

THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE.

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PART III.—PROGRESS AND POWER.

CHAPTER I.—STAGES OF PROGRESS.

STARTING POINTS NOT STOPPING PLACES.



DO not like this idea of a definite point to be gained. I have no faith in any stopping place in the Christian course this side of heaven."

The tone of this remark had a shade of impatience and contempt, accompanied by just the slightest curl of the lip and all the emphasis of a finality.

The young gentleman who made it had the day before—it was now Monday morning—been trying the new-fledged wings of his recent licensure, and was just returning in the cars to the halls of theological lore, to make a new sermon or mend the old one, against the time of the next invitation from an over worked pastor needing respite, or a vacant church seeking supply.

The gentleman to whom it was made was one of some dozen years' experience as a minister of the gospel, seated by his side in the cars. The two had providentially met a few moments before in the depot, and been introduced by a mutual friend. Seated together, and whirling along toward B., they beat about for a while in desultory conversation upon various things, general or personal, but soon settled upon the topic of the higher walks of the Christian life. Some turn in their talk had called out this remark.

"No," added the young gentleman deliberately, with a peculiar emphasis of a deep downward inflection on the word hate—"No, I *hate* the idea of a certain fixed point to be gained—a resting place—the all in all to be aimed at or expected by the Christian."

His travelling companion, in the softened tone of a mellow experience of the love of Christ, and of a developed patience with the foibles of mortals like himself, suggested that perhaps his friend had yoked together a right idea with a wrong one, and was condemning the innocent with the guilty, simply from having himself unwittingly placed it in bad company. "You are certainly right in rejecting the idea of any stopping place for the Christian this side of heaven; but are you sure that a definite point in experience is a stopping place?"

"We are rushing along in the cars at the rate of twenty miles an hour towards A., and I have no thought of stopping until it is reached; but we have just now past the very definite point B. in our journey, and have been doubly advertised of the fact by the car whistle as we were halting, and the clear voice of the conductor calling out B., in the long-drawn manner to be heard over all the din of voices and clatter of feet, and also by the name B. in large letters upon the front of the depot. And in a few moments again we shall come to C., another very definite point, both on our checks and on the bills, known and read of all journeyers by rail. And yet beyond the moment spent in wooding and watering, and stretching our limbs, are they in any proper