at **Which is Better?** the contrast between Pharaoh and Abraham at the time of this sin and afterwards. Pharaoh impresses one as being the nobler of the two. As soon as he learns that Sarah is the wife of Abraham, he rebukes him for his sin, and returns to him his own. He does not even punish him for his double dealing. The selfishness, cowardice, and hypocrisy of Abraham were in sad contrast with the fairness, openness, and generosity of Pharaoh. But we must follow the two men to the end of their lives, in order to decide which one we would rather be. Where is Pharaoh to-day? He lived his life of sensuality, seeking earthly glory, with thousands of slaves to do his bidding. He died and was forgotten. His impress upon the world was almost nothing. On the other hand, Abraham, linked by faith with God, overcomes his sinful tendencies, and becomes a real saint, ripens for glory, and impresses the world with his character, so that no name is now more highly esteemed by millions of people. He became father in the flesh.

of the Jews, and, in the spirit, of Christians. It is better, however weakly, selfishly and cowardly you may be, to put yourself on the side of faith, righteousness, and virtue, and to let God mould you as He would have you, than to get the very best the world can give, living a life of independence and yet of degeneracy. Better be weak Abraham with the strength of God girdling you than strong Pharaoh left to himself.

The difference between Abraham and Pharaoh is illustrated by the difference between the Bellevue Hospital in New York and a hospital in Washington. At Bellevue the object is to cure disease; in Washington it is to cultivate disease. The physicians in Bellevue deal with men and strive to make them well. The officials in Washington deal with plants and strive to make them sick, so that they may understand and describe their diseases. Abraham was in the hands of the great Physician who had undertaken his cure. Pharaoh was in surroundings that cultivated the diseases of his soul, and the result was that he never grew any better.

In Bellevue Hospital there is a ward for prisoners. When a criminal in the Tombs becomes sick, he is sent there to be treated. In order

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to deliver him, you must not only cure his disease, but break the bars that surround his cell. He is out of relation with the State and with the forces of life that make for health. Abraham was, to be sure, a patient in a ward, but he was not surrounded by bars. He had been made free through the grace of God. Pharaoh, on the other hand, was sick and a slave. He was in the hospital where diseases were promoted, surrounded at the same time by iron bars of sin. God's children, who have been made free through the blood of Christ, are not incarcerated by the powers of sin. Let us seek the liberty and the healing of Abraham, while we shun the diseases and bondage of Pharaoh. Our God is able not only to cure the diseases of sin, but to keep us free. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER VI

MONEY

Money is one of our best friends and worst enemies. The love of it is the root of all evil; the use of it the root of all good. The mere possession of money is no index to character. Some men are rich, like Abraham and Job, because they are industrious and honest. Their credit makes it easy for them to acquire wealth. Others are poor, like Moses and Elijah, Peter and Paul, Moody and Spurgeon, because their mission in the world is other than making money. Their poverty is an index to their faithfulness. For them to have turned aside to money-making would have been to disobey God.

Other men are rich because they are dishonest. They have wrecked corporations, or cornered the food market, that they might fill their coffers. Other men are poor, again, because they refuse to adopt the tricks of trade, or to enter into conspiracies to defraud. They chose to lose money

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that they may save themselves. They have come to their poverty honestly. The poverty of others, however, is an index to shiftlessness, or dishonesty. They are poor, because they refuse to work, or have lost their credit by dishonest dealing.

If, therefore, you can learn how a man has gained his wealth or his poverty, and then how he uses it, you have gained the index to his character. If one owns money, he commands a mighty force for Christ and the church, but if money owns him, he is the slave of a heartless master. If, on the other hand, he has the manly qualities which have been developed by honest struggles in poverty, he is rich and powerful without money.

It is to be expected, therefore, that God, in speaking to men through an inspired Book, **Stewards of Capacity** should have something to say about money. And the message of the Bible is very definite. It says to every man of wealth: "You owe to God the capacity to make money." We read in I Samuel 2:7: "The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich." And His method of enriching is given in Deut. 8:18: "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy

God, for it is He that giveth power to get wealth." It is plain from this scripture that the talent for making money is the gift of God, to be used, like other gifts, for His glory: and making money for God's glory is as holy as praying. We need to hear, not less about the "sacred desk" but more about the sacred ledger, the sacred shop, the sacred store. Let us not pull the sacred down to the level of the secular, but lift the secular up to the plane of the sacred. Efface the distinction between sacred and secular by making everything sacred. Make money as religiously as you pray.

