

at best, can make but feeble advances in the knowledge of God and divine things. Our first parents even in their state of innocence, endowed with the capacity of acquiring knowledge by direct and immediate communion with their Creator, could have made but trifling conquests in the fields of infinite wisdom, yet had they retained their integrity they would have advanced beyond anything of which we have any conception. Sin, however, entered our world, breaking the channels of communication with heaven, destroying the spiritual susceptibilities, demoralizing and blunting even the natural faculties and powers of the soul. How much need, therefore, we have to seek the vivifying power of Divine Grace that we may rise above, and in despite of this ruin sin has wrought. Has this been our aim during the months past, and have we sought it in the divinely appointed ways? Do we realize in our hearts more and more of that love which passeth knowledge, and from the advances in the past, have we a well grounded hope that we shall soon "come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?" This is the true goal of the Christian life.

II. Have we made advances in holiness? "Be ye holy, for I am holy," is the divine injunction. Holiness in the creature is only a relative term, and as such, admits of degrees. Our Saviour likened the kingdom of heaven to "a little leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." Now the kingdom of heaven there, is simply the power of vital religion in the heart and life, and as the leaven gradually but surely extends its influence through the entire lump, so this godly principle once implanted in the heart is intended to transform the whole man into the image of God himself. The Spirit is of course the agent in this work, but we ourselves are co-workers with Him. It is a continual putting off of the works of darkness and putting on the garments of light, and if we do not feel and know that the evil desires and propensities of our depraved nature are being brought under and crushed out more and more, then we have reason to fear that we have not only not made advances in holiness, but that God's grace has not yet found a lodgment in our hearts; but on the other hand, if we can realize from a blessed experience that though sin yet dwells in us, yet it is growing weaker day by day, then we should thank God and take courage, assured that He who has begun the good work in us will carry it on to perfection.

III. Have we grown in happiness? Religion is intended to make men happy. Even in the present it lifts him up to a position from which he can aspire to, and lay hold of pleasures that can satisfy the deepest needs and longings of his immortal spirit. The advent of the Saviour was heralded by angels who proclaimed "glad tidings of great joy to all people;" and wherever this gospel has been preached and men have yielded themselves to its power, there we find the highest forms of human happiness. The happiness of the true Christian is like the mighty river flowing onward to the ocean, at times perhaps pressed into a narrow channel, yet the great volume remaining, it only awaits the opportunity to again expand itself into the open valley beyond.

A great writer collected over two hundred opinions in regard to human