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ON EAGLE'S WINGS
By George Asbury McLaughlin

Alternative Title:
Spiritual Aviation

A Devotional Book Of Daily
Meditations For One Month

Also By The Author:
New Testament Commentaries
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NUMERIC TITLES CHANGED

In this digital edition, I have changed the Numeric Titles preceding each Subject Title, so that "Day One -- The Eagle-Life," "Day Two -- The Upward Soul Attitude," "Day Three -- The Worldly Pull Counteracted," etc., are shown simply as: "01 -- The Eagle-Life," "02 -- The Upward Soul Attitude," "03 -- The Worldly Pull Counteracted," and so forth. -- DVM

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01 -- THE EAGLE-LIFE

"They shall mount up with wings as eagles." Isaiah 40:31.

This beautiful metaphor likens the lives of those who wait upon the Lord to the free, exalted, exultant life of the king of birds, who scorns the low plains and valleys and lives and soars and builds its nest in the heights above ordinary birds and above ordinary places, The highest is none too high for him. It is his native element. It would be an astonishing thing to find

an eagle content to live in the lowlands, Its home is in the heavens. It sits upon or soars above the highest peaks and looks down upon the earth and its employments.

God wants and has promised that we may, like the eagle, live in heavenly places in our soul life. This seems like poetry to some people, but it is in accordance with the teaching of scripture. Paul writes to the Ephesian church and tells them that the Lord "hath raised us up with him to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" in this life.

Certainly this is not the experience of the average professed Christian, but, just as sure as his word is true, it is the privilege of us all. We are commanded to leave "the principles (or first elements) of the doctrine of Christ and go on unto perfection." The wise Man says, "The pathway of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Reader, if you have had a good sunrise experience in becoming converted, God wants you to go on to the experience of the perfect day which is as much above conversion as noon-day is above sun-rise. When we hear people say that they had such a glorious conversion that they wish it could be repeated, we know there is some trouble with them for the path of those who are saved is like the sun climbing the heavens, making the day brighter and brighter. Such people need to be converted again. No matter however grand your experience at conversion it was the beginning. If you keep true to God it will get brighter all the time. You have not exhausted divine grace. Jesus Christ improves on further acquaintance. He wants you to have the eagle experience.

How can we convince you that there is in eagle life of constant victory and high experience?

Let us believe, first of all, that it is possible for even you. The scriptures promise it. Let us put the promises to the test.

Suppose that you put it down in your diary today that you will try this promise of special waiting on God for one month. Suppose you put down in your diary today some of your short comings and some of your great spiritual aspirations and try for one month to especially wait upon God each day. At the end of the month let us see what has been accomplished. We knew a business firm that was not prospering. The board of directors resolved to take an account of stock for one month to find the difficulty, Is it not worthwhile in the greatest business of life to do the same? Let us then give especial attention to prayer and waiting on God. We believe, if you will do this, that it will be found at the end of the month you will not have to testify, as some do, that you are "living at a poor dying rate," for God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

A man once had a captive eagle which he kept tied to a stake. In time the bird had worn a circular path about the stake. One day he clipped the cord and set the bird free. But the eagle was so accustomed to his daily path that he continued in it. After a while it dawned upon him that he was free. He unfolded his wings and rose up into the sky and soared away. This illustrates the experience of many whom the Lord has made it possible to be free. They are tramping ill the same old beaten path of monotonous bondage. They do not realize that God has done all that He

can to make them free from sin, and religious bondage. They might soar if they would. They might rise out of their circumscribed life.

Reader: Wings have been provided for you. Which will you have, wings or crutches?

"I rise to walk in heaven's own light
Above the world and sin;
With heart made pure and garments white,
And Christ enthroned within."

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02 -- THE UPWARD SOUL-ATTITUDE

"Seek those things which are above... Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." Col. 3:1-2.

Everyone born of God has within him the divine life, that as certainly reaches up to heavenly things as does the fire leap towards the sun. It is a proof that we are the children of God.

The old-time Calvinists never dared to assert that they were saved, but "indulged a hope." They made tests as to the genuineness of that hope. We too, have tests by which we may know that we are saved. The divine life within us is like a lode-stone pulling towards everything that is good and heavenly. It is attracted by our treasure in heaven. It is well occasionally to stop and meditate,--to examine ourselves and see if our affections are drawn towards heavenly things, -- that we may prove that we have within us the divine life. We can tell what we are by what we most love, for "where our treasure is there will our hearts be also." We think most on the things we most love. And those things that we most love determine what we will do. Tell us what a man most loves and we will tell you what he will do.

A child of God loves heavenly things, more than all others. The margin of the verse above quoted reads, "Set your mind on things above." It is well in the light of this text to examine our thoughts and purposes. "As a man thinketh so is he." It is a good exercise of soul to examine our thoughts and motives when we are alone and no human eye is upon us, Then we can tell to what our affections and attention most incline. This will help locate our experience.

"They that wait upon the Lord... mount up on wings like the eagle." That bird scorns the low places of earth. He revels in the superior region. His aim is upward. Are we looking up at the heavenly things and are we on the upward grade? Are we making progress upward? Do we feel the upward pull?

He, who does not want to be the best Christian possible is not a Christian at all. He who does not want to know all the mind of Christ does not know the mind of Christ at all What are our aspirations?

The affections of a Christian are like the gases that inflate the balloon. They pull upward constantly. Contentment with the same aspiration as the average professed Christians about us means a lack of spiritual life. A regenerate life is one of high ideals. Jesus said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." And again he said, "Where your treasure is there will also your heart be." We may really know whether we are waiting on the Lord by the direction of our heart-pull. A real Christian follows the advice of Paul, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." If we are truly waiting on God, we have no time, inclination or desire to place our affections upon earth, and its low delights of the flesh. If we are living the eagle-life we can not afford to lower our wings towards sin and the allurements that engross the attention of the world.

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace.
Rise from transitory things
Towards heaven, thy native place.
Sun and moon and stars decay
Time shall soon this earth remove.
Rise, my soul, and haste away
To seats prepared above."

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03 -- THE WORLDLY PULL COUNTERACTED

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." I John 6:4.

Those who look upon the ocean for the first time, especially on a day when it is calm, have little idea of its treacherous nature. They do not realize that in a very short time, under the lashing of the wind, it may become a horrible monster, devouring ships with their precious cargoes, and swallowing up human lives. It does not seem possible that underneath those shining waves are monsters ready to devour human life.

This illustrates the world about us. The Bible calls it our enemy, as alluring and as dangerous and treacherous as the ocean. It is to be feared. It has ruined its tens of thousands, who once had a good hope in Christ. Its methods of attack are varied. If it cannot cajole us and by flattery take away our allegiance to Christ, it will use ridicule and actual violence. It charms, if possible. If not it opposes. In the days when the world burned men at the stake the church had more spiritual power than in the times when the world succeeds with its blandishments. The lines between the world and the church today are like the equator and meridians, only imaginary. It is however very difficult to make modern Christianity believe this. The infallible word of God says, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life are not of the Father." (I John 2:6.) "This vile world is no friend to grace to help us on to God."

The greatest and wisest of men have been ruined by the world. It is the Delilah that has shorn many a Samson of his great strength. It will surely ruin us unless we are delivered by divine grace. Some one has said, "What ruined Lot's wife? The love of the world. What ruined Achan? The world. What ruined Haman? The world. What ruined Judas? The world. What ruined Demas? The world. And what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Newton discovered the law of gravitation, which is that the earth has power to draw all bodies to itself. The ungodly world has the same power to draw unsanctified souls to its embrace.

But they that wait upon the Lord have the power given them to rise above its attraction, as the eagle rises above the world and overcomes its attraction. Gravitation is turned the other way--towards heaven. They rise above it, where worldlings are drawn down to its level.

It was not merely a power that overcame gravitation when Jesus and Enoch and Elijah went up on high. It was also a spiritual power that drew them first, and then the power over natural gravitation also was put in them. They resisted the earth-pull because they had already overcome the sinful world. This counteracting power comes to those who wait upon the Lord.

"There, there on eagle's wings we soar,
And sin and sense molest no more.
And heaven comes down our souls to greet,
While glory crowns the mercy seat."

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04 -- LEARNING TO FLY

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him." Deut. 32:11-12.

God, the author of both the natural and spiritual world, uses this beautiful figure to show his tender care over his people whom he had led through the wilderness to the borders of the Promised Land. There is no member of the feathered tribes more tender towards her young than the eagle. God here shows the method he used to care for his people. He alludes to the custom of the eagle in teaching its young to fly. It is said by good authorities that when the eaglet's wings are fully developed and it is able to fly, it still clings to the nest, and is loath to leave it. So the mother bird stirs up the nest by throwing the young out of it that they may learn to fly. Otherwise they never would learn. She hovers over them and darts beneath them if they are in danger of being dashed to the earth. She sustains them with her own wings. This is the way God deals with his people many times today, as well as with his ancient people. We have to be thrown out of our nest and our satisfied life, or we should never want to learn to fly. He lets sorrow and affliction come that we may get our affection off this earth and learn to fly to the heights of a Christian experience and get ready for heaven. We should always want to stay in this world if we had our own way and things went to our liking.