The Bible says again to the man who makes money: "Keep this capacity for making money within the limits of honesty and love." Competition means war, **Honesty and Love** and the ethics of war is so low that deception is a virtue. Military men call it strategy; politicians call it diplomacy, but the English of it is *lying*. An officer who succeeds in deceiving an enemy and luring him into a trap, which causes his capture or death, is praised and promoted. A Russian general said "I can die for my Czar, and, of course, I can lie for him." International diplomacy has become such a science of deception

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that Bismark advised young diplomats to tell the truth on all occasions, because no one would believe them.

The ethics of the battlefield and the political arena has been transferred to trade, so that

**A Life
Rather than
a Living** many men of business do not hesitate to deceive in order to make larger profits. A man in an inquiry meeting declared that he could not be a Christian and do what he intended to do next week. His profits depended upon labeling second-class goods as first-class. Such a man may make a living, but he cannot make a life. He builds up a fortune, while he tears down his character. The blood of his own soul is upon every dollar of his profits. He floats his business while he drowns his soul, for "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts that drown men in destruction and perdition." His standard of ethics is profit and loss. Whatever pays is right; whatever loses is wrong. He is a moral suicide. God's standard is the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. The business man who adopts this standard is rich without money, while he who rejects it is a pauper with his millions, for "a

man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

The Bible also says to the money-maker. "Use your money in doing good." "Charge them that are rich in this world that they Do Good do good; that they be rich in good works." The method of doing good is defined by the word "ready to distribute, willing to communicate." "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). To get and hold is to become an octopus, with tentacles that take in, but never give off. It is to become a Dead Sea, with no fish in its waters, an ugly blot on the landscape, the octopus of geography. To give as we have received is to become a Sea of Galilee, with pure water full of life, a gem of beauty. Giving is a cleansing process. "Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you." (Luke 11:41). Wealth, however acquired, becomes foul with selfishness, if no portion of it is used in doing good. More impure than the sewers of the city is the hoarded wealth of the misers who simply pile up riches and stand guard over the pile. It putrifies and fills the

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atmosphere with the miasma of meanness. To such men the message of the Bible is: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and your silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were with fire." (James 5:13).

If money has been accumulated by defrauding the hireling, one needs to read further:

Nobility of Motive	"Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (James 5:4). Such is the experience of those who make and hoard money simply for the sake of hoarding. Let every money-maker ask the question: "What is my motive in making money?" Has it become a great game? Is it simply war or play? Do I wish to make money just as a football team wishes to win by making a higher score? Is my motive simply to excel, and that people may say that I own more money than others? If so, my picture is
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drawn for me by John Ruskin in the following words:

“The first of all English games is making money. That is an all-absorbing game, and we knock each other oftener in playing that than in football, or in rougher sport. And it is absolutely without purpose. No one who engages in that game ever knows why. Ask a great money-maker what he intends to do with his money. He never knows; he does not make it to do anything with it; he gets it only that he may get it. “What will you make of what you have got?” you ask. “Well, I will get more,” he says, just as at cricket, you get more runs. There is no use in the runs, but to get more than other people is the game; and there is no use in the money, but to have more of it than other people is the game.”

Such money-making without motive, or with low motive, cannot make manhood. It simply develops meanness. I have read of a Scotch laird who compelled his servant to pay him a shilling a week for working in his own garden, that he might enjoy with the recreation the pleasure of accumulating. A man who had heaped up a large fortune, it is said, while on his death bed gave a thousand pounds to a benevolent object.

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While the committee were drawing the papers, the dying miser said, "Gentlemen, will you not allow me ten per cent for cash payment?" They agreed, and the miser died, pleased with the thought that he had made a hundred pounds by a sharp bargain.

These may be extreme cases of meanness, but making money for the sake of making money is apt to result, sooner or later, in just such a character.

The final and most emphatic message of Jesus is *Make your money immortal*. "Lay up for **Making Money Immortal** yourselves treasures in heaven." "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it shall fail, they may receive you into eternal tabernacles." Rich men are exhorted to lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold upon the life which is life indeed. While God gives us all things richly to enjoy in this world, He would have us cultivate "other worldliness." Seek to transmute your money which is seen and temporal into character which is unseen and eternal.

