

thus given them. The man never lived who was made a Christian by a single stroke. You have to go through a severe test,—a discipline of grace,—and it is a long time before a man can come into that Christian state in which he will glorify his Father in Heaven.

When men go out into society, they mostly follow the laws of society: they follow the regulations of industry and the regulations of politicians. But no law ever rises higher than the average common sense of the community. The laws respecting honesty never rise higher than the honesty of the people who make them. Sometimes the average runs very low. A man who is not nobler than the law requires him to be, is not half a man. When, therefore, a man is raised by the influence of religion into Christ, what is the development into which he is called? When a man looks inwardly he says to himself, "I am good-natured enough when not out of temper, pure enough when not impure. I confess I have done a good many things I had better not have done, like a good bargain when I can get it, and don't exactly love my neighbour as myself. I would not murder anyone on any account whatever. I want to live a decent moral life. But when you come to open the Bible and hold out the noble character of the Christian, and show how the true follower of Christ controls selfishness, passion, pride, etc., why I am not so good as I might be. I admit that I am sinful and inclined to do wrong." If, when sleeping to-night, you were transformed by some angelic power, and found when you arose in the morning, that you chose the things of the Spirit, would you not say that you had been born again? Many a man if so transformed during the night, would not know himself in the morning. If so sudden a change came over the great majority of people, they would hardly know themselves, as it is above the average experience. Passing through severe trials and struggles changes the nature of a man. I am not the man I formerly was. The greatest year in my life was that in which Fort Sumter was bombarded. The whole spirit of the nation was lifted up, the flame of patriotism kindled within it. I saw men suddenly inflamed with benevolence and patriotism; and for months and years afterwards they were actuated by a love of the flag and of the Union, and by a hatred of slavery, engendered at that time. It all came with a paroxysm. I have seen men brought into the Spirit of God, when the light and the power of God shone down upon them, and lifted them suddenly up out of their former life; and though far from being perfect, the first principles of a higher life was in every one of them. But they had got no farther than