

is God's voice to me." When you go to the Word for devotional reading—I am not now speaking of study which, as pastors and teachers, we may have to make—take care you do not rise till God has spoken a word right home to you with the conviction that God has given it to you for some purpose. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you."

#### Keeping the Commandments.

Another word is, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." I do not expect any of you to keep all Christ's commandments right through—there is ever shortcoming—but you must not consciously or wilfully break any of them. That is a very different thing from keeping them all. But you must not consciously, carelessly, deliberately, or habitually break any of them, or wink at yourselves in doing it. That is a very important thing, if you wink at sin once, you are so apt to do it again. If you want to be happy and healthy Christians, if you want to abide in Christ, and have His words abiding in you, it is very important to keep conscience clear, that is, a conscience void of offence. Offences will come, and we need washing day by day, if we are to be white and clean. Yet we must seek to have our conscience clear, we must seek to know His will, and be willing to do it when we know it. Then there need not be the least fear of you, and nothing will keep you from growing in grace.

#### Bearing Much Fruit.

Then work, *work for Christ*. He speaks of bringing forth fruit, of bearing much fruit. Now fruit is not doing religious work only. That is a mistake some young converts fall easily into. Work or fruitbearing to them seems to consist in public speaking, Sunday school teaching, tract distributing, and so on. But the important point is that you get into the line God has marked out for you. And above all remember that keeping His commands is doing work for Him. Bringing forth fruit means doing every action in daily life and duty as to the Lord. Don't think, "I have nothing more and nothing different to do than I had before I was converted, it cannot be work for Him." Do the old things in a new way, and by a new power, do them unto the Lord, do them honestly, justly, and cheerfully, and you are bringing fruit in the place where he has appointed you.

#### Joy Abiding.

And remember further that Christ would have His joy abide in us. And it will not unless we abide in Him and His words abide in us. Why is it we have a great many unjoyous Christians and so many joyless Christian lives? Is it not because they have gone wrong there at the very outset? Have we not everything in the Christian life to make us joyous? Have we realized what Christ is, and what He is to us? How complete, and rich, and full He is! Let us remember He is the Beloved of the Father, the joy and portion of our soul. Let us think of what He is preparing for us in that heaven where He is gone. Let us think more of these things and we shall have joy. We will never get joy by looking at ourselves, or at the polluted source of this world's pleasure. Neither will we get joy merely by performing duty. There is a joy above that, the joy of possession, the joy of hope. If we want to be bright, joyous Christians we must become so by being hopeful Christians. Having our affections lifted up above, not set on things on earth. Christ wants us to do that, and by doing that we shall be greatly honoring and glorifying Him.

#### Upward and Onward

Now, dear young Christians, set your faces towards the kingdom; keep your faces right on to that holy, happy city to which you go. Seek the joy and happiness of it. Remember you are yet a long way from that crowned, because tried and perfected, saintliness Christ wishes to see in you and me; in the midst of experiences the most

diverse, He Himself is fashioning us after His own will. Therefore, although the ripest of us are a very long way indeed from the fulness, let us ever aspire after it, and let us not forget what it is, "That ye be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" perfect as the Father's image is perfect, that is Christ Himself, perfect in purity, perfect in righteousness, perfect in love. Towards that perfection we aspire, never content, never satisfied with self; with a noble dissatisfaction, a noble craving after the likeness of Christ. More fitness to please Him, more fruitfulness in His service, and more readiness to depart to be with Him when He shall call us! Our light ever, as we tread the blessed path homeward, growing broader and brighter until the perfect day! Do not despond, do not despair; fall back on your stronghold, on your source of strength. You may, you will fall, but do not lie down because you fall. Go right to Him, claim His grace, and He will send you forth humbler and wiser, and more fitted to serve. May God grant each of us at last that crown of approval, the blessed reward of righteousness laid up for him who is faithful when he is tried as silver, and endureth unto the end!

#### DIVERSITY OF SERVICE.

No one follower of Christ could condemn the other because the other's spiritual life is not of es-same stamp as his own. Let not Martha, wearied with her much serving, running everywhere to man sionary meetings, or to visit the sick and the poor, find fault with Mary in her quiet devotion, peaceful, thoughtful, gentle, loving, because she does not abound in the same activities. Nor let Mary, in her turn, judge Martha, and call her piety superficial. Let each of these follow the Master closely, see as much as possible of the infinite loveliness of His character, and copy all she can see into her own life, but let her not imagine that she has seen or copied all of Christ, and let her look at every other believer's life with reverence, as bearing another little fragment of the same divine likeness. Let every man do earnestly and well the particular work which he is fitted and called to do, but let him not imagine he is doing the only kind of work which Christ wants to have done in this world. Rather let him look upon every other faithful servant who does a different work as doing a part equally important and equally acceptable to the Master.

The bird praises God by singing. The flower pays its tribute in fragrant incense as its censer swings in the breeze. The tree shakes down fruit from its bending boughs. The star pours out its silver beams to gladden the earth. The clouds give their blessing in gentle rain. Yet all with equal faithfulness fulfil their mission. So among Christ's redeemed servants, one serves by incessant toil in the home, caring for a large family; another by silent example as a sufferer, patient and uncomplaining; another with the pen, sending forth words that inspire, help, cheer and bless; another by the living voice, whose eloquence moves men and starts impulses to better, grander living; another by the ministry of sweet song; another by sitting in quiet peace at Jesus' feet, and then shining as a gentle and silent light, or pouring out the fragrance of love like a lowly and unconscious flower. Yet each and all of these may be serving Christ acceptably, hearing at the close of each day the whispered words, "Well done."—*Primitive Christian*.

#### THE SCEPTICAL SHOEMAKER.

"I have read," said the shoemaker, "a great deal about the heathen gods, and I believe the account of Christ is taken from some of the heathen writings."

"Will you abide by your own decision on two questions that I will put to you?" said the Bible-

reader. "If so, I will freely do the same. I will abide by your own answers; by doing so we shall save much time and arrive more quickly at the truth."

"Well," said he, "out with it, and let us see if I can answer; there are few things but that I can say something about."

"Well, my friend," replied the reader, "my first question is, suppose all men were really Christians according to the account given to us in the gospels concerning Christ, what would be the state of society?"

He remained silent for some time in deep thought, and then was constrained to say:

"Well, if all men were really Christians in practice as well as as in theory, of course we should be a happy brotherhood indeed."

"I promised you," said the reader, "that I would abide by your answer. Will you do the same?"

"O yes," he readily replied; "no man can deny the goodness of the system in practice; but now for the other question; perhaps I shall get on better with that. You have a chalk this time against me."

"Well, my next question is this:—Suppose all men were infidels—what then would be the state of London and of the world?"

He seemed still more perplexed, and remained a long time silent, the reader doing the same. At length he said, "You have certainly beaten me, for I never before saw the two effects upon society. I now see that where the Christian builds up the infidel is pulling down. I thank you; I shall think of what has passed this afternoon."

The sequel was that he was fully persuaded in his own mind to give up all his infidel companions and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. But the change did not stop here. When first the reader called he had to sit on an old, dirty chair, with a number of half-starved children sitting in their rags on the floor around him neglected and uncared for; now they have removed to a better home in a cleaner street. Within all is cheerful and happy. The father, no longer faithless, delights in the company of his wife and children, all of whom are neatly dressed; and his chief happiness is to read and speak to them of the things which belong to their everlasting peace.

#### Missionary.

#### MISSIONARY CONSECRATION OF THE WHOLE CHURCH.

The following is the paper read by the Rev. Dr. Fleming Stevenson before the Pan-Presbyterian Council:—

Whatever may be the judgment of history, it is probable that our present century will be distinguished for its practical energy and the fruitfulness of the great Christian ideas that have possessed it. There can be no better illustration of that fruitfulness than the idea of Christian missions, round which our discussion is to gather to-day. Less than a hundred years ago a Mission of the Church was practically unrecognized; when it was brought forward it was scouted in our General Assemblies; public men, who commanded the attention of the country, held it up to ridicule; it was regarded as "the dream of a dreamer who dreamed that he was dreaming;" when it passed into the region of fact those who founded it held their meetings in small parlors and vestries; the missionaries that were employed could be counted on the fingers; and the annual sum given for planting the gospel of Christ throughout the world did not exceed a few hundred pounds. Yet from this modest, imperceptible and unpromising beginning there has come to be a brilliant enterprise that stirs and enlists the sympathies of Christian people in every part of the Globe, and