How can this be done most effectively? How

shall I give my money so that I shall be most richly blessed, and be the greatest blessing to others? The answer is simple. *Give Scripturally.* Learn what the Bible teaches on this subject and do that. In Luke 11:42, Jesus said, "Ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." "These ought ye to have done" is Christ's endorsement of the principle of tithing, and the Christian can have no higher authority. The Mosaic law demanded that one seventh of the time and one tenth of the income should be devoted to the Lord; and the gospel never falls short of the law in its requirements, but rather goes beyond it. The Sermon on the Mount reveals that the gospel demands of the Christian more than the law. The law says "Thou shalt not kill," but the gospel says, "Thou shalt not hate," etc., etc.

One tenth is the minimum, while we should give in freewill offerings as much more as gratitude may prompt. Let every young convert begin his Christian life by adopting this biblical method of laying aside one tenth of his income

How to
Give

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to be used in other ways than in support of himself and family. Do this every week as far as possible. "On the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him" (I Cor. 16:2). Remember that Jesus stood over against the treasury and watched *how* they gave, and He still watches *how* rather than *how much* we give. The widow gave with the spirit of loving sacrifice, and this manner of giving counted for more with Christ than the abundance of the wealthy. Her two mites were really more than their larger gifts, because they meant more self-sacrifice. Indeed, Christ seems to take no account of the amount, but records only the loving sacrifice we make in giving. Such giving is an act of worship in which we express to God our gratitude and praise.

John Wesley's motto was, "Make all you can; save all you can; give all you can." If you make and save with a view to giving, your labor is as religious as your prayers. "What are you doing this morning?" asked a neighbor as he entered a blacksmith shop, while the smithy was striking the hot iron on the anvil. "Preaching the gospel to the regions beyond," was the reply,

as he struck the iron a little harder, and made the sparks fly further. And the labor of this humble man was transfigured by the glory of a high and holy motive.

CHAPTER VII

AMUSEMENTS

The things which amuse us do much toward moulding our characters for good or evil. It is, therefore, needful that the young Christian should be as careful about his amusements as his duties. There are certain principles by which he may be guided.

Amusements that injure the body, weaken the mind, or corrupt the morals ought to be avoided.

A Test So with amusements that vitiate our joys. The German proverb says, "The good is enemy of the better and the best." Amusement, fun, and pleasure may be good; but joy is better. Amusement is the dash of the spray, the sparkle on the surface; joy is the flow of the deep current in the soul. We should not sacrifice the current for the spray or the sparkle. Whenever, therefore, we find that amusement is entrenching upon our joy, we

should sacrifice amusement, that joy may be saved.

Amusements should always be avoided when they are associated with any great evil institution. The people of Israel played before the golden calf. Their play was associated with the evil institution of idolatry. Paul said that he could eat meat offered to idols, for he regarded an idol as nothing, and it would not, therefore, injure him. He had a right to eat, but he had the higher right which was the right to give up his personal right for the good of the weaker brother. He therefore determined to surrender this right and exercise the higher right of self-denial for the benefit of others. Two men were in a boat above Niagara Falls. When they saw that the current was taking them down, by a bold stroke they reached the bank, and there on a tree was the placard, "No trespassing on these grounds." A farmer appeared with a fierce bull dog at his side, and one of the men was cruelly torn. The magistrate at Niagara used these words which are worthy of a place on the fly leaf of your Bible: "You had a right, sir, to placard your land, but in this case there was involved the higher right to surrender your right

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for the good of humanity, and, because you failed to do so, I send you to jail for thirty days." We may contend for the Christian privilege of indulging in certain things, while we forget the higher privilege of self-denial that we may have a larger influence for good.

A safe rule for the young convert is never to indulge in any amusement that links him with a

A Safe Rule great evil institution. Try the card table, the dance, and the theatre by this test. The card table is a world-wide evil institution which you find in all countries, Christian and pagan. It is the gambler's instrument. It has been blackened by dishonesty, stained by murder, and disgraced by innumerable wrecks of character. A pack of cards is suggestive, not of an innocent game, but of a great foul institution which has been a curse to mankind. Shall I indulge, and thus link myself with this institution? Or shall I deny myself, that I may not be suggestive of evil?

The square dance may be considered by some as an innocent pastime, if indulged in

The Dance moderately, but in general it may be said that dancing has become a world-wide institution of evil. The dance-

house cannot be described in polite society. Dancing is not only worldly, but in many of its forms it is desperately wicked. Its associations are malodorous. There may be pleasure in the physical response to music; shall I yield to it, and thus associate myself with a bad institution?

