

TO CHRISTIANS SIGHING FOR AN IMPROVED EXPERIENCE.

It is a genuine desire for a better Christian life which you possess. And that desire mayhap is of long standing. You have made many sincere efforts after a vague, indefinite ideal of such a Christian life as you believe would satisfy the imperial longing of your heart; and so ever and anon the cry goes forth from your struggling soul, "O that I might find what my being craves!" And still the want is not met in its entirety. And often a species of discouragement steals over the spirits, as if all further efforts were useless. Indeed, it often partakes of the essence of despair, voiced in the hopeless wail, "I have seen an end of all perfection."

More than once, mayhap, you have thought that the question was really settled at this point, and that you had dismissed it forever from your mind. But it would not be long before some passage in the Bible applied with new light to your heart, some living testimony, or some memoir, has awakened the old longing in spite of your former determination to have nothing further to do with the subject, thus proving to you that, like Banquo's ghost, it would not down. No, you have the suspicion still haunting you that ever and anon it will spring into vigorous existence, unless, like Esau, you deliberately sell this spiritual birthright or openly despise it.

But I am a Christian, you say. Granting it, what then? You are not a satisfied Christian. We mean satisfied *by the year*. Something is amiss. You say, I have conscious pardon and cleansing. But why does the quoting of such passages as "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless until the coming of Christ," etc., bring a cloud over your spirit, and require apologies and explanations and possibly even another journey to the altar of consecration to retain a semblance of peace?

Now we ask you in all frankness, Do you really expect to go on after this pattern to the end of life? Have you not an expectation that this state of things must, in the very nature of the case, end one way or the other? And, as your prospect of getting into the land of settled questions grows less and less, is there not a scared feeling creeping in that the end of the whole matter will be something most unsatisfactory?

Now we are in all this only relating a portion of our former experience, although you may be tempted to think we have been describing you from the standpoint of observation. But we give it not to help to voice your dissatisfaction, but to awaken the legitimate hope that when one who evidently knew for many years all the different phases of an unsatisfying Christian experience can now speak positively of perfect satisfaction, and that too, by the year, that this complete satisfaction may be for others, for you also.

Of course, the question here will be asked by every sincere, earnest seeker. What is wrong with former methods, and what is the right way to secure all the heart's desire concerning this thing?

Now we will venture to say that the former methods were not wholly wrong. There was an admixture of right and wrong. Confession of sin is ever in order where there is the least consciousness of sin, whether it be in knowledge of definite sin committed, or in admitted lack of love or power, or any other thing which ought to be possessed. Faith in Christ for forgiveness is also needful, and looking for the witness of the Spirit to seal such forgiveness. These are always right where there is consciousness of sins of omission or commission in the least degree. We do not ask you to abate this oft-repeated confession of sins of commission or omission until a better way is found out. It is perfectly right in your case, and should be adhered to most tenaciously until it is given up for something better.

But is there something better? What else, we ask, is the meaning of that longing of the soul you experience for something more satisfying? Would God put that longing there if He had no way