

The King's Highway.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness: . The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Isaiah 35:8

VOL. XV. (New Series.)

WOODSTOCK, N. B., APRIL 29, 1905.

(Semi-Monthly.) NO. 37.

CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE.

Christian assurance is a firm persuasion that we are in a state of personal salvation as to our pardon or our entire satisfaction. Next in importance to being Christians is a knowledge of this fact. Without such knowledge we are at great disadvantage, and subject to a variety of perplexities.

Pardon, regeneration, and adoption are concomitant blessings, and always exist together. Evidence of the possession of any one of these proves the existence of all three. All true Christians are in a state of pardon, regeneration, and sonship; hence, assurance of either of these carries the others with it, as they all stand related to the blessed fact of acceptance with God and personal salvation.

This assurance has respect to present salvation, and not as to final or eternal salvation, which largely depends upon obedience and Christian faithfulness. If believers will be honest and faithful with themselves and with God, they may possess an unbroken assurance of divine acceptance, the certitude of spiritual and religious things being as strong and positive as of physical things.

Christian assurance is not conjectural and probable persuasion, but rests upon the divine response to faith, the conscious possession of the graces and functions of Christian life and the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirits to his own work in our hearts, and to our adoption and sonship. The Holy Spirit's testimony furnishes a knowledge of the work wrought in us by the grace of God. "We have not received the spirit of the world, but that which is of God, that we may know the things freely given us of God."

This assurance is spoken of frequently in the Scriptures, and stands prominently as one of the leading doctrines of Christian experience. It is presented in various forms, as in the following instances: a "full assurance of understanding," an "assurance of faith and assurance of hope" (see Heb. 10:22; 6:11). We are commanded to obtain an assurance (II. Cor. 13:4; I. Thess. 5:21).

Spiritual realities are matters of actual experience, and God's people may know their freedom from condemnation and their spiritual life in Christ by experience. The Scriptures clearly present all the essential items of Christian experience, and the true believer is conscious of their possession. There is an important sense in which Christian experience is susceptible of experimental demonstration, and "if any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine."

The idea that the true believer cannot know his pardon and adoption is irreconcilable with much of New Testament teaching. Doubt and uncertainty cannot be reconciled with its many passages delineating Christian character and experience. While no one should rest without the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit giving assurance, yet the inferential evidences are not to be discarded, as they are strong and are interwoven with the whole Christian life. To be in a state of doubt concerning our salvation is dishonorable to the gospel of the Son of God. For a man saved by the grace and power of God to be in doubt and uncertainty is incongruous with the nature of things, and yet how

many in our churches discard this subject altogether. In some churches a profession of Christian assurance is listened to with suspicion, and is deemed an indication of presumption. Is it not to be feared that in some churches the kind and style of preaching is fitted to keep believers in doubt and far from assurance? The church has always suffered when the pulpit has been recreant to this subject. It was so during the Dark Ages. It was so when Luther and the reformers commenced the great Reformation in Europe. It was so, also, before the Wesleys and Whitfield dispelled the slumbers of the English and American churches.

Two or three centuries ago some of the leading minds of the church gave much prominence to the doctrine. The Augsburg Confession taught that personal assurance is involved in saving faith. Sir W. Hamilton says "Assurance personal assurance was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion of a true and saving faith." Martin Luther declared that "he who hath not assurance spews faith out." Philip Melancthon made assurance the discriminating line of Christianity from heathenism. Mr. Wesley says: "I apprehend that the whole Christian Church in the first centuries enjoyed it. . . . I know likewise that Luther, Melancthon, and many others (if not all) of the reformers frequently and strongly assert that every believer is conscious of his own acceptance with God, and that by a supernatural evidence."

In this position the reformers, doubtless, went to an extreme in making assurance identical with justifying and saving faith; the church is now in more danger of swinging to the other extreme, which is much more harmful, in discarding all assurance and tolerating doubt and uncertainty.

In all periods of the church, as spirituality has declined, the doctrine of assurance has been rejected or discarded. Its importance, in view of the infinite interests it involves, no thoughtful mind will question. It is quite time that the mass of both the doubtful and the doubting give this subject their careful personal attention. A clear experience of entire sanctification has in it the faith of assurance. Had the reformers identified the faith of assurance with the faith inseparable from entire sanctification, they would not have missed the mark and suffered as sad reaction. —Rev. J. A. Wood in The Christian Advocate.

