

GROWTH.

Growth is the evidence of life. The moment we cease to grow, to develop, we begin to die. Spiritual death begins in the Christian as soon as he ceases to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The instant we give over the upward and forward movement, that moment the current begins to carry us downward. At first it may not be perceptible; the dead point must be overcome; but thence afterward the backward movement is sure to be rapid and strong.

Let the Christian fear for his spiritual welfare the moment he gives over communication with God by means of the word of God and prayer. Few of the followers of the Saviour are aware of the peril they expose themselves to spiritually, when they find prayer has ceased to be an habitual pleasure to them and that the Word of God has ceased to have a daily place in their thoughts and meditations.

It is very easy to give over Bible reading; more easy than to cease to pray; but one will not long continue in prayer after he has ceased to read his Bible. God speaks to us through His Word and we speak to God by prayer. It follows as a natural consequence, that communion between the soul and God is mutual.

It is difficult to keep up conversation with an earthly friend who never speaks a word in return to us. It is equally difficult to continue spiritual conversation with God if we refuse to allow Him to speak back to us. Indeed, we must give our Father the lead in communion, else will we fail in matter of communication, and our desires and delights will cease in the Godward direction.—*Ex.*

A BLOTTED OUT FAMILY.

The father of thirteen children said to Doctor Lees, "Doctor, how is it all my children die in decline when young? None of them reached more than twenty. My wife was not unhealthy, and see what a stout man I am!"

Dr. Lees had taken supper with four doctors and two lawyers at St. Ives, when one of the doctors said he thought the effect of drink had been exaggerated. "Why do you think so, sir?" said Dr. Lees. "Oh," says he, "We have such cases of free drinkers who, nevertheless are in good health. A friend of mine only the other day told me he had drunk at least a bottle of wine a day for the last fifty years."—"What is your argument?"—"That wine cannot be so bad a thing as you represent, when a man is so hale at eighty after drinking so much."—"Now for your opinion," said the lawyer.

"Well," said Dr. Lees, "I cannot give you my opinion without knowing the facts. This gentleman lives in a good situation?"—"Yes, the best in the town."—"He lives well and not extravagantly?"—"Just so."—"And what sort of a lady is his wife?"—"Oh, she is a very moderate woman."—"Pretty healthy?"—"Yes."—"Well, I should think, then, you have not much to do in this family?"

"Oh, yes," said the doctor, "but I have."—"What family have they?"—"Oh, they have had eleven."—"Indeed! How many have they now?"—"Six."—"That is very strange," said Dr. Lees: "I suppose you believe in the law that like produces like? Is there any more certain principle in physiology than that good food produces good blood, good blood good structures, and good structure transmits good structures? When parents are healthy, the children must be healthy."—"I cannot deny that," said the doctor. "Now," said Dr. Lees, "there is something to be accounted for—six children are living, five

are dead. But what is the constitution of the six?"—"Oh, for that matter," said he, "they are hiped, nervous." "Oh," said a lady over the table, "You know Miss— was touched in the head." "And Mr. George," said another, "was in the asylum; and, William, you know, is certainly queer."

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Lees, "without going further, nothing is more certain than that some great and serious law of life has been violated; and upon the face of it, the one bottle of wine a day for fifty years may have been the agent. That is my case." A silence followed.

Within a few years all that family was cut off. The father died of apoplexy, and the rest of the family were cut off in early life.—*Bombay Guar.*

THE SIN OF TAKING OFFENCE.

No one is obliged to take offence. A readiness to do it gives evidence of deep-seated selfishness; and a habit of doing it is proof conclusive that folly reigns.

Many who are quite careful to avoid giving offence have not yet come to a full recognition of the fact that taking offence is worse. It betokens a most unhealthy tone of mind. It gives evidence of a sinful and unChristlike spirit. It shows that the thought is fastened on *self*, the most important personage in all the universe; and this petted darling, some one has had the temerity, the impudence, to insult or slight! Shall it not be promptly resented?

Yes, by the fool, by him who likes to be continually in hot water. Let him nurse his injuries, and care sedulously for his dignity, and make both himself and all around him as uncomfortable as possible. He will find no end of occasions if he is on the lookout for them; and there will be no getting along with him in any sort of peace. At the most unexpected moment he has taken mortal umbrage at something done or said with the utmost innocence. No excuse suffices; he is alienated forever; and in the course of a few years he has managed to get rid of about all who tried, in vain, to show him friendship. He has become perfectly certain that everybody is against him.

Surely there is a better way, even the way of love. He who is full of love will see things undisturbed by the blinding mists of selfishness which steam up from corruption within. He will behold realities, not appearances; facts, not fancies. He will have tender pity for the failings and weaknesses of others. He will be full of such genial kindness that no amount of ill-behavior can make him cross. He will have so much of sweetness in him that circumstances cannot sour him. Love is a little child. Love lives in sunshine. Love believes all things that make for peace, is ignorant and incredulous regarding evil, delights to humble itself before others and prefer them in honor. It does not take offence.

No one can do so without guilt. No one can do so and have that happiness which is God's gift to His children. Wise is he and truly blest, who absolutely refuses to receive the affronts that may be proffered him, who positively declines to feel aggrieved no matter who attempts to put grief upon him, who promptly and obstinately thrusts out of his thoughts the injury that some one thought to do him. We are our own masters in this matter. Our actions flow from our feelings, our feelings from our opinions, and our opinions are our own. Everything is susceptible of explanation. If we look at it awry, we shall get awry; if we look at it from the proper angle, we shall find no occasion for turmoil. *Zion's Herald.*