In these days men have learned to fly through the air but it was a severe process before they learned. Some were badly bruised and mangled before aviation was learned. God has been teaching his church in all ages how to fly by throwing them out of their carnal comforts. Many times we pray for an increase of faith but do not realize that faith grows by severe exercise. After we pray and God sends some severe test to strengthen our faith we cringe and draw back from the very thing that will strengthen our faith. There are some things that God can not do and one of them is to give us the strength that comes from severe trial. We will have to get it by actual exercise.

The way to learn to swim is to plunge into the water. The way to learn to preach is to go at it. The way to get strong faith is to exercise it in severe tests. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." We are not called in this world to a life of ease but of discipline. We are in God's school and he is not now instructing us in the easy branches or those always to our liking. It is a school of hard problems, the solution of which strengthens our manhood and teaches us how to fly towards heaven. The way we get the proper use of our spiritual wings is by properly using our knees. We prosper best when we have just enough to keep us on our knees a good deal of the time.

"If on a quiet sea, towards heaven we calmly sail,
With grateful hearts to thee, O God, we'll own the favoring gale.
But should the surges rise and help delay to come,
Blest be the sorrow, kind the storm; that drives us swifter home."

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05 -- INCREASED STRENGTH

"Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Psa. 103:5.

The allusion in this scripture seems to be to the annual molting of the eagle, It is as much as to say that they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength as does the eagle when it casts off its feathers and puts on new plumage. The ancients supposed that at the time when the eagle put on his new feathers he put on new strength also.

We are surrounded by a fainting world. Men are heart sick and staggering under the weight of sin and the ills and burdens of life. Jesus referred to the tendency to grow weak and despondent when he said, "When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" God, through the prophet, speaks of a power given to those who wait upon him, that will sustain them when the strongest of the world about us are fainting, thus, "Even the youths (those supposed to be the strongest) shall faint and the young men shall utterly fail but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up on wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint." The picture is of men everywhere fainting under the burdens and calamities of life while a few stand renewed by divine strength and are enabled to grow stronger and stronger. In every attitude whether mounting, walking or running they shall increase in strength. The wise man says, "If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is

weak." An old writer has said, "We have no more religion than we can command in the day of adversity." It is a good time when, men who look at matters from the human standpoint are fainting under life's burdens to see how much our religion means to us and how much we have on hand of genuine grace. They that wait upon the Lord have not merely enduring grace but increasing grace. Their strength increases as the load grows heavier, is the promise. Like the drivers of the trolley cars they have the privilege of turning on more power as the burdens and emergencies increase.

God has always wanted his people to increase in strength. The great requisite they made upon Joshua when he called him to take the work that the great Moses left unfinished -- leading Israel into Canaan -- was, "Only be strong and very courageous." "To be weak," says Milton, is to "be miserable." With the resources of the God of the universe at our command how dare any of us be weak?

The Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." And then he adds a little farther, in the Psalm, "They go from strength to strength."

We knew a great and good man who has passed on to his reward, who was much given to a life of prayer. One day he was meditating something like this: "I have been praying today. What difference has it made in me?" After a little reflection he said, "Oh, how strong I feel in God!"

"Strong in the strength which God: supplies
Through his eternal Son."

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06 -- THE LIFE OF FAITH

"I live by the faith of the Son of God." Gal. 2:20.

There is a time in the experience of the advancing Christian when faith becomes a life, a second nature. He no longer has to make a desperate or spasmodic effort to trust God. It becomes as natural as breathing. His soul believes as easily and naturally as the eagle floats in the atmosphere. Faith has become his native air.

The disciples never asked but one spiritual petition of Jesus, while on earth. It was, "Lord, increase our faith." Here was where they made their mistake. Jesus very properly rebuked them, saying, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say to this sycamine tree, be thou plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the midst of the sea and it should obey you." The smallest kind of faith is better than an increase of the kind that they had. We insult people when we ask them for more faith in them. What would an earthly friend think if we ask them to give us more faith in him? And yet that is what many ask of God. The better acquaintance we have with good people, the stronger our confidence is in their integrity. What we need is to have better acquaintance with God, which will strengthen our confidence in his veracity and ability to keep his promises.

There was nothing next to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees that so caused displeasure in the heart of Jesus as lack of faith in his disciples. He upbraided them for their unbelief. He found some heathen, like the centurion, whom he exalted above the church, because of his faith. He said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." We have only two places on record where he marveled: once when he saw the faith of the heathen centurion where he might have expected unbelief (Matt. 8:10), and again when he found unbelief in his own country, where he should have found faith (Mark 6:6).

Another mistake made is in supposing that the life of faith is merely living in a spectacular realm of great performances and manifestations. The real life of faith is the ordinary every day life with its toil and drudgery and trials, accepting everything that comes, as sent or permitted by God. This is faith indeed. It is one thing to occasionally goad our weak faith to the point of trusting God, and see a great miracle of healing or a great deliverance, quite another thing to live amidst the hard trials of life and accept them sweetly as all in the will of God, -- to endure with patience and not fly the track. This is soul poise and greatness of faith indeed.

"Teach us in every state
To make thy will our own.
And when the joys of sense depart
To live by faith alone."

* * * * *

07 -- THE UPWARD LOOK

"I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help." Psalms 121:1.

John Bunyan in his Pilgrim's Progress describes a man so busy raking mud that he had failed to see an angel above his head offering him a crown. There are so many so busy in raking together the things of this world that amount to no more than so much mud, that they fail to see the glorious things that are in store for them, because they are looking down. It makes all the difference in the world as to the direction in which we look. No eagle can fly upward and be continually looking downward. We must be looking in the right direction, if we would make a success in going in the right direction!

The downward look means the downward course. The man of high ideals looks upward. It was a look at the brazen serpent that brought healing. It is "looking unto Jesus" that brings salvation, while we are running "the race set before us."

It is the look at self that brings depression and discouragement. A look in the mirror never helps sick people, but hinders. Looking at the world takes our attention from Jesus. We read on a card many years ago these words, which have followed us through life, "If you want to be distracted look around you. If you want to be miserable, look within you. If you want to be happy, look to Jesus." Looking about us at the failures or examples of others, or at the attraction

of the world will take our eyes off Jesus. Looking within us will discourage except as we look to God for divine help and life.

They who climb dizzy heights look down with peril. Their safety lies in looking upward. So do we! The higher we go the higher we need to look. The upward look is the look of safety. Oh, my soul, while others are looking downward look up to the skies. Looking downward to this world will draw you downward. The safety lies in looking up.

"In the tempest of life,
When the wave and the gale
Are around and about thee,
If thy footing should fail,
If thine eye grow dim
Or thy caution depart,
Look aloft, and be firm,
And be fearless of heart."

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08 -- OUT OF GUN-SHOT

"Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue." Job 5:21.

The higher the flight of the eagle the less his danger from the weapons of the hunter. He may get so high that bullets cannot reach him or, if they do, their force is deadened. We may get so far above the world and the strife of human tongues that slander will lose its force and power. It is when we fly low that our soul is wounded.

The price of eminence is slander. If we would be safe from the attacks of enemies we must be content to be ciphers. This is true both in worldly and scriptural eminence. No matter whether deserved or undeserved we must meet the attacks of slander. The best of men have suffered from its attacks. It spares no excellence. Jesus, Stephen and Paul were accounted as blasphemers and so accused. The sharpest and most cruel weapon in the world is the human tongue. No excellence can deliver from its attacks. But we are assured in the word that "no weapon formed against thee shall prosper." The difficulty with most of us is we fly too low. No shots can reach the eagle, who flies high enough. It is those who live for their own glory who are most affected by the slander of men.

How can we be immune from the attacks of the evil tongues of men? By waiting upon God. We mount up above the world and sin. David says he was so slandered that it seemed as if he was compassed by evil tongues. He says of his enemies, "They compassed me about also with words of hatred and fought against me without cause... but I give myself to prayer." Psalms 109:4-5. Prayer was the balm that soothed away the smart of human, venomous tongues. The soul that is steeped in prayer is bullet proof. Exhilarated by the atmosphere of the heaven lies, he feels no irritation at the attacks of men. He has one thing that occupies the attention of his soul. Like Stephen he cared not for the stones that are showering his life out, but cries, "I see Jesus

standing at the right hand of God." Like the three Hebrew children he feels not the fire as he sees the Son of God. Paul with added grace does not shrink any longer at the thorn in the flesh.

In modern times the martyrs have rejoiced in the flames because they were so baptized with the Spirit as to have lost the sense of pain. We have seen souls so happy in their employment of seeking and converting others that they failed to note that they were persecuted. Some thought that they were dull in their perception and did not know why they were insulted and assailed. What happy ignorance it was indeed! They had run into the name of the Lord, their strong tower, and were so enraptured with its inner beauties that they failed to note the howling of the storms without.

There is something that surely leads to indifference to the attacks of men. It comes through waiting upon God. We pity people who are always showing the wounds that they have received in the cause of Christ. Their difficulty is that they have not waited upon God until they have become immune. They have not become like the eagle that flies above these things.

"Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside;
So enchained my Spirit's vision,
Looking at the Crucified."

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09 -- SUSTAINED, PERMANENT EXPERIENCE

"Kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." I Peter 1:5.

We have been told by those who are informed only by their own failures and not by the word of God that it is impossible to live in "the heavnlies." We have been told, "You are walking a tight rope and you will come down." In reply we would say that the word of God distinctly says, "They shall mount up on wings as eagles." It does not say a word that would indicate that what God has done for us can not be permanent. The scripture gives no such discouraging views. This is the language of unbelief. We have watched the eagle that God has created, soaring serenely and majestically in the heavens. He does it easily. Is it possible that God, who made the eagle to soar securely in his native skies, can not do the same for his children who are made for celestial flight? Does God do any less for us than for his animal creation?

We insist that God can as easily keep us, as he saved us. He can as easily keep us in "the heavnlies" as he could raise us there. The same strength of wing that raises us sustains us. Lifting grace and maintaining grace are the same. We have known of those who have had their fears in this direction. We knew a good woman much blessed one night, who was fearful if she went to sleep the blessing would depart in the night. She forgot that "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Surely God has not given any experience of grace that can not be sustained by grace. He proposes to give us "grace for grace." That is, every state of grace is to be succeeded by another greater and richer, for he has never given us so much as to exhaust his

store of willingness. The "pathway of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Improvement of grace already given will lead to greater grace.

Peter says that. if we add to our faith, virtue (courage), knowledge, temperance, patience, goodness, brotherly kindness and charity and let them abound in us we "shall never fall." Jude says that "he is able to keep us from falling." Our only safety is to keep rising higher and higher. It will take all the grace we can get to keep what we have and help us to get more.

One of the faults of present day religious standards is that so many of the church think that the beginning is the highest degree of religious life. They rest in the first elements of religion. They seem to think that conversion is the bright spot of Christian experience. They seem to think that to be converted is the normal Christian life when it is only the beginning. It is thought that we must remain at the door of the temple of Christian life or close to it.

But that is only the beginning. The normal Christian life of the bible is far beyond conversion. It is to love the Lord with all the heart, might, mind and strength. No man is the Christian that God wants him to be until he mounts, up to the "heavenlies" in this life. Who would think to hunt an eagle on low ground? It is not their native air. God never called to low attainment in religion. Full salvation is "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." He who is satisfied to remain a moderate Christian is not a Christian at all.

Reader, be not satisfied with any ordinary life like that of the professed church about you. Take wings. Fly to the heights. There is where you belong.

"Children of God, glorious calling!
Surely his grace will keep us from falling!"

* * * * *

10 -- THE BLESSEDNESS OF TEMPTATION

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." James 1:12.

This is a startling beatitude. It is directly opposed to our carnal notions. Most of us think something like this: Pitiful and pitiable is the man who is sorely tempted. Paul said very truly, "Now we see through a glass darkly." Things from the human standpoint are much confused in this world. Carnal vision distorts their outlines. We do not see things in their true perspective. The true perspective in which to view the things of this life is in the light of the future world to which we are fast hastening and which to a spiritually minded person, already casts its light on the present world. St. James adds the true perspective in which light that world is to be viewed. He says, "For when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has provided for those who love him." Couple temptation with eternity and there comes the blessedness of those who endure.

Peter tells us that "the trial of your faith is more precious than that of gold that perishes." To a serious soul, anxious to make safe landing in heaven, temptation is a blessing, to be hailed

with delight, for it reveals to us the quality of our religion just as testing reveals the quality of gold. We have no more and no better religion than that we can commend in the time of great trial and temptation. No matter however much we may rejoice when the skies are clear, the time that we are tempted shows the true value of our religion.

We should, therefore, rejoice when the acid test comes and reveals that our gold is pure. We can afford to be tested no matter how severe the test, for our religion is our only hope for eternity. We are going through this world just once and can not come back to correct mistakes or fundamental errors.

Temptation means testing. The Lord tempts or tests his people as he did Abraham, to bring out the good and get rid of the evil. Satan tempts or tests to get rid of the good and retain the evil that is in us.

When we get to heaven and look back on this life, as we are, then wearing the crown of life, we shall doubtless feel like saying, "Blessed temptations that showed me just where I was in my religion, that showed me that I was in the way that led to the wearing of the crown of life."

There is a development of faith and patience that can be brought about only by actual trial and temptation. It is as necessary as physical training is to the athlete. There is no substitute for it. Even divine grace can not take the place of the actual trial that develops spiritual life and graces. This being true, when we ask for divine grace and increase of faith and patience and then have immediately severe testing it is the answer to our prayers. Let us stop feeling that we are afflicted when God thus answers our prayers by giving us the means to increase and develop our faith and patience. We have known souls who flinched in their hour of testing, who as they looked back actually wished it might be repeated that they might get back the lost opportunity.

We had better be very careful how we ask for increase of faith unless we are ready to fall in line with the providences that come to us in answer to our prayers.

"Great faith must have great trials,--
We must expect great troubles before we
Shall attain to much faith."

* * * * *

11 -- SORROW

"Yet man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Job 5:5.

Sorrow is the common lot of man. No man can be exempt from it. Even the best men for instance, Jesus and Paul the apostle -- were men of sorrow. It shows how helpless with all his achievements man is. There is no price that will exempt us and no substitute that can take over place.

As things are it can not be otherwise. When the light of eternity is turned upon our life we see that sorrow is just what we need to make us what we ought to be. God intends to make the sorrow of this life a blessing. Sorrow is just as necessary, as we are constituted, as the atmosphere to our breathing. Sorrow is God's great teacher and happy is the man who thoroughly learns his lesson.

Sorrow loosens our hold upon this present world. As we go on in the natural world, especially in the morning of life, this deceitful world looks very delightful. We get to love it. And sorrow comes to show us its real nature to show that it "can never give the bliss for which we sigh." If we had things as we wanted them we should never want to go to heaven. We would live as if there were no such place. So God lets sorrow come to wean us and "set our affections on things above and not on the earth." He allows the billows of sorrow to roll over us that we may strike for the golden shore.

Sorrow leads honest souls to self-examination. When things go to suit us we get careless and drift ere we know it. It was so with David. He says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy commandments." It took the sorrows of sin to bring the prodigal to his senses.

Sorrow brings us into fellowship with Jesus, "the man of sorrows." We think we get very near to him when we are blessed and are filled with ecstasy but never so near as when we are in sorrow. The Mount of Transfiguration is not the place where we get nearest to him. It is Gethsemane with its cry, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me," that brings us nearest to Jesus.

It is sorrow that binds nations, families and individuals together as their joy does not and can not. There is nothing that will so drive out sectional strife, neighborhood differences and family discords.

Sorrow melts and subdues and ripens the soul for eternity. It is like the frost that makes some fruits palatable, that otherwise are useless. It is the grindstone that puts on the polish that shines in the diamond. Bless God for sorrow that works the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised by it! We are assured by the apostle that "our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Its future compensation is great. Sorrow then brightens our future hope.

"Let sorrow's rudest tempest blow,
We need not cease our singing,
That perfect rest naught can molest
Where golden harps are ringing."

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12 -- THE LIFE OF PRAISE

"I will bless the Lord at all times." Psalms 34.1.

The Psalmist puts an emphatic "I will" into this declaration. It might at first sight appear unnecessary to be so positive. If he had simply said, "I will bless the Lord," without any modification it might be thought that it was superfluous emphasis. But he qualifies it by saying "at all times," for it is easy to say, "I will bless the Lord," when things seem to be running smoothly, when our sails are filled with a prosperous wind. But to say, "I will bless the Lord at all times" even when the wind is contrary to our course many times is quite another matter. He says virtually, "I will bless the Lord no matter what the weather or the storms I meet; no matter whether it is the day of prosperity or adversity." That is quite another matter. "It is a good deal to say," is the opinion of some who walk by sight and not by faith.

The eagle rejoices in the heights even if the sun does not fall upon him; even if dark clouds intervene between him and the sun. Some times in the upper atmosphere of the "heavenlies" there are times of heaviness, but not of darkness. The best men have met such experiences. Jesus was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Paul said he had "great heaviness" at times. All days are not alike. Different people have different temperaments and moods as they meet the adversities of life. Can we always "bless the Lord"? Does our religion depend on our moods and feelings? Can we bless the Lord on the days when we can not see the sun? Does our faith and enjoyment depend on our feeling and moods? Yes, we can bless the Lord at all times. "We walk by faith and not by sight." We can walk by faith in spite of moods.

Some are consecrated to their emotions and feelings and not to God. They estimate their religion by their emotions. The fact that the grace of God brings joy and peace leads some to seek the peace and joy of salvation rather than salvation itself. They are like those who sought Jesus not for himself and for his glory but for the loaves and fishes. There are such selfish seekers of religion today.

