

Behold the Lamb!

What it Means to be a Christian

Lesson 3: Christian Character.

There are two words we need to understand about the Christian Life, and how we are saved. They are 'Justified' or 'Justification', and 'Sanctified' or 'Sanctification. When a new believer comes to Jesus and confesses their sins, Jesus forgives all the past sins. This is 'justification', meaning that they are justified, made right or just with God. Jesus' blood covers the past sins. This is the work of a minute, it gives us our title for heaven.

Then there is a second part to salvation called Sanctification, this is a process where we are being made holy and our characters made ready for heaven. It is our fitness for heaven and is a work done in cooperation with our Savior. This goes on as long as we live and choose to keep following Jesus every day. As we learn more about Jesus, God's Word, and His will for us, we see sins in our lives that we did not recognize before. Then we take them to Jesus and ask forgiveness and His power to overcome them. When we make a determined choice to be rid of a sin and turn it over to Jesus, He empowers us, by giving us His victory, so we can overcome on that point. It is by this process of cooperation between us and the Lord that sins are overcome and we are made fit to live with holy beings. Sanctification is God's method of developing our character. Every step of the way it is by our own free choice that the changes are made, the Lord will never force us to do His will, it has to be our choice too.

The character of the Christian is shown by his daily life. Said Christ, "**Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.**" **Matthew. 7:17.** Our Saviour compares Himself to a vine, of which His followers are the branches. He plainly declares that all who would be His disciples must bring forth fruit; and then He shows how they may become fruitful branches. "**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.**" **John 15:4.**

The apostle Paul describes the fruit which the Christian is to bear. He says that it "**is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.**" **Ephesians 5:9.** And again, "**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.**" **Galatians 5:22, 23.** These precious graces are the principles of God's law carried out in the life.

The law of God is the only true standard of moral perfection. That law was demonstrated in the life of Christ. He says of Himself, "**I have kept my Father's commandments.**" **John 15:10.** Nothing short of this obedience will meet the requirements of God's word. "**He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.**" **1 John 2:6.** We cannot say that we are unable to do this, for we have the assurance, "**My grace is sufficient for thee.**" **2 Corinthians 12:9.**

Those who will look long enough into the 'divine mirror', by studying His Law, to see and despise their sins, their unlikeness to the meek and lowly Jesus, will have strength to overcome. All who truly believe will confess and forsake their sins. They will cooperate with Christ in the

Behold the Lamb

work of bringing their hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong under the control of the divine will, so that sin shall not have dominion over them. Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, they will be changed into His likeness.

Those who have genuine love for God will manifest an earnest desire to know His will and to do it. Says the apostle John, whose epistles focus so fully upon love, "**This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.**" **1 John 5:3.** The child who loves his parents will show that love by willing obedience; but the selfish, ungrateful child seeks to do as little as possible for his parents, while he at the same time desires to enjoy all the privileges given to the obedient and faithful.

The same difference is seen among those who profess to be children of God. Many, who know that they receive His love and care, and who desire to receive His blessing, take no delight in doing His will. They regard God's claims upon them as an unpleasant restraint, His commandments as a grievous burden. But one who is truly seeking for holiness of heart and life delights in the law of God, and mourns only that he falls so far short of meeting its standards.

God's character and the law of the whole universe centers on love. Now there are different kinds of 'love', but heavenly love, is the kind of love meant here. As humans we tend to love someone or something because we get something out of it. But heavenly love is 'Agape' love; it is principle of always doing what is right and best for the other one, even if there is no reward for us in it.

We are commanded to love one another as Christ has loved us. He has shown His love by laying down His life to redeem us. The beloved disciple John, says that we should be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. For "**Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.**" **1 John 5:1, 2.** If we love Christ, we shall love those who resemble Him in life and character; and not only so, but we shall also love those who have "no hope," and are "**without God in the world.**" **Ephesians 2:12.**

It was to save sinners that Christ left His home in heaven and came to earth to suffer and to die. For this He toiled and agonized and prayed, until, heartbroken and deserted by those He came to save, He poured out His life on Calvary.

