

is a roll-call of heroes so long and great that all the rest of the world in all the centuries cannot make its equal. There is no conceivable blessing that is not included in the catalogue. It is simply a summary of the fulfilment of a multitude of promises scattered through all the pages of the Holy Scriptures from the first time God came to commune with His children in the breeze of evening and blessed them. In Isaiah 58:8-14 we find every symbol of good—springs of water, food, sunlight, delight in the Lord and glory of God, used as an alphabet to spell out the language of promised blessings that shall flow from a just recognition of right relations between God and man, and a right performance of duties.

We may have this spiritual life? Not every man can become a poet, mathematician, artist, or astronomer: do these limits of lower knowledge apply with greater force to the highest? By no means. Any man, at any time, anywhere, may know God. There are certain conditions to be met as there are in any other department, even farming or shoemaking. Let there be desire to know, moral affinity, opportunity, time, and a seeking for this wisdom as men seek silver and search for hid treasure, and they shall find the knowledge of God. Two such similar personalities, so desiring communion, will find it.

But, as already said, departments are somewhat distinct. A musician, loving harmony, is not necessarily a promoter of life's amenities. A map wise in the law is not therefore honest in its application to himself or his client. A good Christian is not consequently a good doctor. There is a tendency in the perfection of this highest capability of man to exalt every lower faculty; moral excellence renders easier the perception of every intellectual truth, but we are still left to develop every faculty by appropriate means.

This world has been a kindergarten and object-lesson to call out every capacity of our being. Its functions are not to be abrogated. Nay, they will better serve their purpose when we have clear vision of what is their real design.

There may be special inspiration of various faculties for particular purposes, as Bezaleel to devise cunning works, or Elisha to foretell Ahab's death, but the fact that every man is not so inspired is proof that these are exceptional cases for extraordinary purposes, and that men are left to work out strength, wisdom, and salvation under ordinary conditions.

Because a man really knows God, he has no right to expect to be exempt from toil and study to acquire other knowledge, or from the operation of the laws of nature from disease or death. It took Moses forty years of depending to learn his lesson of meekness. With a single exception, all men have died, even our great Exemplar, who was the life itself.

The true scope of spiritual knowledge is to know God, His personal relation to the individual soul, and the spiritual significance of material things. This knowledge is received by spiritual faculties into consciousness. It is the most sure of all knowledge, and most potential in ruling, heightening, and glorifying life.

Put Yourself in His Place.

A simple rule helps us in many difficult places. We are often unreasonable and exacting, which we would not be if we took pains to see things with other people's eyes. Our imagination can do us a good service if we only let it, by transmitting ourselves into other people—for a little while. It is difficult for some of us to understand why all other eyes do not see exactly as ours see, why all other minds do not reason as ours do. By changing places we shall understand many things now dark to us. The large part of our misunderstandings and censorious criticisms would melt away by doing this. How little we know each other's weaknesses and trials. Here is a closely knitted character, every fibre is firm and strong, he is beyond the assault of many temptations which lay siege to and cause others of opposite nature to capitulate. That man cannot enter into the thoughts and feelings of the other, and he simply denounces and despises his weaknesses. The Lord's golden rule about doing unto others as we would like them to do unto us, includes the principle of this little rule. Let fastidious and exacting purchasers who sit

outside a counter scrutinizing goods and giving needless provocation, exchange places with those inside the counter, and they will see their ways and speeches in a new light. Let those who neglect to pay bills, and who become insolent because they are asked to do it, exchange places with the workmen or tradesmen whose lives are fretted to pieces because their customers are defrauding them of their rights by their neglect or indisposition to pay. Let the man or woman whose tongue is a serpent's fang imagine themselves the subjects of hateful speeches and unjust judgment like those they are measuring out to others. By the simple exchange of places they will gather new ideas of things and will grow kinder, wiser and more just in their relations with others. Sympathy, consideration and justice will inevitably develop in us by putting ourselves in the places of other people.

The People's Amen.

We have banished the people's word from our services. The minister speaks it all alone, except in some of our churches the choir gives it an elongated intonation. But it belongs to the people and not to the minister or choir; at least they have no charter right to its exclusive use. Thirty five hundred years ago it was spoken at Gerizim. The blessings and curses following obedience and disobedience were recited with solemn emphasis and the people responded to each blessing and each curse with a fullvoiced "Amen," by which they acknowledged the righteousness of the spoken laws. When Ezra read the forgotten Scriptures, the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands. It was probably customary in the service of the temple, for a call is made upon the people to say, Amen, after ascriptions of praise are made unto God. The early Christians, too, used the word, for Paul asks in the case of those speaking in an unknown tongue, "How can the unlearned say, Amen, at the giving of thanks?" In the perfected worship of heaven the elders are described as responding to the anthems sung unto God and the Lamb by saying, Amen. In all these cases it was not an inward, silent Amen, but said aloud. Neither was it intoned, nor formal and perfunctory, but spontaneous and hearty.