The theatre as an institution is also bad. There are some moral plays, as well as some moral actors and actresses, but, so far as I can find, there is not a moral theatre in the world. Edwin Booth determined to establish a moral theatre, before whose footlights there should not be a display of spectacular obscenity. The result was that Booth's theatre failed and paid five cents on the dollar. Henry Irving determined that the Lyceum theatre should be moral, but the management had to change its quality to keep from bankruptcy. Mary Anderson left the stage, and declared that on moral grounds she did not wish her children to attend the theatre. McCready would not allow his children to go to the theatre. Edwin Forrest, after hearing Dr. Brantly in Augusta, Ga., preach a sermon denouncing the theatre for its immorality, lingered after the service long enough to take the preach-

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er by the hand and say to him, "Sir, what you have said to-night is true, only you have not painted the picture as dark as it is."

There is a difference between pleasure in the midst of business, and making a business of pleasure. The pleasure-seeking spirit is a living death, for "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (I Tim. 5:6). If you will turn to Job 21. 12, you will find some of the results of this pleasure-seeking spirit. "They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit shall we have if we pray unto Him?" When the pleasure-seeking spirit fills a man's life, he ceases to desire God. He says to Him, "Depart from us." He sees no profit in prayer or in the service of the Almighty. Pleasure is his god, and he becomes vain and empty like the god he worships.

The picture of a pleasure-seeking life which is given us in the second chapter of Ecclesiastes

is enough to startle one who desires to be something or do something in the world. Solomon was rich enough to have everything that he desired, and he set himself to seeking pleasure. The result was that he hated life, and declared that "All is vanity and striving after wind." Some one has described the palace of pleasure as a building "which has a gorgeous street entrance adorned with statuary and brilliant with variegated lights, and the passerby is lured in by strains of music. The exit is a dark, narrow, concealed rear-way which leads into the fields where swine are kept." As a gentleman entered the theatre several years ago, the usher beckoned to him with the words, "This is the way to the pit." The word "pit" was so suggestive that the man turned and left the theatre in haste. However beautiful the entrance to the pleasure-seeking life, and however entrancing the music, the exit is into the swine field, and near the swine field is the precipice over which sooner or later we fall into the pit.

The danger is that the pleasure-seeking spirit may displace the serious work of life. In the parable of the sower, the seed was "choked by

Solomon's
Experience

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the pleasures of this life" (Luke 8:14), and

**A Danger
Signal**

when one makes up his mind that the end of life is simply to have a good time, duty is neglected, sacred obligations are ignored, business lags, the prospects of life wither, and the end is despair. Here is a good place to hold the red flag of danger. When the Duke of Orleans was in this country, he happened to be in a small village when a circus was there. He could not obtain dinner or any sort of service. The people of the hotel informed him that no one would work that day, for everybody was going to the show. Such a holiday once in a while might produce little harm, but suppose that village should decide to quit work and attend the show every day; the result would be stagnation and death. Just so with the life of a man who allows pleasure to displace business, who lets fun and frolic swallow up the serious duties of life. The Romans became so greedy for amusement that they demanded great outlay in purchasing wild animals and gladiators for their enjoyment in the arena. This pleasure-seeking spirit so enervated the people of Rome that they became an easy prey to the serious Northmen who came down upon them.

As with the nation, so with the individual. Pleasure-seeking weakens character and makes it easy for us to be captured and destroyed by evil habits. I have read of some cavalry-men who, during five or six years of rest, taught their horses to dance to the music of the band. It was great sport, but, when they were riding into battle and the band began to play, hoping to inspirit the soldiers, the horses stopped in the charge and began to dance. The result was the enemy swept down upon them and conquered them. Many a man has lost the battle of life for the same reason. He is so possessed by the pleasure-seeking spirit that, when he ought to be serious and dutiful, he is dancing, or gambling, or in some other way frittering away his time.

After Napoleon Bonaparte had killed the Duke D'Enghien, the indignation of the French people was so intense that there was danger of a revolution. The wily Emperor quieted their consciences by producing for them the most magnificent ballet that Paris had ever seen. They rushed to the theatre and forgot their grievances. It is hard for conscience to assert itself when the pleasure-seeking spirit is master.

Inglorious
Retreat

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Everything that any one ought to enjoy, the Christian may enjoy. What is sinful or hurtful to body, mind, or soul, should not be indulged in by any one, and such indulgence displaces a purer enjoyment. **The Better Way** If the young Christian will take Jesus Christ as the umpire of his life, submitting to Him his pleasures as well as his duties, his life will be full of light, and the shadows that come will only refresh. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And this light never becomes darkness. It grows "brighter and brighter till the perfect day."