The true way to judge of the depth of our religion is not by our emotions but by what we can endure and not fly the track, Our patience under difficulties is the test of our religion. Our doing the will of God shows the true nature of our religion. When we can do the will of God without any inward tendency to the contrary we may assure ourselves that we are well started on the road to the city of THE KING. Our feelings are not under our control. The only thing that we have that is entirely ours is our will. God has made that sovereign and he will never compel us against our will. He can take away everything we have except that will, which he never will take. It is our business to manage our will and yield gladly to the emotions and feelings that he allows us to have. Feeling will come and go. When we are wholly given up to feel just as he wants us to feel, and be satisfied with that, we have the evidence that we are wholly consecrated. There are many people who are far from entire consecration because they are ever complaining about their emotional experiences. No man is fully consecrated who says, "I am all the Lord's but I do not feel as I want to feel." He is a long way from entire consecration, A soul that is wholly consecrated says, "I am feeling just as God wants me to feel for I have given my feelings and my whole being to the Lord." He who says, "I am all the Lord's, but -- ," shows that he is a long way off.

Satan cajoles people to seek feeling. He tempts by saying, "You do not feel like others, or you do not feel as you should." Those who are wholly consecrated can answer these subtle

suggestions by maintaining, "Nevertheless, I am the Lord's." That has given victory to thousands. Let us maintain that we wholly belong to God no matter how we feel. Then we can bless "the Lord at all times."

"Teach us in every state
To make thy will our own,
And when the joys of sense depart
To live by faith alone."

* * * * *

13 -- ESTABLISHMENT

"By whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Rom. 2:5.

"Also" means something more and besides what has already been spoken, done, thought or enjoyed. Webster says it means "adding one principle or truth to another." What was the first principle or truth here which now has the addition of another? We find by reading verse 1 that the first principle or truth is justification by faith as the result of the atonement Of Jesus. (See verse 1.) And now there is another grace wherein we stand that comes "also" by faith.

Repentance is the gateway by which we enter this grace of justification and now we have a grace that establishes us, entered by faith also. Certainly we must believe that the average Christian needs an establishing grace when we see that the mass seem to fall away or do not retain the freshness of their justified experience. Did God intend that justification should lose its bloom and freshness? We can not believe it in the light of the scripture that says, "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We do not believe that God ever intended any one to have any less of the joy and victory of religion than they have at the beginning. We learn by reading the epistle of the Hebrews that repentance is the foundation of the Christian life and that many are always: laying that foundation and never building on it, (Heb. 6:1), -- not laying against the foundation of repentance."

The true way to keep a foundation intact is to add to it something of superstructure. Otherwise it will begin to crumble. There is an established grace that saves the foundation.

The chief cause of backsliding is not Satan and the world. It is internal. It is a phase of heart disease. It comes from our fallen nature. The inspired author of Hebrews knew this, for he says in warning, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." It is a heart of unbelief that causes weakness. The riddance of the soul from the corrupt nature is the establishing grace. It too comes by faith in the atonement of Jesus.

The establishment is a cure for the "up and down" experience of which so many speak. There are no more "ups and downs" or "downs". He who keeps a heart from sin set free has an upward experience all the time.

More than that, faith becomes a habit. Once it was a spasm, a kind of impulse that was occasional. Now it is permanent and has become a life. We no longer think of attempting or trying to believe. We accept everything as from God or permitted by him and we believe just as naturally as we unconsciously breathe. It is our habit and is done without effort.

How can we expect to be established in grace unless we earnestly seek to have his inward foe cast out that leads to backsliding? It is hard to carry on the war with Satan on the outside and that traitor, the Old Man, on the inside. It will be noticed by a careful study of the Acts of the Apostles that the second time that Paul visited a place he went for the special ministry of establishing the converts made in his first visit. The rite of Confirmation practiced in some churches today is the fossil remains of the ancient ceremony of laying on of hands that the new converts might be established by the baptism with the Holy Ghost which casts out the sinful nature or, in other words, purifies the heart.

"The seed of sin's disease,
Spirit of health, remove,
Spirit of holiness,
Spirit of perfect love."

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14 -- VICTORY

"We are more than conquerors." Rom. 8:37.

It would be not only wrong but misleading to tell a young convert that there was no warfare in the Christian religion. It is a warfare all through life and in every department of life. All life has to resist its peculiar foes. Spiritual life has its foes as well as physical life. Our daily physical life is a resistance against the forces that would destroy it. The difference between the life of the worldling and the Christian life is that the former is conquered by the foes of his soul. The believer has power given him to be always a victor. You and I need never be defeated. Our commander has all power given him for our aid. No matter what your situation or environment, you may have victory for "he giveth more grace," "God is able to make all grace abundant to you" is the promise of God.

A glance at the previous verse shows that the grace of God is sufficient for all the various difficulties that we meet. If we have grace sufficient to conquer in these, what more can we want? A glance will show that there is nothing sterner to meet in this life. They are "tribulation," "distress," "persecutions," "famine," "nakedness," "peril" and the "sword." If we can be more than conquerors in these stern experiences what need we fear? If we can have grace to conquer in all these what else is there to fear? This is more than conquering. When the Duke of Wellington overcame Napoleon, he was a conqueror. But the Prince of Wales who could sit on the throne with his mother, the Queen, was more than a conqueror. He was a prince royal. So God makes us more than conquerors. He says that he that "overcometh shall sit down with me in my throne." We not only get victory but we become more than conquerors. Every victory does not leave us exhausted like some who have no strength left after they have overcome. We get

new supplies of faith and love. We are called to victory and never need be defeated. Victory!
There is magic in the sound of the word and as We look upon it on the printed page.

"But I have suffered so many defeats." We reply that in warfare the best general is not the one who never has any defeats and makes no mistakes but the one who knows how to wrest victory out of defeat and who profits by his past mistakes or defeats. We know of some of the most successful men in the work of the Lord who once were defeated but refused to lie down and let the enemy keep his foot upon their neck.

Paul tells the church at Ephesus to "put on the whole armor of God," and then describes the different pieces of armor and says, "Praying with all prayer and supplication of the Spirit." The weapon of all-prayer never fails. No man with the whole armor on as described in Ephesians 6:11-18 need ever fail of victory.

"Restraining prayer we cease to fight.
Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above."

* * * * *

15 -- DEVELOPMENT OF PATIENCE

"But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:4.

He who is possessed with perfect patience is a Perfect man. So says St. James. In another chapter he cites Job as an example of patience (and God saith that Job was a perfect man). Patience and perfection go together.

The Greek word for patience is rendered in the category of the fruitage of the Spirit as "long-suffering." (Galatians 5:22.)

Patience, like the other fruit of the Spirit, cannot be perfected except by trial and experience. As God has arranged it patience can not be perfected without testing. God intends that we shall help develop our patience. There are some things that he can not do alone. We need to "let patience have its perfect work."

We sometimes pray for patience and then when the trial comes that will help perfect it we repine and wonder why we have 'the trial so severe. We start back at the process. Just when God wants to answer our prayer, by allowing circumstances that will bring the answer, we repine and wonder why we are so tried. We pity ourselves when the test comes and miss the grand opportunity to perfect the grace that he has given us. Instead of doing our part we want the Lord to do it all.

Even a heathen philosopher who had no knowledge of divine grace said, "The things which you bear with impatience, you should accustom yourself to, and by habit you will bear them well." How much more ought those who have supernatural religion to find grace to help them, in addition to their own efforts.

Patience means to outlive the storm. It means to stand when the others have got discouraged and have quit the field.

The root of impatience is the carnal mind. It is discontent with our lot in which God has placed us. It is a failure to believe that all that comes to us was sent or permitted of God. When we take that view of divine providence and really believe it, we shall find that trials develop our enduring qualities. We sometimes have the blister applied and when it draws we forget its use.

The test of our religion is our patience. Some people will feel more over the breaking of a dish by a child than over serious bereavement and loss of friends.

The test of our religion is not what we enjoy when things go smooth, but how much we can endure without murmuring and repining. Our religion consists not so much in getting on the mountain top as being able to endure the hard things of life. Not how much hilarity or ecstasy there may be in the Christian life but how much can we endure and keep sweet. Paul says, "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness." This is the acid test. The power that keeps the locomotive on the track is the power of gravitation that holds the worlds in their places. It is greater than the power that blows the whistle and rings the bell. Many want to hear the whistle and ring the bell but to have power "to keep on" the track is a small thing with them. The power of patient character is greater than explosive utterance and talent.

"Oh! why by passing clouds oppressed,
Should vexing thoughts direct thy breast?
Turn, turn to Him, in every pain,
Whom never suppliant sought in vain;
Thy strength in joy's ecstatic day,
Thy hope when joy has passed away."

* * * * *

16 -- REST

"For we which have believed do enter into rest." Hebrews 4:3.

So said the inspired writer of Hebrews. He states it as a matter of experience. A legend gives the origin of the name of the state of Alabama thus: An Indian chief pursued by forest fires crossed a large river and planted his tent pole in the ground saying, "Alabama." (Here we may rest.) It was not true. He was a false prophet. Hostile tribes overcame him and his tribe and they found only graves where they hoped to find a home. This illustrates the quest of this world for

rest. When man thinks he has found rest it turns out a disappointment. There is no rest in this world, except the rest given by Jesus Christ.

