

"If I bring thee the cup of joy, be thankful, and pitiful to those who mourn; and let all men be unto thee as brethren. If the dregs of bitterness cleave unto thy lip, be not too eager to receive comfort, lest thou betray the weakness of thy faith. God's perfected discipline giveth wisdom. Therefore count them happy who endure.

"When morn breaketh in the east, gird thyself for thy duties with a song of thanksgiving. For God is near to those who trust Him, and rejoice in His ways. And when night putteth on her coronet of stars, kneel and ask that the day's sins may be forgiven thee.

"So, when I have no longer any days or nights to give thee, and must myself die, thou shalt bless me as a friend, and a helper on the road to heaven."

IDOLS.

WHAT is your idol, my brother? my sister? I will tell you. It is that thing which you do not like to have any one speak of; it makes you feel a little unpleasant, and uncomfortable. The mention of it, in any way, to call your attention to it as an evil, always agitates you somewhat; and though you may perhaps endeavor to justify it, you get a little excited when you do so. Whenever a hand is laid on it, you are conscious that a sore spot has been touched, and you had rather it would not be done. It is that thing that you stoutly declare, "is not an idol;" you "do not make an idol of it." Yet, when you are told that you had better dispense with it, you are by no means willing to do so. It is that which you say you "care nothing about;" you regard it as a thing of "no importance whatever;" but when it is suggested that you had better give it up, you somehow discover that there is a great importance attaches to it, for you will by no means renounce it. It is that thing that comes up before you when you are praying; when you are giving your testimony, and want to make the best presentation that you can to God and your brethren; and if you are a professor of perfect love (for some of them are not fully cleansed from their idols), it is that which presents itself when you

are endeavoring to testify to full salvation, and makes your testimony inexplicit and ambiguous. You cannot unequivocally declare that you are saved from all sin, when you are not quite certain that you have renounced every thing that is sinful. You certainly did this when you attained this great blessing, as far as you knew; but there was something that you did not apprehend as evil at the time, hence it was not then in your way; but you have discovered it since, have become enlightened upon the subject, and instead of giving it up at once as the Spirit prompted you to do, you engaged in the hopeless task of trying to retain your experience in its richness and fulness, and the idol likewise. It is that thing which involves the soul in endless questionings with regard to its propriety,—whether it is really sinful or not; and you labor to convince yourself that it is not sinful, and for the time you seem to succeed; but you cannot remain convinced. The question comes up again and again, and has again to be disposed of by the same forced process. The Spirit, true to his work, gives you no rest until you hearken to his gentle voice, or else, by resisting his light, your eyes become blinded, and your heart becomes hardened, and he lets you alone.

The idols of Christians are many and various. I conceive that those who are working the greatest amount of evil at the present time, are not those of the greatest magnitude. They are the little things that are now doing the most mischief to God's heritage. They are the most injurious, from the fact that they are the hardest to reach. They are Satan's greatest stronghold; behind their insignificance he has intrenched himself, and is determined to hold his ground.

The greatest want of Christians, who are waked up to a sense of these evils, is moral courage. They really desire to be cleansed from all their idols, but do not like to be *first* to renounce them; they dread being called fanatical. May God give them grace to be willing to bear reproach for Christ, in order that they may keep *all* his commandments, even the least of them, and thus show their love for him. These idols *must* be given up. "From all your idols I will cleanse you."