CHAPTER VIII

THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN

Napoleon said, "Imagination rules the world." Certainly there can be no great achievement where there is no ability to conceive a great ideal. If our day-dreams do not make us content simply with reverie, they will stir us to heroic action. Castles in the air may become solid structures.

In Col. 1 : 9-13 we have a picture of the ideal Christian and every young Christian will be profited by a careful study of his features: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suf-

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fering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."

The ideal Christian is "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." It is not the knowledge of astronomy, botany, philosophy or geology that develops Christian character, though these are important in their places. A man who knows all science and history may still be a bad man. But if he is filled with a knowledge of God's will, such fulness will make him wise and spiritual. We learn God's will from the Bible, and hence the importance of persistent Bible study. A Christian can afford to miss breakfast, dinner, or supper rather than to neglect his Bible. Starving the body is not so fatal as starving the soul. Let not the newspaper or the magazine, however attractive, push aside the Word of God, and the business, however prosperous, that causes the Christian to neglect his Bible study impoverishes more than it enriches.

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord in all pleasing.” Nothing can please Christ more than seeing His people in their daily lives maintaining a standard worthy of Him. This does not mean that we are to be worthy Christians only in crises and emergencies. *Walking* is the daily hum-drum of life. We should “run with patience the race that is set before us,” and strive to be the first to reach the goal, so as to receive the victor’s crown. We may mount up with wings as eagles, but such running and flying are not the tests of character that every-day drudgery is. The man who is faithful in the common places is sure to be faithful in the crises. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.”

A Worthy
Walk

A man in Chicago heard a rescue mission worker make an earnest address, urging upon his hearers to become Christians. The man, who had been a detective in former years, made up his mind that he would shadow the speaker for twenty-four hours, in order that he might decide whether or not he was really what he claimed to be. On the following night he returned to the mission and said, “I am now ready to become a

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Christian. I heard our brother make his earnest plea last night, and I determined to watch him for twenty-four hours. I believe he is sincere, and I want you to pray for me." How many of us could stand the detective's shadowing? Would he find us going to places and doing things unworthy of the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, you may be certain that he would not become a Christian upon our testimony.

To walk worthy of Christ is the highest possible standard, and the motive to please Him in all things will make the Christian consecrated and self-sacrificing. Rev. F. B. Meyer, of London, tells of a man whose income is \$10,000 a year. He lives on \$1,000 and gives the remaining \$9,000 to foreign missions. He tells of another whose income is \$10,000; he lives on \$1,250 a year and gives away the remainder. Dr. Meyer knows of a governess who earns \$500 a year, and gives away \$250; he speaks of another man with a comfortable competence, who remains in business and gives all his profits to the Lord. Sarah Hosmer, working in a factory and living in a garret, gave \$50 a year for the spread of the gospel. Are these people fanatics, or have they not caught a glimpse of the vocation which

is worthy of Jesus Christ, who gave Himself on the cross for them?

“Fruitful in every good work.” A life that is full of the knowledge of Christ cannot fail to bear good fruit, and there is nothing artificial about it. It is Fruitfulness not fruit hung upon the branches, but growing out of them. I saw at an “Exposition” apples, peaches, grapes, and oranges made of papier maché, and they looked just like fruit. But there was no odor and no lusciousness. They simply appeared to be fruit. There is so-called Christian fruit like the papier maché not produced by internal life. It is not grown, but is put on. In Galatians 5:22 is described a cluster of fruit produced by the Christ life within us: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” It is the business of every Christian to grow fruit of this kind.

“Fruitful in every good work” means much fruit rather than great fruit. The world is fed, not by the rare specimens which we see at the “Fair,” but by the little grapes and the little grains of wheat and corn. “Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.” We

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may be too ambitious to bear big fruit. "Do good unto all men." Let no opportunity pass, and it may be in eternity you will find that the little deeds were the great deeds in their results.

On the national arms of Scotland is the engraving of a thistle, and it means that one little thistle was the salvation of the nation. During the invasion of Scotland by the Danes the enemy were advancing in the dark, when one of them, pricking his bare foot by a sharp thistle, cried out with pain. The cry was heard by a sentry who sounded the alarm, and the Scottish soldiers, roused by the cry, gained the battle. If I can only be a little thistle, pricking the foot of evil, I may bear fruit to the glory of God.

Julian Legrand, the great Paris merchant, relates that the firm to which he belonged was in financial straits. They decided in the morning that it would take \$100,000 to tide them over. Legrand went out and sought a loan among his friends, but the times were so stringent that no one would lend him a dollar. He returned to his office dejected and despairing. While sitting there in a gloomy state of mind, there was a tap at the door. The man who entered came up to the desk and said,

“I hear, Mr. Legrand, that you are in need of money.”