Many shrink from such a life as our Saviour lived. They feel that it requires too great a sacrifice to imitate the Pattern, to bring forth fruit in good works, and then patiently endure the pruning of God that they may bring forth more fruit. But when the Christian regards himself as only a humble instrument in the hands of Christ, and endeavors to faithfully perform every duty, relying upon the help which God has promised, then he will wear the yoke of Christ and find it easy; then he will bear burdens for Christ, and pronounce them light. He can look up with courage and with confidence, and say, "**I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.**" **2 Timothy 1:12.**

If we meet obstacles in our path, and faithfully overcome them; if we encounter opposition and reproach, and in Christ's name gain the victory; if we bear responsibilities and do our duties in the spirit of our Master--then, indeed, we gain a precious knowledge of His faithfulness and

Behold the Lamb

power. We no longer depend upon the experience of others, for we have the witness in ourselves. Like the Samaritans of old, we can say, **"We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."** John 4:42.

The more we consider the character of Christ, and the more we experience His saving power, the more we shall realize our own weakness and imperfection, and the more earnestly shall we look to Him as our strength and our Redeemer. We have no power in ourselves to cleanse the soul temple from its defilement; but as we repent of our sins against God, and seek pardon through the merits of Christ, He will impart that faith which works by love and purifies the heart. By faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God we may be sanctified, and thus obtain a fitness for the society of holy angels and the white-robed redeemed ones in the kingdom of glory.

It is not only the privilege but the duty of every Christian to keep a close union with Christ and to have a rich experience in the things of God. Then his life will be fruitful in good works. Said Christ, **"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."** John 15:8.

When we read the lives of godly men, we often think what they did is far beyond our reach. But this is not the case. Christ died for all; and we are assured in His word that He is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. The prophets and apostles did not perfect Christian character by a miracle. They used the means which God had placed within their reach; and all who will put forth the same effort will secure the same results.

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul sets before them the "mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19), the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8), and then assures them of his earnest prayers for their spiritual prosperity:

"I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:14-19.

He writes to his Corinthian brethren also, **"to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus. . . : Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."** 1 Corinthians 1:2-7. These words are sent not only to that church, but to all the people of God to the close of time. Every Christian may enjoy the blessing of sanctification.

The apostle continues in these words: **"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgement"** (verse 10). Paul would not have told them to do that which was impossible. Unity is the sure result of Christian perfection.

Behold the Lamb

In the Epistle to the Colossians also are set forth the glorious privileges given to the children of God. **"Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, . . . we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."** Colossians 1:4-11.

The apostle was himself trying to reach the same standard of holiness which he set before his brethren. He writes to the Philippians: **"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."** Philippians 3:7-14.

There is a great difference between the boastful, self-righteous claims of those who claim to be without sin, and the modest language of the apostle. Yet it was the purity and faithfulness of his own life that gave such power to his exhortations to his brethren.

Paul did not hesitate to tell people about the importance of Bible sanctification. He says: **"Ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."** 1 Thessalonians 4:2, 3.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" Philippians 2:12-15.

He taught Titus to teach the church that while they should trust to the merits of Christ for salvation, divine grace, dwelling in their hearts, will lead to the faithful performance of all the duties of life. **"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. . . . This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."** Titus 3:1-8.

The foundation of all acceptable service to God, as well as the very crown of Christian graces, is love; only in the soul where love reigns will the peace of God abide. **"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel**

Behold the Lamb

against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Colossians 3:12-17.

The sanctification the Bible tells us about has to do with the entire person, this is the true idea of entire consecration. We all may enjoy this great blessing. **"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Thessalonians 5:23.**

Our Lord desires all of His children to enjoy the pleasure of this close relation with Him. But there is in the religious world ideas about sanctification which are false and dangerous in influence. In many cases those who profess sanctification do not have the real thing. Their sanctification consists in boasting and doing works to be admired by others.

Those who are really seeking to perfect Christian character will never think that they are sinless. Their lives may be faultless, they may be living examples of the truth which they have accepted; but the more they discipline their minds to dwell upon the character of Christ, and the nearer they come to His divine image, the more clearly will they discern its spotless perfection, and the more deeply will they feel their own defects.

