

and helped us on with their sympathy and applause, there would be something to rouse our energy and to stir the blood; but to work and suffer and watch and wait, and no one to know but the silent unseen God, is hard—and hard just because we forget his presence. The thought of years of unknown, unrequited labor sometimes pierces the soul like the keen blade of the stiletto. And yet herein lies the test and trial of our faith. If we have no living faith in God, we will float with the tide and drift wherever a corrupt nature may carry us—whereas if faith is strong, we shall hold out against the temptations of selfishness, even though we should sometimes taste the bitterness of death. If you can live like Christ in the home, the spirit of glory and of God rests on you, but if you fail there, all the rest goes for nothing.

II. *Levity.*—By levity I do not mean anything that has the slightest shadow of immorality, but simply the love of gaiety and excitement. I have not a word to say against innocent recreation; within proper limits mirth and laughter invigorate and strengthen the spirit and give it snap and fire. What I do most earnestly condemn is an everlasting giggle, the tendency to turn life into a holiday, an incessant straining after wit and cleverness, and the habit of saying and doing everything in such a way as to provoke a laugh. This peculiar mental intoxication is unfortunately too common. And what is the result? A ceaseless round of excitement and pleasure-seeking—a tendency to look out for the ludicrous and grotesque, even in connection with the most sacred things; while everything that tends to soberness and quiet, whether it be the sober duties of home or the sacred duties and pleasures of the hour of prayer, are voted as something of a bore. Hence, also, the demand for magnificent churches, for artistic singing, for eloquent sermons, and for the whirl and bustle of conventions and revivals. Levity is growing into a frightful curse; it is filling the Church with leprosy; it is sweeping thousands of souls into perdition; it is an opiate always at hand to stupefy the conscience and drive away those pains of earnest thought and rational penitence which dignify the soul and are the sure precursors of a peace the world can neither give nor take away.

The soul cannot live on excitement any more than the body can live on stimulants. We must get back to the solid bread of life, or we shall die of starvation. This world is not a play-house. Time is heavy with eternal issues, and God has put us here, not to play the part of mountebanks or court-fools, but to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Even now we may reach the awful glory of being temples of the living