The above scripture is in the present tense. "We which do believe have entered into rest." This is a rest that comes in this world as a foretaste of the heavenly rest. In the midst of the trying things of life there is soul rest. We may so cast our burden upon Jesus as to rest. This rest of soul is like the compass of a ship which is set even so as to keep on a level, in spite of the tossing of the ship. It has been so set by an arrangement of its' own that keeps it always level. A great painter has pictured a rushing cataract with its roar and tumult and it has been named "Rest." -- not because of the cataract. It would be difficult to know how the name applies to that great uproar were it not that he has hung a bird's nest on a limb just above the cataract where the mother bird sits on her nest undisturbed amidst the uproar. My soul, thou hast a more certain power upholding thee, in the confusion and weariness of life!

This rest does not depend on circumstances nor surroundings. It is too deep to be thus disturbed.

It is not a rest of stagnation or idleness. It can be in the most busy times of life. When the Pilgrim Fathers stepped on American shores, they looked up to God's sunlight and sang, "This is our rest." But it did not mean idleness. Each one had his own cabin to build and wage a war against the desert until they subdued it. We can not trust and worry at the same time. We can not trust until we have east our burden upon him who says, "I will give you rest." He commands us, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." We cannot really trust until we have entirely yielded ourselves to God. The unrest of this world is because the world is not where God intended it should be. As truly as an eagle is full of unrest and discontent when caged, because it is out of its native element, as truly as the fish is unhappy while out of its element, so is the soul that is not in harmony with God. He made the soul of Such a nature as to find satisfaction in nothing but himself. This is the law by which he holds men. Our troubles are chiefly because of lack of adjustment with our Maker. He who has come to the place of being, doing and suffering the will of God with gladness has entered into rest of soul.

"Lord, I believe a rest remains
To all thy people known,
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns
And thou art loved alone."

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17 -- CONFESSION OF FAULTS

"Confess your faults one to another and pray for one another, that ye may be healed."
James 5:16.

Confession of faults is one of the proofs of Christian perfection. This is plainly laid down in the inspired word of God as a command and is as truly a duty as any of the ten commandments. Christian perfection is not freedom from faults as some seem to think. Their

idea of Christian perfection is absolute perfection. Therefore, they consider that to claim it is fanatical and presumptuous. Christian perfection is perfect love. It is moral and not absolute perfection. It may exist with imperfect judgment. There are some who tell opposers that Christian perfection is not freedom from mistakes, but they never acknowledge their faults, and seem to assume that they have no faults. They never have anything to apologize for, either to God or man.

The Bible never tries to prove that all of us have faults. It assumes not only that we all have them. but that we all know we have them. This being so, how do they sin who refuse to obey the Bible command to confess their faults!

It is a strange fact that so many have understood this command to mean "confess the faults of your neighbors." Some people are like Roman Catholic priests who expect every one to confess to them. They have especial freedom in confessing other people's faults.

"And pray for one another." This must mean that a company or association of those who confess to each other their faults are in a condition where they can pray with successful united faith for each other. Otherwise how can they pray with united faith?

We have no right to pray for the faults of others until they have confessed them and we have confessed our own faults "Physician, heal thyself." It is a good test for us to ascertain if we have the humility that is begotten by perfect love. More than that, the confession of our faults will keep us against the approaches of pride. It will constantly keep us from the temptation to get our eyes off Jesus and substitute our own works for implicit reliance upon God. It is he that is to live in us and shine through us.

To one who wishes to slide along easily, confessing faults is unpleasant medicine. But to those who are really desirous of deep spirituality it is a welcome exercise of soul. We live in a day when more is said and practiced on the question of diet than in all history. Thousands are denying themselves and living on plain food in order to live better and longer. Do we care as much for our spiritual life as to improve this opportunity of really deepening and strengthening our souls? The last part of the verse is, "that ye may be healed." Confession helps our prayers, both for physical and spiritual healing.

"How sweet, how heavenly is the sight
When those who love the Lord,
In one another's peace delight
And so fulfill his word!"

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18 -- RETIREMENT FOR REPLENISHMENT

"They made me a keeper of vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."
Solomon's Song 1:6.

This is the lamentation of the bride in Solomon's Song. I have been so engaged in looking after the welfare of others that I have neglected my own interests.

It might be supposed at first thought that it would be very commendable for one to sacrifice himself for the good of others. But it must be remembered that we can not be saved for what we do for others. We can be saved only by faith. Personal work in the church or in doing good will not bring salvation. We are saved only by faith in Jesus Christ's atonement. And as surely as we are saved by faith we are kept saved by faith. God expects us to look after our salvation first of all. We have this duty as much as looking after others. If we do not look after our own salvation, who will? God will hold us responsible for our own souls.

There are those who are so busy in the work of the Lord that they have no time to provide nourishment for their own souls. They are feeding others and starving themselves. Or, to change the figure, we may be so engaged in the activities of church or charitable work as to neglect our own spiritual life. Storage batteries out of which power is constantly flowing must need recharging.

Paul tells Timothy that "the husbandman that laboreth must first be partaker of the fruits," before he gives them to others. In the work of the Lord we cannot properly help others unless we are samples of the salvation that we urge upon others, and that strength that will come to others by partaking of the breads of life, we must already possess ourselves.

The old maxim is, "Prayer and provender never hindered a journey." Many journeys have failed for lack of proper nourishment, and resting to partake of refreshment. The wise man undertaking a long journey looks after supplies; the artisan who must work hard does not fail to note the matter of supplies; the athlete who expects to gain the prize is particularly careful to have sufficient nourishment. And can it be any less a matter of concern in the case of those who work in the greatest of all undertakings -- cultivating the vineyard of the Lord?

"Haste makes waste" as truly in the work of the Lord as any where else. We may, in the haste of purely fleshly activities, exhaust our energies by trying to do in our own strength, what the Holy Spirit should do, if he could be, or do, unhindered through us. The more we are working in our own strength, the less we will appreciate our need of divine aid. On the other hand the more we feel the need of God working through us the more we will take pains to constantly recoup our strength from him, who says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Surely, if we believe this, we will spend a great deal of time in waiting upon God. If we believe that our strength is renewed by waiting on God we will wait upon him much.

The multiplication of church machinery-committees, organizations, et cetera -- leaves little time to wait upon God. We are trying in modern days to take the place of the aid of the Spirit by organizations which have to be attended to. We have much machinery and little power to keep the machinery in motion.

The Son of God in the midst of active labor took time to be alone with his Father. He also commanded his disciples to come apart from the crowd and rest. If we are to do the work of God we must commune often with God. "But we have a duty to others." Certainly, but that does not

excuse us from the duty to ourselves. One duty is never a substitute for another. "These things ought ye to have done and not leave the other undone."

"Bless me, Lord, and make me a blessing!
The message I'll gladly convey;
Help me to help some poor, needy soul,
And make me a blessing today."

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19 -- PLEASING GOD

"For before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him." Heb. 11:5-6.

The great, universal question of mankind is how to please God. This is the great problem of the heathen world especially. The conscience of universal humanity tells man that he is a sinner. The heathen think God is a monster who is angry with them and they seek by paying any price to appease a deity who they think is angry with them.

There are then two most important questions: Can we please God? And, may we know that we please him? If we can find in history the experience of any man who knew that he pleased God, we are encouraged, and if we can discover that such an one knew that he pleased God, there is hope for us that we may please God and know it by doing as that one did.

We learn in sacred writ that Enoch pleased God while in the flesh and we believe that if we can find by what means he pleased God we have found how we may please God. This man pleased God when the age in which he lived was far more wicked than that in which we live. Our surroundings are more favorable than were his. He was absolutely alone in his day; all the world was against him. Yet he pleased God.

We read that it was by faith that he had the testimony that he pleased God. He had a creed according to Hebrews 11:6-7. It was this, he believed that God was "and that he was a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Next to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees there was nothing while on earth that displeased Jesus so much as unbelief on the part of his disciples. He was constantly rebuking them for their unbelief and saying such things as "O ye of little faith!" and "Where is your faith?" He certainly can feel no different at the unbelief of his professed followers of today.

We read twice that Jesus marveled while on earth and those occasions were over the matter of unbelief and faith. When the centurion who was a heathen trusted him for the healing of his servant he marveled to find such faith in a heathen where he might not have expected it. He said he had not found such faith in his church. Again he marveled at the unbelief of his townsmen who ought to have had faith. He still marvels at the unbelief of those who call themselves his disciples.

The disciples asked for more faith. What a mistake they made. Jesus replied, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed ye might say to this sycamine tree, be thou plucked up by the roots." It was not more faith that they needed but the right kind of faith. It is an insult to ask a man to give us more faith in him. How would it do to go to a bank and say, "If I had more faith in you I would do business with you." Is it not an insult to ask a man to give us more faith in him? The fact of it is, many have a faith of the head, which is not faith at all. Our great business every day is to have faith in God and exercise it. If we have it we shall rise above the petty worries and cares of life. We shall have victory in every emergency. If we do not have constant victory it is because we do not have faith. It lifts above the cares and worries of life.