“Yes,” replied the merchant, “we certainly are.”

“How much do you need?” he asked.

“Not less than \$100,000.”

“Draw me your note,” continued the stranger, “for that amount without interest for one year, and I will give you my check for it.”

Legrand looked at the man in astonishment, conscious that he had seen him before, but not able to identify him.

“But pray, why have you come to our relief?”

“When I was a small boy,” said the stranger, “attending the public school, you came as one of the commissioners on examination day. I was poor, shabbily dressed, and thought that you would, of course, pay attention to the rich men’s children, but after the exercises you put your hand on my head, spoke some kind words, told me to persevere, that I could do better if I would try, and assured me that the way to honor was open to all alike; all I had to do was to be resolute and push on. That, sir, was the turning point in my life. From that hour my soul has

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aspired, and I have never reached a goal without blessing you in my heart. I have prospered and am wealthy; I now offer you but a poor return for the soul-wealth you gave me in that by-gone time."

Little did Mr. Legrand suppose when he was speaking to the poor boy in the school that he would reap such a fruitage from that little deed. And doubtless we shall meet many such surprises in heaven. What we thought were the great occasions on earth in God's estimation may have been small and insignificant; what we thought was the trivial may have been in His sight the most important.

"Increase in the knowledge of God." This means growing by means of the knowledge of
Growth God. It is the knowledge of God that makes us grow. Many Christians are dwarfs because they know so little of God. To think God's thoughts is to grow intellectually, and to know and love God's will is to grow spiritually. An old infant is a sad sight. For a child to be deprived of its growth is a great calamity. I saw such a pitiful object in the hospital. From four years of age there had been no growth for thirty-five years. Chris-

tians many years old may be infants in size, simply because they have not learned more of God.

“Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power unto all patience.” The power is not inherent. It comes from God, and the measure of it is not our ability, but His might; and the need of it is for patience. We are apt to think that we need power only for work, but there may be more need of power to endure. A poor mother whose drunken son was before a court in New York charged with crime fell dead in the witness box, when she was asked to testify against her son. The strain was more than her nerves could stand. What she needed was the power of God in her moments of greatest weakness. A daughter, who went from her place of business in New York to a New Jersey town, found her mother intoxicated, and in a fit of despair committed suicide. The poor girl had power to work, but not power to endure so great a shock. If she had called upon Christ, He would have strengthened her for even that ordeal.

Barney Barnato, the millionaire of North Africa, committed suicide by throwing himself into

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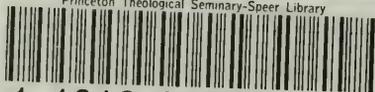
the sea. He saw that his great fortune was dissipated, and he could not bear the thought of becoming again a poor man. The sense of failure broke his heart. I wish I could have stood beside him on the deck of the vessel, beneath the clear sky, and whispered to him of God in Christ who could give him strength to endure, not with melancholy and moroseness, but with joyfulness. Under the heaviest burdens we may sing. In the darkest night we may shout His praise. When Susannah Wesley was dying, she said to her weeping children at the bedside, "When I am gone, sing to God a hymn of praise," and when her spirit departed, the children with trembling voices and weeping eyes sang their song of praise for a mother now glorified with Christ. The ideal Christian is the person who can be sorrowful and yet rejoice, cast down and yet lifted up, patient and longsuffering with joy.

"Giving thanks to the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light." We thank
Gratitude God not simply for the inheritance which is "incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away," but for the fitness to enjoy it.

Going to heaven unfit for the place would be a calamity. Christ is preparing a place for us while the Holy Spirit is preparing us for the place. Thanks be to God for heaven! Thanks be to God still more for the preparation of heart which makes heaven everywhere!

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” Death **Deliverance**
to a Christian is a translation, but we have not to wait until we die to be translated from one kingdom to another. We leave “the prince of the power of the air” for the kingdom of His dear Son. The chains of darkness which bind us have been broken and we walk in the light. The emigrant comes from Russia to America and becomes a citizen by renouncing the sovereignty of the Czar of Russia, and acknowledging his allegiance to the Constitution of this country. So we renounce the rule of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, when we acknowledge the allegiance of Christ. The Lamb who died to redeem us is the King who lives to rule us. If the young Christian will let Christ reign in him, He will always give deliverance and his life will be ideal.

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