When persons claim that they are sanctified, they show that they are far from being holy. They fail to see their own unworthiness. They look upon themselves as reflecting the image of Christ, because they have no true knowledge of Him. The greater the distance between them and their Saviour, the more righteous they appear in their own eyes.

When with repentance and humble trust we meditate upon Jesus, whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows have burdened, we may learn to walk in His footsteps. By considering Him we become changed into His divine likeness. When this work is done in us, we shall claim no righteousness of our own, but shall exalt Jesus Christ, and hang our helpless souls upon His merits.

Our Saviour always condemned self-righteousness. He taught His disciples that the highest type of religion is that which shows itself in a quiet, humble manner. He cautioned them to do their deeds of charity quietly; not for display, not to be praised or honored of men, but for the glory of God, expecting their reward hereafter. If they did good deeds to be praised by men, no reward would be given them by their Father in heaven.

The followers of Christ were taught not to pray to be heard of men. **"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6:6.**

Christ did not approve of the Pharisees who liked to stand on the street corners and pray loudly so people would admire them.

Behold the Lamb

True sanctification is an entire conformity to the will of God. Rebellious thoughts and feelings are overcome, and the voice of Jesus awakens a new life in our entire being. Those who are truly sanctified will not set up their own opinion as a standard of right and wrong. They are not self-righteousness; but they are watching self, ever fearing in case, a promise being left them, they should come short of the conditions upon which the promises are based.

Many who profess sanctification are entirely ignorant of the work of grace upon the heart. When proved and tested, they are found to be like the self-righteous Pharisee. They become angry if any one contradicts them. They lay aside reason and judgement, and depend upon their feelings, basing their claims to sanctification upon emotions which they have at some time experienced.

They are stubborn and perverse in urging their claims of holiness, giving many words, but bearing no precious fruit as proof. These professedly sanctified persons are not only deluding their own souls by their pretensions, but are exerting an influence to lead astray many who earnestly desire to conform to the will of God. They may be heard to repeat again and again, "God leads me! God teaches me! I am living without sin!" Many who come in contact with this spirit encounter a dark, mysterious something which they cannot comprehend. But it is that which is altogether unlike Christ, the only true pattern.

Bible sanctification does not consist in strong emotion. Here is where many are led into error. They depend on their feelings. When they feel elated or happy, they claim that they are sanctified. Happy feelings or the absence of joy is no evidence that a person is or is not sanctified. There is no such thing as instant sanctification. True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last. Those who are battling with daily temptations, overcoming their own sinful tendencies, and seeking for holiness of heart and life, make no boastful claims of holiness. They are hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Sin appears to them exceedingly sinful.

It can be difficult to tell the difference between these false ones and those who honestly make a profession of the truth, but the difference exists, nevertheless. The testimony of those claiming such an exalted experience will cause the sweet Spirit of Christ to withdraw from a meeting, and will leave a chilling influence upon those present, while if they were truly living without sin, their very presence would bring holy angels into the assembly, and their words would indeed be "like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25:11).

In summer, as we look upon the trees of the distant forest, all clothed with a beautiful mantle of green, we may not be able to distinguish between the evergreens and the other trees. But as winter approaches, and the frost encloses them in icy embrace, stripping the other trees of their beautiful foliage, the evergreens are easy to see. So it will be with all who are walking in humility, distrustful of self, but clinging tremblingly to the hand of Christ. While those who are self-confident, and trust in their own perfection of character, lose their false robe of righteousness when subjected to the storms of trial, the truly righteous, who sincerely love and fear God, wear the robe of Christ's righteousness in prosperity and adversity alike.

Self-denial, self-sacrifice, benevolence, kindness, love, patience, fortitude, and Christian trust are the daily fruits borne by those who are truly connected with God. Their acts may not be

Behold the Lamb

published to the world, but they themselves are daily wrestling with evil, and gaining precious victories over temptation and wrong. Solemn vows are renewed, and kept through the strength gained by earnest prayer. The boastful ones do not discern the struggles of these silent workers; but the eye of Him who seeth the secrets of the heart, notices and regards with approval every effort put forth in lowliness and meekness. It requires the testing time to reveal the pure gold of love and faith in the character. When trials and perplexities come upon the church, then the steadfast zeal and warm affections of Christ's true followers are developed.