And to think that any of us can please God by trusting him! If we do not know that we please God it is because we are not really trusting him.

"A faith that shines more high and clear
When tempests rage without,
That when in danger feels no fear
In darkness feels no doubt."

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20 -- HAVING ALL THAT WE REALLY WANT

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you." II Cor. 9:8.

There is no excuse for having a shortage of grace, for we have all the grace that we really want. This statement may startle us and we may deny it, but nevertheless it is true as we stop to consider it. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like a man who found hidden treasure in a field and went and sold all that he had and purchased it. If that field contained a gold mine he would be inexcusable if he did not dig with all his might. If that gold mine was inexhaustible he could have all he wanted if he dug with all his strength and lost no time.

The kingdom of grace is an inexhaustible gold mine. The man who really wants its treasures is the man who seeks them with all his soul. The wise man says of the obtainment of wisdom, "If thou seek her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasure, thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." The man who does not seek after grace in that manner (and few do) has all the grace he really wants.

To say that we have all the grace that we want is as much as to say that we have exhausted the supply. Paul says that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." This seems like an impossibility to a man of weak faith and small endeavor, for we have asked for great things and have thought of greater than we ever dared to consider among the possibilities of our possession. But God is able to do even more than we ever thought.

Some are like a man sitting idly down by a great fountain that has been gushing out since creation's morning and sighing and wishing that he had more of it.

In the presence of such an infinite supply as our God has on hand to give to him who will take, let us not consent merely to sigh for more, but dip and drink constantly all that we can contain. Instead of saying, "I want more," let us say, "I am receiving all that I really appropriate all the time by faith."

Those who seem to have a shortage of divine grace should remember that they are now in possession of all that they are receiving by faith. It is as true today as in the time of Jesus, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." We are exactly today what our faith has made us, for every man is the product of his own faith in God. The great question then, is how much do we appropriate each day by faith, not how much do we sit down and idly wish we had.

Some who say, "I want more grace," to be truthful should say, "I want a determination to have all the grace there is for me at any cost, any price, or any self denial." We are serving a God who "giveth unto all men liberally and upbraideth not." Let us stop saying, "I want more grace," for it is as much as to say our God is straitened in his supply of grace or is penurious. Better say, "I want to be really hungry and thirsty for grace," for "they that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled." What more can one ask than to be filled?

"All my life long I had panted
For a draught from some cool spring,
That I hoped would quench the burning
Of the thirst I felt within.
Hallelujah, I have found Him
Whom my soul so long has craved,
Jesus satisfies my longings,
Through His blood I now am saved."

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21 -- PATIENCE PRECEDES COMFORT IN TRIAL

"The patience and comfort of the scriptures." Rom. 15:4.

The inspired author of the epistle to the Hebrews tells the Christians of his day, who were passing through persecution and trial, "Yet quite often, when we think that we need divine comfort, we really need patience on our part, more than we need comfort from God."

God looking at our case sees that we need patience so much that it would be divine grace wasted to attempt to comfort us until we begin to exercise patience. We want divine grace to do what we need to do ourselves. It is of little use to comfort people who are not rightly adjusted to the situation.

How can God comfort impatience? Impatience will blight any amount of grace that God might give us. Some people in trial do not hold still long enough for God to comfort them. They are not trusting God at all. The things that try them look bigger to them than the power of divine grace. Their vision is so distorted by want of resignation to the will of God and unbelief that they see giants where there are none. Their minds are more on the things that annoy than upon divine grace and the power and goodness of God.

Let us learn then that patience under trial is the way to divine comfort. Since much of our tribulation is self-inflicted, since many of our trials are increased by our own heaviness that casts a shade upon them, we had best pray for patience before we pray for comfort.

If the prayer for patience is answered much of our distress -- that which our own imagination has caused will be dissipated, and we will be in a position to receive and appreciate the divine comfort. Let us clear the way for the incoming of divine comfort by possessing our souls in patience. Ships are often saved in a storm by throwing overboard useless cargo.

"When pain o'er my weak flesh prevails,
With lamb-like patience arm my breast;
When grief my wounded soul assails,
In lowly meekness may I rest."

* * * * *

22 -- GRACE AND ENVIRONMENT

"Our light affliction which is for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." II Cor. 4:17. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. 8:28

Are environments a help or a hindrance to the spiritual life? This is a question on which people do not seem to be agreed. Some think and say they could live the Christian life successfully if they did not have so many unfavorable surroundings. They seem to think that the success or failure of their Christian life is much affected by surroundings. They seem to think that the workings of divine grace in their hearts are successful or unsuccessful according to their surroundings. This is as much as to say that surroundings and circumstances affect the mighty power of God's work in the heart. Is this true? Are circumstances and surroundings hindrance to divine grace? Is divine grace to be reckoned in its power according to the influence of surroundings? We know it is said by some that it is easier to live a holy life if every thing is adjusted satisfactorily to themselves and there is no opposition. To us this is a debatable question. We think that it is not strictly true that the efficiency or working of divine grace depends on what we call favorable surroundings. Can surroundings weaken the power of the keeping grace of God in the soul? We believe that divine grace, like the power of electricity, cannot be confined in its workings or hindered by any obstacle when it is allowed its free course. Nothing can hinder it. Give electricity (which is divine power) its unhindered way and it will lift the heaviest loads that can be put upon it. Nothing can successfully oppose it. So with divine grace. Allow it its full sway and circumstances are nothing.

It is a cheap kind of religion that can be hindered by human obstacles or environments. The soul fully committed to God has a divine power that is not merely invincible in the face of what seems adverse surroundings but actually gets more of divine help out of the seeming difficulties than it would have had without them. Adverse surroundings are really the great helps to the working of divine grace within us. Samson's lion was conquered and became a hive of honey that otherwise he would never have received. Paul's thorn in the flesh became the occasion of the reception of grace that he never would have otherwise received. The furnace became the place of the revelation of the Son of God that the three Hebrew youths would have missed without it. The den of lions was the place where Daniel became acquainted with the angel of the Lord. The banishment to Patmos gave John visions such as a life time of comfort and association with his brethren would never have given. It was a prison that enabled Madame Guyon to have such revelations of God that put a shine on the prison walls like the glories of the New Jerusalem. It was Bedford Jail that enabled John Bunyan to dream such dreams as no man in the soft, sickly atmosphere of worldly religion ever had.

Yes, circumstances do affect our spiritual life. If they are adverse enough to drive us a good deal to our knees they do help us in holy living. For we prosper best when we have just enough to keep us on our knees a good deal of the time. Yes, we can live nearest God when the environments are just right. But just right means when the case is severe enough to drive us close to God.

A live Christian, like a live tree, puts his roots deeper into the soft when the strain strikes hardest.

"In every condition, in sickness or health,
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth,
At home or abroad, by the land or the sea,
As thy day doth demand shall thy strength ever be."

* * * * *

23 -- STILLNESS

"Be still." Psalms 4:4.

This is a jangling world and its voices are many, and consequent confusion reigns. The world is full of discordant voices. There has been confusion of tongues in many senses since Babel. It is therefore very easy to get: confused. The Psalmist says, "Commune with: your own heart on your bed and be still." Stillness is a grand corrective for the feverish state of this world. It is a sedative and also a stimulus to the spiritual life.

We need stillness in order to meditate.. It requires meditation in order to be rooted and grounded in the spiritual life. It is not the most effusive and boisterous, who make the greatest saints. Noise and bluster are not signs of sainthood. They often accompany shallow waters. "Still waters run deep" is the old adage. We may profess to be regenerated and sanctified in an instant,

but we need stillness to become rooted and grounded in the faith. If we do not need to "take time to be holy" we need to take time to keep holy.

The greatest saints in the church have been those who have taken time to meditate on the things of God. Moses had to be taken out to the solitude of the desert for a forty years of silence before he was fit to lead Israel and make a great nation out of it. Paul went to the deserts of Arabia for a season before he was fitted to carry on the great work that God called him to, in establishing the gospel among the Gentiles. A greater than Moses or Paul was forty days and nights in the wilderness enduring temptation before he commenced his life work. He also spent much time-even whole nights -- in the silence of the mountain top. He did this the night before he chose his apostles.

We need time to commune with God. We have much to say about God hearing our Prayers. We stoutly contend (and none too much so) with unbelievers as to the fact that God hears prayer. We have a good deal to say about it. But we rarely have much thought about hearing God speak to us. Many of us are like boys who ring door bells and run away. We talk to God but do not listen to him and let him talk to us. We are so engaged in hearing ourselves pray that we do not hear what God has to say to us. We are so full of a statement of our wants that we do not stop to commune with God. The soul that waits on God waits in silence to hear from him.

Great talkers need to "be stilled" before God. Great talkers have an exceedingly dangerous gift. Some of us have wished that we had the gift of fluency. It is a very delicate matter to manage such a gift, for great talkers usually say too much. They need often to "be still." We do not believe in the stillness of the cloister or monastery, but we need to be "in the world and yet not of it," and retire in ourselves often and be still in the inmost sanctuary of our own hearts that we may listen to God.

