

## The Life that Grows.

Hebrews 5:11; 6:1-10.

BY CHARLES A. EATON.

The epistle to the Hebrews is addressed to a body of believing Jews who are in danger of going back to forms of Judaism. Its argument is to show the transcendent value of the New Testament covenant in Christ as compared with the fleeting shadows, symbols and types of the Old Testament dispensation. As in all ages, the priest had become to this people a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, and the epistle, joining issue directly on this one point, sets forth as no other New Testament writing does the essential superiority of Christ Jesus as High Priest. He is better than the angels, better than Moses, better than Aaron. He is the absolute High Priest. His qualities and high virtues are summed up in the magnificent passage found in the close of the seventh chapter. "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

In the midst of this sublime argument there occurs an exhortation based upon the fact of the readers' incapacity to understand the profound truths presented. This passage claims the attention as few words can because it sets forth the principle of progressiveness as absolutely necessary to the Christian experience.

The new life is a life that grows. If it fails to grow it is in the awful danger of crucifying, by its failure, the Lord afresh and putting him to an open shame. If we wish to discover what is meant by progress in the Christian life we need only turn to the main argument of the book. Progress for those to whom the writer addresses his epistle is evidently a passing from symbol to reality, from shadow to substance, from childhood to manhood, from milk to meat, from external legalism of the Old Testament to the deep, vital and spiritual relations revealed in Jesus Christ. Progress is advance towards perfection, and perfection is identity with God.

We suffer from false standards of progress. We count and measure oftener than we weigh. A nation is supposed to be progressive which grows in population, in customs returns, in bushels of grain raised, in the total of its manufactured products. A man makes progress who advances in learning, in wealth, in social position, in fame, but in both of these cases there may be no progress, for they may in spite of their proud possessions be standing beside the ocean of God's presence and refusing to launch away upon it.

Let us recall the awful importance of all this. It is simply the man with one talent philosophically presented. Failure means outer darkness. We think too lightly of this matter. Men are in the church, their names written in the Lamb's book of life; they perform the perfunctory and conventional externals with faithfulness, but are they making progress? Are they passing from symbol to reality? Are their tears lighted into glory by the smile of the present God? Are their joys caught up into the holy joy of heaven? Are their burdens carried by the everlasting arms? Is their peace that peace of God which passeth all understanding? Are their impulses from their own hidden passions, desires, ambitions, or do they spring out of the loving heart of Christ?

Our passage presents to us the absolute necessity of growth in grace, the absolute wickedness of failure to grow. It tells us concerning the progressive Christian life, of the source from which we spring, of the course we follow and of the end we attain.

The point of departure for the believer is Christ. Christ is first—all and in all. Christ, the Man, the God, the revelation of God as justice and love, the revelation of man as guilty and lost. Christ the crucified for the world's sin, Christ the risen for the world's justification, Christ enthroned for intercession and judgment. This is the fountain open for sin and uncleanness, out of which flows forever streams of living water.

In actual experience as shown by the two first verses of the 5th chapter, the source from which the progressive Christian life springs may be described in three ways. First, as an inner experience summed up in repentance from dead works and faith towards God. Secondly, as external rites summed up in the doctrine of baptisms and laying on of hands. Thirdly, as a progressive experience summed up in the doctrine of the resurrection and judgment to come. These are the beginnings of the Christian life. As Saul turned from his task of building righteousness for himself and counted all that had been gain to him loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, so must every believer. Nor must we fail to remember that the rites of

the church are but beginnings in the Christian course. And while the fact of the resurrection and judgment is accepted and enthroned in us at the new birth, it is as the law of our being to which we surrender as unconsciously as to the law of gravitation. As Christ on the cross is the point of departure for the Christian, so Christ on the throne is the light-house towards which we steer across life's troubled sea.

Remembering that these are but the beginnings, we look to the course upon which the progressive life is run. The underlying figure of the passage is that of a child growing to manhood. Babies in Christ growing to the fullness of the stature of men in Christ. If a child receives food, teaching, guidance, and at last has poured into his lap all the riches of inherited manhood and still remains a child, his manhood is forever lost. The ground which receives the rain and sun and bears but thorns is nigh to a curse and its end is to be burned.

Here is a deadly danger in modern Christianity. We are content too much with preaching and with too much preaching. We sit like children in the market-place, and the golden hours slip through our hands into eternity while the shadow of the curse and the flame of the burning draw nearer. A man who in middle life is still a child, plays with childish toys, thinks childish thoughts—this is his curse. The prolonging of his childhood into manhood makes the thing for which he was born impossible. All Christians who fritter away their years with rudimentary doctrines and experiences and refuse to pass out into the conflict and service to which they are called, are in the most deadly danger of crucifying their Lord afresh and putting him to an open shame.

It is a strenuous way and rough. The progressive Christian is not slothful; he shows diligence, he patiently endures. He stands out under the shadow and storm and stress, and does his part manfully in the fear of God. Many have found life to be a struggle. Heavy laden and weary they sometimes look at heaven and long to enter in. Still, this is the way of growth, of life; it is the way the Master trod.

The believer is sustained by a great hope resting upon the solemn oath of God. His feet are among the storms of earth, his head is in the calm of heaven. His anchor enters within the veil. As a mariner, finding it impossible to make way against the storm, casts anchor and rides it out, so the Christian must have that hope which like an anchor enters within the veil. Only his anchor fastens above instead of below.