We feel sad to see professed Christians led astray by the false and bewitching theory that they are perfect, because it is so difficult to undeceive them and lead them into the right path. They have sought to make the exterior fair and pleasing, while the inward adorning, the meekness and lowliness of Christ, is missing. The testing time will come to all, when the hopes of many who have for years thought themselves secure, will be seen to be without foundation. When in new positions, under varied circumstances, some who have seemed to be pillars in the house of God reveal only rotten timber beneath the paint and varnish. But the humble in heart, who have daily felt the importance of riveting their souls to the eternal Rock, will stand unmoved amid the tempests of trial, because they trusted not to themselves. **"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." 2 Timothy 2:19.**

Those who like to call attention to their good works, constantly talking of their sinless state and trying to make their religious attainments prominent, are only deceiving their own souls by so doing. A healthy man, who is able to attend to the tasks of life and who goes forth day after day to his labor with buoyant spirits and a healthy current of blood flowing through his veins, does not call the attention of every one he meets to how healthy he is. Health and vigor are the natural conditions of his life, and therefore he is scarcely aware that he enjoys so rich a boon.

Thus it is with the truly righteous man. He is unconscious of his goodness and piety. Religious principle has become the spring of his life and conduct, and it is just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs or for the rosebush to yield roses. His nature is so thoroughly filled with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of Christ with a willing heart.

All who come within the sphere of his influence perceive the beauty and fragrance of his Christian life, while he himself is unconscious of it, for it is in harmony with his habits and inclinations. He prays for divine light, and loves to walk in that light. It is his food and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. His life is hid with Christ in God; yet he does not boast of this, nor seem aware of it.

God smiles upon the humble and lowly ones who follow closely in the footsteps of the Master. Angels are attracted to them, and love to linger about their path. They may be passed by as unworthy of notice by those who claim exalted attainments and who delight in boasting of their good works, but heavenly angels bend lovingly over them and are as a wall of fire round about them.

Our Saviour was the light of the world, but the world knew Him not. He was constantly employed in works of mercy, shedding light upon the pathway of all; yet He did not call upon

Behold the Lamb

those with Him to behold His unexampled virtue, His self-denial, self-sacrifice, and benevolence.

The Jews did not admire such a life. They considered His religion worthless, because it did not harmonize with their standards. They decided that Christ was not religious in spirit or character; for their religion consisted in display, in praying publicly, and in doing works of charity for all to see. They trumpeted their good deeds, as do those who claim sanctification. They would have all understand that they are without sin. But the whole life of Christ was in direct contrast to this. He sought neither gain nor honor. His wonderful acts of healing were performed in as quiet a manner as possible, although He could not restrain the enthusiasm of those who were the recipients of His great blessings. Humility and meekness characterized His life. And it was because of His lowly walk and unassuming manners, which were in such marked contrast to their own, that the Pharisees would not accept Him.

The most precious fruit of sanctification is meekness. When this grace presides in the soul, the character is molded by its influence. There is a continual waiting upon God and a submission of the will to His. The understanding grasps every divine truth, and the will bows to every divine precept, without doubting or murmuring. True meekness softens and subdues the heart and brings the thoughts into obedience to Jesus Christ. It opens the heart to the word of God. It places us with Mary, as learners at the feet of Jesus. **"The meek will he guide in judgement: and the meek will he teach his way." Psalm. 25:9.** Like the child Samuel, they pray, **"Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."** **1 Samuel 3:9.** The first words of Paul after Christ was revealed to him were, **"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts 9:6.**

When a man professes to be sanctified, and yet in words and works is like the impure fountain sending forth bitter waters, we may safely say, That man is deceived. He needs to learn the very alphabet of what constitutes the life of a Christian. Some who profess to be servants of Christ have so long cherished the demon of unkindness that they seem to love it and to take pleasure in speaking words that displease and irritate. These men must be converted before Christ will acknowledge them as His children.

Meekness is the inward adorning, which God estimates as of great price. The apostle speaks of this as more excellent and valuable than gold or pearls or costly array. While the outward adorning beautifies only the mortal body, the ornament of meekness adorns the soul and connects finite man with the infinite God. This is the ornament of God's own choice. He who garnished the heavens with the orbs of light has by the same Spirit promised that "he will beautify the meek with salvation" (Ps. 149:4). Angels of heaven will register as best adorned those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with Him in meekness and lowliness of mind.