"Oh days of heaven, and nights of equal praise!
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,
When souls drawn upward in communion sweet,
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat;
Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past, and wonders yet to come;
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted rest."

* * * * *

24 -- UNSELFISH GRIEF AT LOSS OF FRIENDS

"And all the widows stood by him weeping and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas had made, while she was with them." Acts 9:39.

Peter the servant of God, while tarrying at the city of Lydda, was summoned hastily to Joppa by reason of the death of an eminent saint named Dorcas. Her character was not only a benediction to the city but her "almsgiving," had begotten gratitude and love among the poor. She

seems to have been an unusually lovable character for she was mourned by both the saints and the poor whom she had befriended.

When Peter came to the room where her body lay he found it surrounded by a weeping company. "The widows stood by, weeping and showing the garments which she had made while she was yet with them."

The question would naturally arise in our minds, Were the widows weeping because she would furnish them no more garments? Or were they weeping because of the loss of a friend? Or were they weeping for her sake? Was their grief selfish? Is our grief at the loss of friends selfish? Why should we lament the death of friends that have gone to be with Jesus? Or is our grief on account of our own loss? Surely we weep for our own sakes. We are human. It is no discredit to weep for our own loss, although it is for a limited time, that we are separated from our friends. Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus, not for the loss of Lazarus for he was about to raise him from the dead but he wept in sympathy with the sorrows of humanity. He did not condemn such grief. He still sympathizes with human grief, when he knows that our dead shall rise again.

But we must not allow selfishness to mingle with proper sorrow. We should allow our sorrow to be mitigated by the thought that our dead are in a state far better than our own. Paul said that for him to live was Christ and "to die is gain." He also said that to depart meant to be "with Christ which is far better." This will comfort us if we really believe these great truths. If eternity and heaven and Jesus are realities to us our faith will rise victorious over all our grief and will let in the light and drive away our darkness. But if our religion is only a theory then we shall indulge a selfish grief.

Paul very happily states this thus: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so those who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him." He adds, "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." And if these words do not comfort us how are we any better than the infidel who does not accept the Christian religion at all? Our very grief will be a test as to the genuineness of our faith. Does it cause us to believe in the future hope as certain?

We may well then ask ourselves when we weep, Is it for our friends? Would we want to call them from their delightful state? Or is our grief a display of selfishness?

"Why do we mourn for dying friends,
Or shake at death's alarms?
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
To call them to his arms.

"Are we not tending upward too
As fast as time can move?
Nor should we wish the hours more slow,
To keep us from our love."

* * * * *

25 -- FAITH DEFINED

"But as many as received him to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." John 1:12.

What is faith? This question is often asked and the answer is quite often given with hesitation. This is surprising, when so much is said in the church about faith. So much is said about it many times, that it has been buried under a mass of words. The Bible too gives such prominence to faith that we ought to be able to readily and easily define it.

A common answer is, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But this is not an answer to the question, What is faith? It is no definition at all. If we were asked what is concrete and replied that it was the substance which is put into foundations of houses and is the material of which sidewalks are made and roads paved, it would not tell what concrete is. To say that faith is "the substance of things hoped for" simply tells us the relation of faith to hope. It is the foundation of hope. It is the evidence that the things that we do not see are real. Who knows any better what faith is and how to exercise it from the consideration of that verse, which was never intended to define faith? The man who tells us that concrete is a mixture of cement and sand and water has defined it. The man who tells us that faith is that confidence in what God has said that causes us to act accordingly has defined faith. Such confidence in what God has said enables us to indulge a good hope for the future and realize "things not seen" as yet as verities that we are as sure of as we are of the existence of foreign countries that we have never seen.

The conduct of the ten lepers is a good illustration of the definition of saving faith. As they saw Jesus passing by they lifted up their voices and cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us." He replied, "Go show yourselves to the priest." This was in harmony with the law, which required that when God healed leprosy the healed man should go to the temple and let the priest examine him and pronounce him cured. They believed that they were healed since they trusted him for healing. They went on that belief just as healed men went, and as they went, they were cured. Faith in them was asking God and trusting him and the acting as if they were cleansed. Faith is taking God at his word and acting accordingly.

Good works do not save us but they are the indication that we are saved. For without works our faith is dead. Faith is that attitude of heart that results in good works. Faith believes God and acts as if it believed that God has kept or is keeping his word.

Saving and keeping faith are more than intellectual processes. They are the attitude of the heart towards God. According to John 1:12 saving faith is heart reception of Jesus Christ. It is an act of the will. It is casting ourselves wholly on Jesus and relying solely on his merits as our sacrifice for our sins. It is ceasing to rely on our own works, but risking our destiny for eternity upon him and his sacrifice for our sins. Whoever does this has confidence in Jesus.

Because this is an attitude of soul it does not mean that we are excused from works of righteousness. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews the men who had faith manifested their faith by doing something. Abel offered a sacrifice. Noah built an ark. Abraham left all, at the divine

bidding. He offered up Isaac at the divine command. Our faith is a most exceedingly active principle.

"Faith, mighty faith the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done!"

* * * * *

26 -- SUPREME TEST OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head." Psalm 141:5.

There can be no denial by any candid mind that the Scripture teaches perfection of some kind. It can not be absolute perfection, for only God is absolutely perfect. Since the word perfection is used in many senses, it may be well to find out just what God means when he says, "Be perfect." We believe it refers to moral perfection, called also Christian perfection. It may exist in the spiritual man, imparted by divine power which cleanses the affections. Anything is perfect that accomplishes what it is intended to accomplish. So a man may be perfect in his love to God when he has fulfilled the chief and all inclusive command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." We may therefore be perfect in love and faith and humility while at the same time we are far from being absolutely perfect.

Perfect humility is the highest test of perfect love or Christian perfection. The spirit with which we receive rebuke and correction will show if we really have perfect love indeed. Resentment when we are rebuked for our faults shows that we have pride which is absent when we really have perfect love. Pride and perfect love do not exist in the same heart. If we are really filled with perfect love, we do not have a spirit of self importance. The man filled with perfect love reckons himself as nothing. If we so reckon ourselves we shall not resent any rebuke at our faults.

"But people are so unjust in their criticisms." Yes? Then rejoice that the criticisms are not true. We might well be sorry if they were true. We ought to mourn if they are true. It is good medicine even if it be bitter. It will lead unto self examination, to see if we have not so conducted ourselves as to give false impressions. Could we not lay off some of our peculiarities that lay us under the imputation of being what people think we are? The true test of our character is not when men criticize us but when they speak too well of us. We ought to feel as much hurt when men speak too well of us as when they speak ill of us. We ought to ask ourselves, "What have I done to make men over-estimate me and make me deserving of the woe that Jesus gives when all men speak well of me?"

This is as really the test of what we are, as well as the way we receive rebuke. The man who is tickled with flattery that he knows is not true is the same as the man who is upset by rebuke. It is the same principle of overestimation of self.

Fenelon, the saint of the middle ages, says in a letter to a friend, "I request you more than ever not to spare me in telling me my faults, although you should think you discover a fault in me which perhaps I do not have; the harm will not be great. If your intimations and advice offend me, I shall thereby discover that you have reached the quick. And then you will do me a great benefit by inuring me to reproof and to a Christian lowliness of spirit. The higher I am raised by my character the more I ought to be humbled. And I hope that far from weakening our union, it will be a means of strengthening it."

"Help us to help each other, Lord,
Each other's cross to bear;
Let each his friendly aid afford
And feel his brother's care.

"Help us to build each other up,
Our little stock improve;
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love."

* * * * *

27 -- ENEMIES, NECESSARY AND UNNECESSARY

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Rom. 12:18.

No man with any strength of character can pass through this world without having enemies. It makes no difference whether he be of the best character or not. Quite often the man of sterling worth makes many enemies because of his vary virtue. It might be thought that good people would have no enemies. But this is not true. The best men, from the day of Abel down, have been the target for the arrows of the wicked. The only perfect character that the world has ever, beheld was assailed by the bitterest of enemies who were not satisfied until they had crucified him. He, himself, uttered these words, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." The man who has no enemies is a cipher and ciphers are not worth persecution.

The world is full of envious people, who cannot bear to see others prosper either in worldly affairs or religion. The very presence of holy people puts the ungodly under conviction and shows them what they ought to be themselves. The very presence of a straight man always makes crooked men see their own lack. It shows them what they ought to be. It is like a bright light shed on the pathway of a man who does not want light. It is really a testimonial to good character to be opposed and persecuted by some people. It shows that the man is good.

But after all has been said it is also true that we may unnecessarily make enemies. It is very foolish to go out of our way to make enemies, when it can be avoided without compromising or betraying the truth. The apostle says, "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." If we have done our best to avoid unnecessary friction then the responsibility is not upon us but on others.