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE.

Lot's wife had many privileges, but she perished. Lot's wife had a righteous husband, but she perished. Lot's wife had often been prayed for, but she perished. Lot's wife had a good example set her, but she perished. Lot's wife had been warned by God, but she perished. Lot's wife had been led by the angels out of Sodom, but she perished. Lot's wife was nearly saved, but she perished. Lot's wife only looked around, but she was damned for that look. She lingered when she should have made haste, and God left her. Mercy drew her, but she grieved mercy, and mercy forsook her. Where mercy left her, justice found her, and destruction seized her. She loved Sodom, and would love Sodom, and God gave her her bad love to the full. The Lord took her out of Sodom, but she took

Sodom out of Sodom, with her. "Let me get a last look at my idol," she said, and she got a last look, with a vengeance. "She is joined to her idols," said the jealous God; "let her alone," and she was terribly alone; she became a pillar of salt. Sodom was more to her than her daughters, her husband, her soul, or God. In judgment she was wedded to her evil choice. She entered eternity in fellowship with these that "suffer the vengeance of eternal fire."—Sel.

GUARD THE BOYS!

One of the sweetest sights that I ever saw was a tiny little mother, seated in church between her two big, stalwart sons, each vying with the other in their attention to her. With what almost adoring love their eyes rested upon her, as they found her place in the book, picked up her handkerchief, put on her rubbers, arranged her wraps and assisted her down the stairs when the service was over. And how she leaned upon and trusted them. It was truly a lovely sight!

Later I visited her, and found that what I had witnessed in church was but a type of the home life. And I understood it all when this little mother said to me, "I have never allowed anything to come between me and my boys. We have always been companions, and I have never let them grow away from me. I have kept in touch with all their interests, and so have kept their confidence. They talk freely of all their private concerns with me, and very early they gave themselves to their mother's God. And now they are what you see them—Christian men in whom I can trust, and upon whom I can lean."—Sel.

PURPOSELESS LIVING.

Living without a purpose is like sailing without making use of the rudder. The one who does that has no port in view, and doesn't know where the winds and currents may carry him. But no one sails that way, not even on a pleasure yacht. No one hoists up the anchor without intending to go somewhere. It is not so, however, in the voyage of life. In that, there many who are not trying to get anywhere. They drift along from day to day without ever looking at their compass; they let the rudder manage itself; the direction they happen to be going at any time depends upon the way the wind is blowing and the currents are running. Nothing worthy can be accomplished by an aimless life. The thing to do is to try for some definite port, equip the ship for the voyage, then up sail, and with a firm grasp on the tiller steer straight for it, unmindful of storms, and declining for any reason to be lured out of the course.—Wellspring.

There is not enough breadth in many lives. We ought to grow in height, reaching up to the fulness of the stature of Christ. We ought to grow in the out-reach of our lives. We ought to know more of God and of heavenly things tomorrow than we do today. We are told that if we follow on we shall know, that if we do the little portion of the will of God we understand, we shall be led on to see and know more of that will. We ought to grow in love, also, becoming more patient, more gentle, more thoughtful, more unselfish day by day, extending the reach of our unselfishness and helpfulness.—J. R. Miller, D. D.

THE CONDITIONS OF HOLINESS.

So far as holiness is an experience the conditions are these:

1. You must be persuaded that in some degree a holy life is possible in this world. Think what a denial of this proposition implies. If a holy life is not possible in this world, then no holy life was ever lived. Abel, Enoch, Isaiah, Paul, John Wesley, Madame Guyon, Fletcher, Mrs. Palmer, and all the other saints and worthies were actual sinners as long as they lived. They lied when they professed to be holy. Not for a moment during their mortal careers did they live without deliberate transgression of the law of God. And if they transgressed the law, they sinned; and if they sinned, they were of the devil, and not of God. How unnatural and terrible is such a thought. The very idea that no man can in any measure be holy gives the lie to the gospel, discredits Bible truth, tramples under foot the son of God, and does violence to all our conceptions of moral grandeur and exemplary virtue. On the other hand, a persuasion that a person can be holy if he will, agrees with his own expectations in regard to others, and with all intelligent conceptions of divine power and human responsibility. The truth is, we know that men need not be sinners. They may be saved, fully saved, and live clean, straight, noble and pure lives. We know this. When honest with ourselves we know that uprightness and purity are exactly what we demand as the normal condition of our intelligent fellow beings around us.