There are high attainments for the Christian. John had an great idea of the privilege of a Christian. He says, **"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."** **1 John 3:1.** It is not possible for humanity to rise to a higher dignity than this. To man is granted the privilege of becoming an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. To those who have been thus exalted, are unfolded the unsearchable riches of

Behold the Lamb

Christ, which are of a thousand fold more value than the wealth of the world. Thus, through the merits of Jesus Christ, finite man is elevated to fellowship with God and with His dear Son.

Jesus told a couple of simple stories to illustrate the fact that becoming a genuine Christian is a big commitment, a very real change in our life.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Luke 9:23.

We need to consider what this meant in Jesus’ day. The disciples may well have just seen some poor prisoner carrying his cross on which the soldiers driving him onward, were intending to nail him and leave him to die on it! And here is their beloved teacher Jesus, telling them that to follow Him meant they were to take up a cross and follow Him? What could it all mean?

“If any man come to me, and hate [love less] not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

“Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:26-33.

Being a true Christian cannot be just one little part of our life and we go on same as we were before, except maybe go to church once a week. It has to become our focus in all of life. We either are all His, or we are not His at all. Now this next similar text adds some important thoughts.

“And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mark 8:34-37.

Here we see Jesus saying that although becoming His follower was a big decision and would affect all of one’s life, it still was the most important thing anyone could do, because to even gain the whole world, would mean nothing if one would finally lose his soul!

Many who are sincerely seeking for holiness of heart and purity of life seem perplexed and discouraged. They are constantly looking to themselves, and lamenting their lack of faith; and because they have no faith, they feel that they cannot claim the blessing of God.

Behold the Lamb

They mistake feeling for faith. They look above the simplicity of true faith, and thus bring great darkness upon their souls. They should turn the mind from self, and think on the mercy and goodness of God, recount His promises, and then simply believe that He will fulfil His word. We are not to trust in our faith, but in the promises of God. When we repent of our past transgressions of His law, and resolve to obey in the future, we should believe that God for Christ's sake accepts us, and forgives our sins.

Darkness and discouragement will sometimes come upon the soul and threaten to overwhelm us, but we should not cast away our confidence. We must keep the eye fixed on Jesus, feelings or no feelings. We should seek to faithfully perform every known duty, and then calmly rest in the promises of God.

At times a deep sense of our unworthiness will send a thrill of terror through the soul, but this is no evidence that God has changed toward us, or we toward God. No effort should be made to keep our mind raised up to a certain intensity of emotion. We may not feel today the peace and joy which we felt yesterday; but we should by faith grasp the hand of Christ, and trust Him as fully in the darkness as in the light.

Satan may whisper, "You are too great a sinner for Christ to save." While you acknowledge that you are indeed sinful and unworthy, you may meet the tempter with the cry, "By virtue of the atonement, I claim Christ as my Saviour. I trust not to my own merits, but to the precious blood of Jesus, which cleanses me. This moment I hang my helpless soul on Christ." The Christian life must be a life of constant, living faith. An unyielding trust, a firm reliance upon Christ, will bring peace and assurance to the soul.

Be not discouraged because your heart seems hard. Every obstacle, every internal foe, only increases your need of Christ. He came to take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh. Look to Him for special grace to overcome your peculiar faults. When tempted, steadfastly resist the evil promptings; say to your soul, "How can I dishonor my Redeemer? I have given myself to Christ; I cannot do the works of Satan." Cry to the dear Saviour for help to sacrifice every idol and to put away every darling sin. Let the eye of faith see Jesus standing before the Father's throne, presenting His wounded hands as He pleads for you. Believe that strength comes to you through your precious Saviour.

By faith look upon the crowns laid up for those who shall overcome; listen to the exultant song of the redeemed, Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain and hast redeemed us to God! Think of these scenes as real. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, in his terrible conflict with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places exclaimed, "**Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.**" **Acts 7:56.** The Saviour of the world was revealed to him as looking down from heaven upon him with the deepest interest, and the glorious light of Christ's countenance shone upon Stephen with such brightness that even his enemies saw his face shine like the face of an angel.

