

"IT'S A GREAT LIFE IF YOU DON'T WEAKEN."

By Rev. W. E. Smith.

Another phrase often used humorously but pregnant with spiritual meaning, for it contains the fundamental law of spiritual progress and success. We soon find that the Christian life is not a little spirit but a Marathon race, and many fall out before they get their second wind.

But we wish especially to apply this principle to the life of entire sanctification or holiness. The one that goes this way ought to carefully count the cost. Those who jump in very quickly often fall out quite as speedily, failing in that perseverance so necessary to final salvation. Those who look only at the joy side of this life are easily offended at the trials, temptations and persecutions that inevitably come; they draw back, thus revealing the fact they had not fully died out of carnal self.

John Wesley said probably not one in five who profess the blessing of entire sanctification, perseveres in grace. Many mistake an emotional fulness as a great uplift of soul for the Holy Ghost baptism; many no doubt profess holiness when they are only restored from a back-slidden-in-heart condition.

Only can this grace be maintained by having proper regard for first principles. "Let us walk by the same rule and mind the same thing." Constant watchfulness, heart searching and prayer are absolutely necessary to progress in the Holy life. Entire sanctification instead of being the ultimate end, is only a good foundation for development of character.

I. We must weaken in this life when we get our eyes off God and on men. No matter how good they may be, they grieve us, if we be extremely sensitive. A clean heart never implies infallible judgment. John Wesley was certainly one of the holiest of men, but he showed poor judgment in marrying a termagant of a wife. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Thank God, we can live in perfect fellowship with Him all the time, even though the course we pursue may be condemned by some good people. But the deeper we are in God the more confidence will we have in those who walk with God, yet the more patiently we will bear with infirmities and diverse judgment of others.

It sometimes happens that the great man has a fall. Marvellous gifts in preaching nor apparent success in evangelistic work have been safeguards against a downfall. Many have helped in the undoing of a good man by making of him a sort of an idol. They have praised his eloquence and his power. Gradually he may have regarded himself as a peculiar favorite of the Lord's and not required to watch and pray. Pride may have come in and a gradual loss of fellowship with God. He began to think more of selfish interest than he did the glory of God. First it perhaps was money and then the lust of flesh. Such a fall sweeps down a lot of weak people who are trusting in men, but it does not destroy the faith of those who know their Christ. It proves a

warning to drive them more and more to Him who is the only source of strength.

II. So many weaken in this life by looking at their environment. We have known preachers to go to a holiness camp meeting seek and profess to find entire sanctification. They have gone back to their churches to face a cold unsympathetic official board and congregation. The devil has said "now if you preach this you will not get your salary, and may have to soon leave for a smaller church. You had better go very cautiously and live the life but don't bring on an issue." They have listened to the suggestion. It has proven fatal, and they soon found themselves back in the old rut. Next year they do not go to the holiness-camp meeting and soon they may be opposing the very experience they once professed. The preacher who professes holiness and is not expecting to fight his way through all the opposition of earth and hell must soon get discouraged. But if he keeps linked onto God he will always find it the easy way because of the victory within his soul.

Thank God there are boys who are rejoicing in this experience in army cantonments at the battlefield; there are men shouting the praise of God for cleansing from all sin, on the railroad, in the mine and workshop; there are mothers with a load of responsibility upon them, and a husband that antagonizes who go through it all in perfect victory; there are husbands who have to meet the same thing from unsympathetic wives, yet they keep sweet and go through. Needless to say these have gotten their eyes off circumstances and on Jesus only. They have come to the place of complete abandonment to the will of God where they can say:

"The ill He blesses is my good,  
And unblest good is ill.  
And all is right that seems most wrong,  
It it be His sweet will."

III. We soon weaken when we look to ourselves. Looking unto Jesus must be the watchword. The devil discourages a multitude by causing them to look at themselves as though we could do it alone. Well may we cry out when the standard of holiness is presented, "Who is sufficient for these things," but thank God, Paul did not leave it there. We have been exultantly saying, "Our sufficiency is of God." I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "When I am weak then I am strong."

No one feels so absolutely his dependence on God as does the wholly sanctified. He clings to God by faith. Feeling may ebb and flow; friends may praise or blame; adversity may follow prosperity; none of those things move him. He clings to God. He knows that God is above and beneath and around him. As the little child held by its loving father's strength, so is the trusting child of God strong in the strength of Jehovah. He sings, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" "The Lord is the strength of my life of whom shall I be afraid."

We can never have holiness apart from Jesus, and by this we do not mean holiness by legal imputation. The heart is made clean, but Jesus must abide in us

by the power of the Holy Ghost to keep our hearts clean, and so we gave him all the praise and the glory. "The just shall live by faith." Moment by moment we are kept alive physically and yet the organs of our body perform their functions so well we are not in a state of dread and fear; so the state of heart purity is a state of restfulness and trust in God. We are not always under a strain fearing we are going to fall or afraid we have not done quite enough to please God. What a bondage such a life is! That is the old bondage of the divided heart. We are free in Father's love and grace because all doubt and fear have been removed, "Cast out by perfect love."

We soon learn that the life of holiness is lived more in the will than in the emotional. God can put a big determination in our soul. He can take out the inbred sin and put a resolution and back-bone in us that is remarkable. The person who professes entire sanctification and goes very long without the blessed exhilaration the Holy Spirit makes in the heart is self-deceived; but he who rests his faith in delightful emotion rather than in God will soon be stranded. Be sure all is upon the altar; faith will be sure and instead of weakening in testimony and in life we shall stand "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

#### GEMS.

Fellowship with God on earth must precede fellowship with Him in heaven.

Abiding power results from abiding in Christ.

The only preparation for the morrow is the right use of today.

Perseverance is the only Christian grace that cannot be counterfeited.

Every kind word you say, even to a dumb animal, will make you happier.

Two good rules for life are: Never be discouraged. Never be a discourager.

True politeness simply consists in treating others just as you love to be treated yourself.

Life is a stewardship and not an ownership; a trust, not a gift. With a gift you may do as you please, but with a trust you must give an account. It must be administered so as to meet the approval of the Great Judge.—E. Hodgson.

#### AN INCIDENT IN NELSON'S LIFE.

When Nelson was asked by his friend, Hardy, it is said, to put on a cloak to hide his stars, which made him a mark for the French sharpshooters, who were huddled in the rigging of the man-of-war, he answered, "No; in honor I got them; in honor I will wear them; in honor I will die with them, if need be." And the sun glistened on those stars and Nelson became a mark for the foe. Let your uniform be seen. Do not fling on the cloak of compromise, and in a sneaking way hide the uniform that you wear as a child of God.—Sel.

Piety used for a pull soon gets frayed out.

"The righteous rest in the redemption of Christ."