

begins a very peculiar sentence. A triple gradation of the downward progress of the evil man is given in three stages, and thus the righteous man is negatively portrayed: his methods, character, and actual life are neither bad, worse, nor worst. He neither **walketh** (for a brief season of sin), **standeth** (with evil determination), **nor sitteth** (in wicked self-security); he companies neither with the **ungodly** (the unrighteous, the negatively bad, "the not good"), nor **sinner**s (open transgressors, aggressive doers of iniquity), nor **scornful** ("mockers, those who openly scoff and blaspheme"); if he does wrong it is unintentionally done, for he has nothing to do with any evil **counsel** (covert plans, secret designs), nor any evil **way** (open sin), nor any evil **seat** (stronghold, or, better still, as Dr. Perowne phrases it, "any deliberate confederacy in wickedness"). (4) *There are many paths in wickedness, but they all belong to one way.* (5) *He who chooses his companions among the wicked will inevitably be controlled by their influence.* (6) *Beware of the beginnings of evil.* (7) *The worst sinners are those who sneer and scoff at that which is good.* (8) *Goodness is the secret of genuine happiness.*

2. The first verse was negative; this is positive; the first verse told us what the righteous man avoids; this tells us what he does. **His delight is in the law of the Lord.** He not only obeys, but finds pleasure in obeying. Luther translates, "His will is God's law." The word "law" refers to all God's written word. For us John and Romans are as really "law" as was Leviticus for the ancient Hebrew. (9) *The work of grace is not complete until not only our duty, but our desire, leads us into the ways of God.* **Meditate.** His eagerness to obey God's word leads to eagerness in its study. (10) *"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he;" while sinful hearts revel in guilty imaginings the pure find enjoyment in thinking of God's word.* **Day and night.** In moments of midnight wakefulness he recalls the promises and commands of the precious word. With the Jews the night lasted from about six o'clock in the evening till six o'clock in the morning. (11) *We must meditate upon something; the thoughts cannot cease, and must find food.* (12) *God's word furnishes abundant food for meditation; in the plainest text there is a world of holiness and spirituality.* (13) *Thought at once reveals character and shapes it.*

3. **Like a tree.** Having (1) life; (2) growth; (3) beauty; (4) fruitfulness; (5) endurance. **Planted.** Transplanted. (14) *The Christian's place among God's people comes not by birthright, but by adoption.* **By the rivers of waters.** In the dry season the whole Orient is parched and turned into a wilderness, except only the rocky winter-torrents, or "wadies," and such great river beds as the Nile and the Euphrates. There the grass grows with refreshing verdure, and the

trees planted by such rivers "do not wither" nor lack fruit. But the Revised Version substitutes the word "streams" for "rivers," and the allusion is probably to the little artificial channels dug for purposes of irrigation. (15) *The Christian obtains his supplies of grace not from occasional reviving showers, but from the steady streams of God's word.* **His fruit.** The greatest disadvantage from which the Christian Church to-day suffers is its multitude of dead branches. By this is our heavenly Father glorified, that we bear much fruit. (16) *Fruitfulness is the test of life.* (17) *By the character of the fruit can we tell the character of the life.* **In his season.** The grace of God adapts itself to every need of mankind; in seasons of weakness it furnishes spiritual strength; in weariness it refreshes; in darkness it enlightens; for all struggles it is the adequate preparation; for arduous labor it supplies vigor and skill; and every-where and at all times it brings forth love, joy, peace, and the other "fruits of the Spirit." **His leaf also shall not wither.** Mr. Spurgeon beautifully says, "The Lord's trees are all evergreens; no winter's cold can destroy their verdure; and yet, unlike evergreens in our country, they are all fruit-bearers." **Whatever he doeth shall prosper.** "Whatever it produceth shall come to maturity." A similar promise is that given by God regarding his word, that it shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish that whereunto he sends it. He whose horizon is bounded by death cannot believe this promise, for by the measurements of this life God's children seem often to fail; but in reality no effort made for God's sake and in God's strength ever fails, for our lives reach into eternity, and our success can only be correctly measured from the point of view of heaven. (18) *No man really fails who is on the Lord's side, even though to his own eyes his failure may be plain.*

4. **The ungodly are not so.** They differ from the righteous in character and conduct, in the sources of their delight, in their thoughts, and in their destiny. **Like the chaff.** When the Oriental farmer winnowed his wheat it was by throwing it and the chaff up together and allowing the wheat to fall into a heap of nutritious food while the wind drove away the chaff. The words, **the wind driveth,** present a picture of the ruin which awaits the wicked when his little hour of fleeting pleasure is passed. "Without root below, without fruit above, devoid of all the vigor and freshness of life, lying loose upon the threshing-floor, and a prey to the slightest breeze, utterly worthless and unstable."—*Delitzsch.*

5. **The ungodly shall not stand.** (19) *The act of forsaking God is itself the completed ruin.* Whether a man "stands" or not depends upon the standard one applies. He may seem very straight