It is then a Scriptural custom, and as Baptists we should be the last people to object to its proper use by the congregation. Like everything else it might become a mere form, it might be simply a musical sound floating from chancel or choir gallery, but there is no reason why it should not be used reverently and with deep meaning at all our services by the people. The omission of the Amen is a loss to our services, and a suppression of the feeling of the heart. It was a saying among the Jews that "heartly Amens open heaven." A man who prays in our churches has to say his own Amen instead of letting the people say it. It is taking away that which belongs to them. Our worship would have added solemnity, and gain in congregational power if the people in clear, natural and united voices responded to the spoken prayers of the ministers in this manner. In the prayer-meetings the Amen should have much greater part than it has among us. The occasional and spontaneous Amen of a brother whose heart has been touched by some special appeal is not enough. At the close of every prayer offered the whole congregation should unite in putting their seal upon it by a clear, earnest Amen!

Clothed.

There are many outward signs of a changed life. When the demonized man of Gadara was restored by Christ there were several evidences of the transformation wrought in him. The devil-tormented man became quiet, rational, affectionate, and docile. Peace came into his life and he stopped his perpetual wanderings and visitation of the places of the dead, and settled calmness came upon his spirit. Reason, too, returned to supremacy. One of the marks of the change in him was the fact that he at once clothed himself. This indicates social and personal elevation of character. Before he had been naked, but when Christ restored him the man's finer instincts asserted themselves. He ceased to be animal

and became man. Savages who are Christianized need not be told to put on clothes, they do it of their own accord and without delay. Delicate self-respect is a natural result of a new life. Refinement, modesty, and purity are among the best evidences of conversion. If we have the truth indwelling of the Spirit, coarseness and vulgarity must vacate the soul. Christianity means refinement of thought, feeling and expression. It makes a gentleman of a man who was once among the swine. The prodigal who lived in rags when in the far-off country exchanged these for goodly garments when reinstated in the father's house. The religious life always begets social respectability, and no matter how poor or abject people may be, when they are made Christians, they at once rise in the social scale and put on new refinement.

The sovereign test of a religious life is not achievement but aspiration. We are not saved by character but for character. The man who is carrying on a faithful struggle against the evil tendencies of his nature stands higher in the judgment of God than the one who has reached a far higher level of character, but is snugly content with his attainment. A noble dissatisfaction and unrest lie near to the heart of the religious life.

The Golden Lamp-stand.

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The meaning of the golden lamp-stand in the Jewish tabernacle is unmistakable. It represents the office of Israel, as destined to ray out the light of God into a dark world.

It is referred to in Zechariah's vision of a golden lamp-stand fed with oil by two "anointed ones," and in our Lord's first word after the Beatitudes when he described his disciples collectively as "the light of the world." It is significantly modified in the vision in the Apocalypse, where, instead of the lamp-stand with seven bowls, we have seven separate lights with Jesus walking in the midst.

The general thought thus set forth is that the Church is Light. It is so in two ways. Our Lord laid emphasis on one of the two when He bade us let our light so shine before men that, seeing our good works, they may glorify our Father in heaven. We are to shine by righteous Christlike living and in such a fashion that we may be overlooked, and He who helps us to so live may be seen and praised.

Sunbeams are unseen, but they show everything else and the sun from which they stream. So we should shine, unobtrusively yet conspicuously; drawing and desiring neither notice nor praise, but leading feeble eyes to see in us a tempered ray from the fountain itself of heavenly radiance and to adore. The ray is impelled by force sufficient to carry it over the abysses between sun and earth yet falls so gently that an infant's eye is not hurt. It shines as lovingly on filth as on jewels. It reveals everything but itself, and is silent as strong. "Let your light so shine before men."

But we are to shine by word as well as by deed; as Paul has taught by his modification of this image, when he tells us that we are to appear as lights by holding forth the Word of Life, as the arm of a candelabrum does its lamp. Good deeds are more likely to reveal God when they are accompanied by words that tell of God. We have not only to live the Gospel, but to confess the Gospel by which we live. We fail to be Christ's witnesses unless when occasion serves we are ready to avow the principles which mould our lives, and unless we always mould them by the principles of Christ's revelation.

Another thought suggested by the golden lamp-stand is that of derived light. The priests lit its lamp, and then they shone out welcome and good cheer over the dark desert. "He shall not quench the dimly burning wick," but fan and tend it into brightness. He alone is "light of the world." All others are, as he said of his forerunner, "lamps kindled and (therefore) shining;" and every kindled lamp will be an extinguished lamp some day, and for a season only do men rejoice in its light; but the unkindled lamp will shine forever.

The lamp once kindled has to be fed. If there is no oil in the reservoir there will be a moment's flame and then a charred wick, smoke and foul smell. Oil must be poured in and the light will be bright. So our light must be nourished by continual reception of the oil of the Holy Spirit, which softens and makes flexible our wills, nourishes our spiritual life, and communicates the gifts which feed the holy fire in our souls that shines out in our lives. Though the Christ himself lit the flame, it will die unless we have oil in our vessels; and will become what so many professedly Christian lives are—a feeble flicker which is darkness rather than light.

The light of the lamps is clustered light. The seven were set on one stem and blended their rays into one beam. So with us: It is best when the individual is merged in the mass and when we are less desirous of showing our own brilliance than in joining with many another twinkle to make one: