

Well, it is one of God's secrets with them that fear Him, resulting from conscious reconciliation to Him through Jesus Christ; from trust in the Fatherly wisdom and love; from the firm persuasion that He cares for us constantly and tenderly. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, one of whose blessed fruits is peace.

It is by no means an easy matter to describe this little word fully and accurately. Suppose we say that it is rhythm, harmony, balance; we still leave its highest heights unscathed, its deepest depths unfathomed. Those who possess it can and will testify that it is real and abiding; that on the line of actual experience alone can its true meaning be understood and its value known.

It will, perhaps, be urged that when they who fear the Lord are in trouble, they are very much like other men—they are depressed, they are sorrowful, they mourn. That, no doubt, is true, for to be genuinely Christianized is not to cease to be human. The religion of Jesus Christ is not designed to rob the heart of its tenderness and sensitiveness. Its purpose is not to dry up the fountain of tears. It does not teach man that it is weak and sinful to feel keenly and weep bitterly.

There is, however, a marked difference between those who fear the Lord and those who do not; for whatever the outward agitation, whatever the storm or strain, the God-fearing have in their inmost soul a holy calm, just as there is a perfect calm in the depths of the world's great ocean, despite the wild whirl of fury on the surface.

The air may be full of wild rumors; the outlook may be discouraging; many hearts may be the prey of faithless fears and of dark forebodings, but they who fear the Lord "shall not be afraid of evil tidings; their heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." God leads them in the secret of His presence; God keeps them secretly in the pavilion, and His Peace reigns in their hearts, so great is the goodness which he has laid up for them that fear Him, which He hath wrought for them that trust in Him.

#### The Prophet Hosea.

"We gather that Hosea was a native of the Northern Kingdom, and not a native of Judea, as was his colleague Amos. It is just possible that he belonged to the aristocracy; probably he was of priestly rank; at all events he had a wonderful knowledge of Israel's past history. We see that Hosea was himself a citizen of the Northern Kingdom, when we compare his book with the book of Amos. Amos also writes with an exact, vivid power of delineation, about wrongs and oppressions, about the political and religious position in the Kingdom of Samaria. But here is the distinction; the words of Amos sound like a voice from

outside, pealing with the thunder of God's anger and righteous indignation against wrongs and injuries that Amos does not feel himself bound up with. The characteristic of Hosea's book is that the burden of Israel's guilt lies weighty on his soul; he wails, and mourns, and laments, and repents with that sinful people. He cannot, without tears in his eyes, contemplate the glorious opportunities that have been flung away. He almost expresses a sense of his vicarious involvement in their guilt, and carrying of their sorrows. That is the note which gives its exquisite music of pathos and beauty to Hosea's prophecy of the coming downfall of his own land and of his own people.

"The characteristic idea—indeed, the keythought that underlies the whole of Hosea's prophetic message is a remarkable one. He pictures the relation between God and Israel as a marriage tie. It is of little use to try to divide the Book of Hosea into minute paragraphs and divisions; and to trace a line of thought through it, because if there is any book in the Bible which is one long musical burst of emotional life and harmonious unity from beginning to end, it is the Book of Hosea. The man was not so much an intellect, he was a great, overflowing heart. He cannot think out things and reason out things. He sways like a pendulum from one extreme to another; now blazing indignation against the people's wickedness and blindness and madness, and the next moment lamenting over them like a mother over her only son."—The late Rev. Dr. W. G. Elmshie.

#### The Truth.

Friend, though thy soul should burn thee,  
yet be still,  
Thoughts were not meant for strife, nor  
tongues for swords,  
He that sees clear is gentlest of his words,  
And that's not truth that hath the heart to  
kill,  
The whole world's thought shall not one  
truth fulfill,  
Dull in our age, and passionate in youth,  
No mind of man hath found the perfect  
truth,  
Nor shalt thou find it; therefore, friend, be  
still.

Watch and be still, nor hearken to the fool,  
The babbler of consistency and rule;  
Wiser is he, who, never quite secure,  
Changes his thoughts for better day by  
day;  
To-morrow some new light will shine, be  
sure,  
And thou shalt see thy thought another  
way.  
—Archibald Lampman.

Let there be no discouragement, but a steady, earnest, persistent determination to work with loving regularity, not considering results, knowing that all true development is according to law. Let spiritual attainment be your first object, above all else; and, finally, life's problems will disappear.

#### Self-Control.

Nadab and Abihu had everything—a father's love, a priest's compensations, the favor of God—everything except self-control, and for want of this lost all the rest. Whose was the hand that presented the sparkling glass? Was it held in the jewelled fingers of some dashing but delightful maiden, to deny whom required a moral courage of colossal proportion? No reply. It has been many times since! Was this wreck the result of flowing impulses of an exceptional occasion? Again no reply. Like wrecks have been many times since! Somehow these noble, young, promising priests lost the jewel of their principle in the jungle of their passion, and when they lost their principle the hollow in their souls became the vacuum into which their lives collapsed.

#### The Company of Christ.

It was said of Melik Shah, one of the noblest of the Seljuk emperors, that "to belong to his household, to hold his commands, was not merely an honor and a privilege; it was also an apprenticeship in principles. In serving the Sultan one grew like him, and a standard of conduct was thus set up, modelled upon the life of the royal master, the pattern and exemplar of the age. A chief or governor was esteemed by public opinion in accordance with the degree in which he conformed to the Sultan's example."

These words could scarcely be improved upon as a statement of the privileges and duties of Christian discipleship. How truly to belong to Christ is "not merely an honor and a privilege," but "also an apprenticeship in principles." If in serving the famous Sultan one grew like him, much more is this true of the follower of Jesus Christ.—The Evangelist.

#### Judge Not by Appearances.

The truth never lies on the surface; it is deep and must be sought profoundly. It seems certain at first sight that the sun goes round the earth, but it does not. It took centuries to see beneath the appearance to the fact. Our earth looks flat, but it is not; it is a globe; and there are men on the other side with feet turned towards ours. The stars all look to be the same distance away, but the difference of distance is perfectly immense—immeasurable. It will not do to trust our first impressions, or the appearances of things, or our desires or our wishes in the matter. We must find out what the facts are.—The American Friend.

"Make religion the every-day business of your life, and not a thing of fits and starts," was the advice Livingstone as a lad received from his Sunday school teacher.