If we would permit our minds to dwell more upon Christ and the heavenly world, we should find powerful support in fighting the battles of the Lord. Pride and love of the world will lose their power as we consider the glories of that better land so soon to be our home. Beside the loveliness of Christ, all earthly attractions will seem of little worth.

Behold the Lamb

Let none imagine that without earnest effort on their part they can obtain the assurance of God's love. When the mind has been long permitted to dwell only on earthly things, it is a difficult matter to change the habits of thought. That which the eye sees and the ear hears, too often attracts the attention and absorbs the interest. But if we would enter the city of God, and look upon Jesus and His glory, we must become accustomed to viewing Him with the eye of faith here. The words and the character of Christ should be often the subject of our thoughts and of our conversation, and each day some time should be especially devoted to prayerful meditation upon these sacred themes.

Sanctification is a daily work. Let none deceive themselves with the belief that God will pardon and bless them while they are knowingly trampling upon one of His requirements. The willful commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. Whatever may be the religious feelings, Jesus cannot abide in the heart that disregards the divine law. God will honor those only who honor Him.

"His servants ye are to whom ye obey." Romans 6:16. If we indulge anger, lust, covetousness, hatred, selfishness, or any other sin, we become servants of sin. **"No man can serve two masters." Matthew 6:24.** If we serve sin, we cannot serve Christ. The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit; but the Spirit striveth against the flesh, keeping up a constant warfare. Here is where Christ's help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims, **"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57.**

If we would develop a character which God can accept, we must form correct habits in our religious life. Daily prayer is as essential to growth in grace, and even to spiritual life itself, as is temporal food to physical well-being. We should accustom ourselves to lift the thoughts often to God in prayer. If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy. We cannot for one moment separate ourselves from Christ with safety. We may have His presence to attend us at every step, but only by observing the conditions which He Himself has given us.

Religion must be made the great business of life. Everything else should be held secondary to this. All our powers, of soul, body, and spirit, must be engaged in the Christian warfare. We must look to Christ for strength and grace, and we shall gain the victory as surely as Jesus died for us.

We must come nearer to the cross of Christ. Repentance at the foot of the cross is the first lesson of peace we have to learn. The love of Jesus--who can comprehend it? Infinitely more tender and self-denying than a mother's love! If we would know the value of a human soul, we must look in living faith upon the cross, and thus begin the study which shall be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity.

The value of our time and our talents can be estimated only by the greatness of the ransom paid for our redemption. What ingratitude do we manifest toward God when we rob Him of His own by withholding from Him our affections and our service! Is it too much to give ourselves to Him who has sacrificed all for us? Can we choose the friendship of the world before the

Behold the Lamb

immortal honors which Christ offers, **"to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."** Revelation 3:21?

Sanctification is a progressive work. The successive steps are set before us in the words of Peter: **"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."** 2 Peter 1:5-11.

Our Saviour claims all there is of us; He asks our first and holiest thoughts, our purest and most intense affection. If we are indeed partakers of the divine nature, His praise will be continually in our hearts and upon our lips. Our only safety is to surrender our all to Him and to be constantly growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

The apostle Paul was highly honored of God, being taken in holy vision to the third heaven, where he looked upon scenes whose glories he was not permitted to reveal. Yet this did not lead him to boastfulness or self-confidence. He realized the importance of constant watchfulness and self-denial, and plainly declares, **"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."** 1 Corinthians 9:27.

Paul suffered for the truth's sake, and yet we hear no complaints from his lips. As he reviews his life of toil and care and sacrifice, he says, **"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."** Romans 8:18. The shout of victory from God's faithful servant comes down the line to our time: **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"** Romans 8:35-39.

Though Paul was at last confined in a Roman prison--shut away from the light and air of heaven, cut off from his active labors in the gospel, and momentarily expecting to be condemned to death--yet he did not yield to doubt or despondency. From that gloomy dungeon came his dying testimony, full of a sublime faith and courage that has inspired the hearts of saints and martyrs in all succeeding ages. His words describe the results of true sanctification: **"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."** 2 Timothy 4:6-8.