The highest type of Christian experience is to love our enemies and do good to them that despitefully use us. This is the most difficult perhaps of all Christian duties. To "pray for them that despitefully use" us is the mark of Christian perfection. To do this requires constant watchfulness, tact, patience and forbearance. To properly and sincerely do it requires real salvation. It is one thing to say it and another to really feel it. It is a dangerous pathway for when we say the Lord's Prayer we really ask God to destroy us if we do not mean it and "forgive our debtors" as we desire God to forgive us. Here is the greatest of dangers. This being so, how carefully ought we to conduct ourselves so as not to make enemies unnecessarily. To do so is to make our own path to heaven more difficult. Let us not then, for our own sakes make enemies if it can be conscientiously avoided, lest we hinder ourselves.

"Should earth against my soul engage
And fiery darts be hurled
Then I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world."

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28 -- CUMBERED ABOUT MUCH SERVING

"But Martha was cumbered about much serving." Luke 10:40.

Not that much serving is wrong in its proper place. It is only when it is out of place that it is a hindrance to the spiritual life. It is out of place when it crushes or hinders the spiritual life. Martha's much serving took her attention from Jesus. She was a better house-keeper than she was heart-keeper. She was consecrated to service more than she was to Jesus. There are many sisters today that are spending so much time in service that they have little or no time to attend to their souls. They are more consecrated to house work than to God. They want "power for service" more than they want to get acquainted with the Lord. The cares of this life take them away from the devotion that their souls surely need. They are full of activity and substitute that for acquaintance with Jesus.

It is said that one may eat a great abundance of some kinds of food and at the same time be starving to death. Many are so busy looking after the temporalities even of the church that they have no time to wait on God. He cares more for what we are than for what we do. Character is greater than conquest. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Jesus would soon be offered as a sacrifice. He would soon leave these sisters and now was their opportunity to get better acquainted with him before he went. The opportunity would soon be gone forever. When house-work, church-work or any other work takes the place of prayers or meditation in the scriptures, it is out of place.

"But I have no time to pray." That is not true for the things that we consider the most important. We must always put the things that we consider of the most importance first. How

many excuses we find for our lack of devotion! How many excuses we find for absence from the closet of secret prayer. Any work, even for God, that takes away our opportunity to pray is out of place.

"But these things must be attended to." Not if they take our attention from the first business of life, which is to wait upon God.

The people who suppose that doing the will of God is the chief thing miss two-thirds of consecration, which is to be and do and suffer the will of God. Doing is often easier than suffering or being what God wants us to be. Church work after the modern idea of church work is, much of it, of no help to the spiritual ire. It consists of many things that are not spiritual at all. The more church work of the modern style with all its ecclesiastical machinery we do, the leaner our souls may become. Mary chose the good part which was better acquaintance with Jesus.

"Distracting thoughts and cares remove,
And fix our hearts and hopes above;
With food divine may we be fed,
And satisfied with living bread."

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29 -- OUR PECULIAR TRIALS

"There hath no temptation taken you but is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it." I Cor. 10:13.

What gives special point and power to temptation is the false light and glamour that Satan throws around it. He seeks to cast a dark cloud over virtue and goodness and gilds over the darkness and pollution of sin. He seeks to make it appear impossible to be good, and the natural easy thing to be bad. He even transforms himself into an angel of light. If he can thus make himself appear, he is just as able to make sin appear beautiful.

We get our eyes upon ourselves and make our own interests the chief thing and the interest of the kingdom of God appear secondary. We get such a vision of ourselves as to fill our whole horizon and we are unable to see anything else except our own trials. We are apt to think that other people have none. We get to think that no one else ever had such difficulties, and we do not see how they could. We forget that "the heart knoweth his own bitterness and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." We look at our own sorrows with a microscope and have hard work to see the sorrows and trials of others, even with a telescope.

Paul told the Corinthians that there was no temptation that had befallen them but was common to man. Theirs was not an exceptional case. Others had passed through the same floods and come out alive. "There is nothing new under the sun." The same is true as regards temptations. Men and women have undergone throughout the ages the same difficulties. We must remember that there have been many millions who have gone before us and to suppose that

we are the exception is absurd. Affliction is the common lot of man. We are born to it as naturally as the sparks fly upward. It is a part of our heritage.

The inspired writer of Hebrews says to those of his day, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

It is one of the temptations of Satan to make us think our case is the most desperate of all the generations of the past. It will do us good when so tempted to read Hebrews, eleventh chapter, and ask ourselves if we have been "subject to" the violence of fire or "exposed to" the edge of the sword, or been "sawn asunder," or have "wandered in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted and tormented," as were the saints of olden time. We are having an easy time after all.

"In fierce temptation's darkest hour,
Save me from sin and Satan's power;
Tear every idol from thy throne,
And reign, my Savior, reign alone.

"My suffering time will soon be o'er,
Then shall I sigh and weep no more:
My ransomed soul shall soar away
To sing thy praise in endless day."

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30 -- THE DUTY OF COURAGE

"He thanked God and took courage." Acts 28:16.

God has called us to conflict -- not with enemies of flesh and blood, but "spiritual wickedness in high places"; not with literal, carnal weapons but with spiritual weapons. It takes just as much courage as it does to enter the field of carnal warfare, and we think more. We are commanded to "fight the good fight of faith."

It would be more pleasing to us to have a life of peace, but peace with sin is death. A life free from conflict means captivity to spiritual enemies. To fight and conquer means just as much trial of faith and courage as the worthies displayed who went to the stake or faced the wild beasts of the arena.

To be holy does not exempt us from conflict or opposition. If we had none of these we should have it easier than did the holy Jesus. The more we are like him the more will we meet the same opposition that he met.

We are called to be courageous as truly as we are called to contend. The great men of the past, in the eyes of God and men, were those who had great courage. It takes courage of the

highest degree to maintain a holy life. Moral courage is higher in degree than that of mere brute force.

When God called Joshua to take the place of Moses and carry on his work he said to him three times, "Only be thou strong and of good courage." This is the command still to those who are called to places of authority or effort for which they think themselves incompetent. The God who has called us will give us success according as we take courage. If we furnish the courage he will furnish all the success that he expects us to have.

He can do nothing with a discouraged man. To be timid is to be weak. Timidity hides talent and to hide the talent that God has given is sin. While on the one hand there is a foolish pride that over-estimates its own importance and lives only to promote selfishness, there is on the other hand a timidity that hides under a bushel the light that God expects us to let shine. It is a false humility that hides the talent that God has given, in a napkin. The cause of God as truly suffers from excessive timidity as from excessive egotism.

What is there to frighten us? "If God be for us who can be against us?" We have all the power of our omnipotent Christ to give us victory. We can overcome the world. We need not fear the devil. Any little saint can have victory over Satan. None need be defeated. Has not the word said, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you"? Do we really believe that this is true? There is then no reason why we may not be victorious. We need to "add to our faith courage." He who takes courage in the face of the enemy and refuses to be discouraged has the battle already had fought. More people have been overcome by cowardice than for any other kind of weakness.

"Through much distress and pain,
Through many a conflict here,
Through blood ye must the entrance gain,--
Yet, O disdain to fear.

"Courage, your captain cries
Who all your toil foreknew:
Toil ye shall have, yet all despise;
I have o'ercome for you."

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31 -- ASSURANCE

"The elect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

Assurance is the result of good insurance. A man insured in a good insurance company feels a good assurance. He does not base his assurance on any ecstatic emotion that he feels but on the fact that the company is sound. His knowledge of the company gives him assurance. His faith in the company is the ground of his assurance.

Is not the same true with those who really trust God? Belief in his ability and willingness to keep is the ground of assurance to those who have wholly given themselves to him. We do not depend on our feelings but on what we know of God. What we know that God has done for us is the guarantee of his faithfulness and willingness to keep. It was so with Paul. He said to Timothy in view of the dangers that he was to face in his approaching trial at Rome, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." He was not merely thinking of the day when he should face the blood thirsty Nero but of the day when he must face the Judge of all the earth. His acquaintance with Jesus led to his assurance of the future as well as his present salvation.

Such assurance gives boldness in life, death and the Judgment Day. Without it we are weak. With it we can face a frowning world and the last great enemy, death. Thousands have done so. It is not merely a beautiful theory. It makes cowards strong in action. "When I live in a settled assurance about the state of my soul, methinks I am as bold as a lion; I can laugh at all trouble; no affliction daunts me; but when I am of a fearful spirit, I could run into a very mouse-hole," said the martyr, Latimer, in a letter to Cranmer, who was also martyred.

Isaiah says that assurance is the result of righteousness. When our hearts are right with God "perfect love casteth out fear." It is a guilty conscience that makes men cowardly. "The righteous are as bold as a lion."

It is possible to have this assurance if we know God. Enoch had such acquaintance with God that his ways pleased God. The Lord let him know that his ways were pleasing to him. We know from this scripture that men may please God while in this world and that they may know it. Enoch was a man of the same human nature as ourselves. If we act towards God as Enoch did, we may have the same assurance. If Enoch thus acted since he was only a man, we can act towards God as he did. When we prefer God and his companionship as did Enoch we shall also have the same assurance.

It is too important a matter not to have assurance in our religion. We can not afford to be without it. Perfect faith in God brings perfect assurance.

"Now I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.

"Should earth against my soul engage,
And fiery darts be hurled
Then I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world.

"Let cares like a wild deluge come,
Let storms of sorrow fall,
So I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all."

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THE END