The end attained is the fullness of the stature of men in Christ. Here we know in part, there we shall know even as we are known; here we see as through a glass darkly, there face to face; here the image is marred, there we shall be like Him. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard the things prepared for those that love Him. We turn our faces forward. We heed the warning. The dead past? It is gone. Let the past nourish the living present, not poison it. On the northern islands of this country are great masses of moss rich in color, soft and deep. The moss lives on itself. The dead growth of past years forms the soil for the living beauty of the present. So with the Christian, if his dead past is beneath him it will give him life, if it is above him, between his soul and the light, it will smother him.

"I held it truth with him who sings  
To one clear harp in diverse tones,  
That men may rise on stepping stones  
Of their dead selves to nobler things."

And at last? Having fought a good fight, having finished the course, there is laid up for the believer the crown of righteousness.

"And when in life's late afternoon,  
Where cool and long the shadows grow,  
I walked to meet the night that soon  
Shall shape and shadow overflow,  
Shall I not see Thee waiting stand,  
And, white against the evening star,  
The welcome of the beckoning hand?"

## Ontario Letter.

REV. P. K. DAYFOOT

The vacation, like all other things, comes to an end. To this scribe, the summer was made memorable by a trip to Richmond, Va., to the B. Y. P. U. Convention. Among the many privileges of that time, one of the most valuable was the meeting in the Second Baptist church, when the Canadians came together. The brethren and sisters from the East and the West looked into each other's faces, spoke to each other's hearts, and clasped hands, never more to be strangers. Then when the roll call came at the Auditorium it was a glad some sight to see two Union Jacks sent to the platform, while two speakers told of the work done in the land that seemed just then so far away. May the union grow closer and stronger, until there shall be neither East and West, but only—Canada.

## EDUCATIONAL WORK

is in full swing. Woodstock College opened Sept. 5th, with increased attendance. McMaster University begins the year with a new campus, and all accommodations full. Moulton Ladies' College has so many new students that ladies attending the University can no longer find

rooms there. British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec are represented. The annual sermon was preached Sept. 24th by pastor W. W. Weeks, in the Walmer Road church.

## THE BIBLE TRAINING SCHOOL.

has opened with 150 students. Students have gone lately to India, China and Armenia. Dr. Harris, the President, is giving a course on Philipians, and there is a Friday evening course for Sunday School teachers.

## FOREIGN MISSIONS.

An important step has been taken by the appointment of Rev. J. G. Brown to the Secretaryship. His seven years of work in India were the best possible training for such service. He is now giving attention to the raising of a debt fund, and has secured nearly \$4000. One well known Baptist in Toronto has offered to support a missionary.

The work in Bolivia is progressing beyond our expectation. Mr. Reekie is calling for an assistant. Mr. Routledge has located at La Paz, the new capital, and has found his school so remunerative that he offers to forego his salary if another missionary is sent out.

## A NEW COLLEGE

has been opened in Brandon, Man., on the foundation of Prof. McKee's Academy. Dr. McDiarmid, our late Foreign Mission Secretary, is principal and he has a staff of five teachers. The term begins with 97 students. There are now in the Northwest 69 churches, 130 outstations, 11 German churches, 100 Irish converts and a missionary among the Galicians and Doukhobors. The gains last year were eleven per cent.

The establishment of the college will be a powerful impetus to the work throughout the whole country.

## OTHER.

We gave you Ira Smith for St. John. You have given us J. A. Gordon for Montreal.

Dr. Sowerby, late of Boston, and Roger Williams University, Tennessee, has taken the pastorate of Talbot St., London, Ont.

Rev. W. E. Norton, Owen Sound, left October 2nd for a continental tour.

The churches of the Convention are taking hold of the Forward Movement. They are pledging \$1.50 per member by October 1900. This will mean \$150,000 for Missions.

The first Dominion Convention of Christian Endeavor met in Montreal, October 5 to 9. This movement began in Canada with the Germain St. Baptist church, St. John, New Brunswick, in February 1883. Then followed the Calvary Congregational church, Montreal, in December, 1883. Then came the Western Congregational church, Toronto, 1884. Since then the Society has grown to 4000 unions, with 160,000 members, in 14 denominations. There are local, township, county and provincial unions; but now we have attained to the dignity of a Dominion Union. The three speakers from outside the Dominion were Dr. F. E. Clark, Dr. Wilbur Chapman, and Secretary Willis Baer. It is worth noting that the largest C. E. Society in the world is in Cooke's Presbyterian church, Toronto, and has a membership of nearly 600.

Port Hope, Ont.

## Exegesis of a Baptist Doctrine.

One of the foremost Baptists of the South sends us the following exegesis of the Philadelphia Confession on the doctrine of the Church. Confession says:

1. The Catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole (a) number of the elect, that has been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (a) Heb. 12:23; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:10, 22, 23; 5:23, 27, 32.

2. All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ, according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors, evverting the foundation or unholiness of conversation, (b) are and may be called visible saints; (c) and of such ought all particular congregations to be constituted. (b) 1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 11:26. (c) Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:20-22.

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject (d) to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become (e) no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had and ever shall have a (f) kingdom of this world, to the end thereof of such as believe in him and make profession of his name.

(d) Read the second and third chapters of Revelation. (e) Rev. 18:2; 2 Thess. 2:11, 12 (f) Matt. 16:18 Ps. 72:17; 102:28; Rev. 12:17.

Here the first section states the Baptist doctrine of the Universal invisible church. It is called universal because it is composed of all the redeemed of all ages, the bride of Christ, the body of which he is the head. It is not spoken of as a prophecy, but as a present and continuous reality, just as Ephesians has it. Christ is the Head of His Church.