2. A conviction that scriptural holiness is a necessity. We must be convinced, not only that holiness is essential to our highest usefulness in this world; that if we would accomplish the will of God in our life we must be fully saved. We believe that this conviction is quite general in all the churches today. Young people, as well as older members, are giving evidence that they feel the need of personal purity and of a richer baptism of the Holy Ghost. They long for power. They crave full spiritual liberty. They covet the best gifts.

3. A willingness and decision to make a complete consecration. Consecration is a resolute and unyielding determination to be wholly the Lord's. It is presenting soul and body and all as a reasonable service to God. This is necessary, because God will never sanctify us while listless, indifferent and selfish. He recognizes our free moral agency. He has given us powers of thought, judgment, choice, determination, and he requires that all be freely, voluntarily, gladly, and completely given up to him, to be used as he directs at all times.

Remember that consecration is not repentance. When we gave ourselves to God at conversion we repented of our sins; now that we want to attain to higher knowledge and fuller blessings we consecrate all to him, we present our bodies a living sacrifice.

"Now, Lord I give myself to thee;
I would be wholly thine;
As thou hast given thyself to me,
And thou art wholly mine.
O take me, seal me for thine own,
Thine altogether, thine alone."

This consecration is not sanctification. Consecration is man's part; sanctification is God's part. It is simply saying to God, do with me as thou wilt. Make of me all you can. Show me wherein I may do better.

Reign in me. Rule over me. Act through me. Give me ample grace to use all my ransomed powers for thee.

4. Active, appropriating faith. Trust in God is the condition of purity as well as of pardon. When we sought the pardon of our sins our faith laid hold on Christ as a personal Saviour. The chief thought in our mind then was that we get free from the sense of guilt, and gain the evidence of divine acceptance. So in seeking purity, our faith must lay hold upon Christ as the complete deliverer. Our chief thought must be that we gain a victory, not simply over the guilt of sin, but over its power; and that henceforward and always we are to be wholly Christ's. —Michigan Christian Advocate.

UNCONSCIOUS KINDNESS.

A young woman who had passed through deep sorrows said to a friend one day, in speaking of the comfort certain persons had given her unconsciously: "I wish some people knew just how much their faces can comfort one! I often ride down in the same street car with your father, and it has been such a help to me to sit next to him. There is something so good and strong and kind about him; it has been a comfort just to feel he was beside me. Sometimes, when I have been utterly depressed and discouraged, he has seemed somehow to know just the right word to say to me; but if he didn't talk, why, I just looked at his face, and that helped me. He probably has not the least idea of it, either, for I know him so slightly, and I don't suppose people half realize, anyway, how much they are helping or hindering others!" There is a great deal of this unconscious kindness in the world. Moses wist not that his face shone. The best people are not aware of their goodness. According to the old legend, it was only when it fell behind him, where he could not see it, that the saintly man's shadow healed the sick. This is a parable. Goodness that is aware of itself has lost much of its charm. Kindnesses that are done unconsciously mean the most.—Sel.

CIGARETTE SMOKING A CRIME.

At the recent Charities' Conference in Cincinnati, E. George Torrence, superintendent of the Illinois Reformatory, made the following startling statements of his own experience:

"On the first day of this month we had 278 boys between the ages of ten and fifteen. Of sixty-three of this number with the average age of twelve, fifty eight were cigarette smokers; of 133 of them with an average of fourteen, 125 were cigarette smokers; eighty-two were fifteen years of age of whom seventy-three were cigarette smokers.

"This demonstrates that 92 per cent of the whole number were in the habit of smoking cigarettes at the time they committed the crimes for which they were sent to the reformatory; but even more astonishing is the fact that 85 per cent had become so addicted to their use as to be classed at the time as cigarette fiends." The use of intoxicating liquor is to be condemned: it destroys manhood, destroys homes, beggars wives and children, and fills jails, penitentiaries and reformatories, but not to one-tenth the extent of the cigarette, does it start the boy from ten to fifteen on the way to become a criminal."