

HELPS AND HINTS

For Young Christians.

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FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

1st. Renounce, once and for all, the legal thought that your righteousness and acceptance before God depend on anything *you are, or can be, or anything you do, or can do.* Christ in His Person and Work, and not your condition or your conduct, is the ground of your acceptance. God accepts Christ for you, and accepts you in Christ. (Rom. iv. 25 ; v. 1, 2 ; viii. 1, 2 ; Ephes. i. 6, 7 ; Col. i. 12-14—please read them.)

You're not worthy—oh, no !—Christ alone
Is righteous and true in God's sight,
But you are in Him, who for sin did atone,
In whom is found all God's delight.

2nd. You are now a Christian—*Christ's one*. As such seek to walk worthy of "that beautiful name by which you are called" (Acts xi. 26; Ephes. iii. 15; James ii. 7). What is a Christian? Someone has said, "A Christian is—C-H-R-I-S-T = Christ in full; and I-A-N (I am nothing) = me in initial." Look up, then, for grace to be nothing, and to make Christ everything. Remember that to be "accepted" before God is one thing, but to be "acceptable" depends on your conduct down here (2 Cor. v. 9).

Oh to be but emptier, lowlier,
 Mean, unnoticed, and unknown,
 And to God, a vessel holier,
 Filled with Christ, and Christ alone!

3rd. Be careful to have "a good conscience"—a conscience instructed by Scripture—pure and sensitive. Let conscience be like some finely polished mirror, that is

dimmed by the slightest breath of the tempter. If you sin, confess at once, not as a *sinner to God*, but as a *child to the Father* (Acts xxiv. 16 ; Heb. xiii. 18 ; 1 John i. 9 ; ii. 1, 2).

Speak a shade more kindly
Than you have before ;
Pray a little oftener,
Serve a little more ;

Cling a little closer
To the Father's love ;
Life will then grow liker
To the life above !

4th. Be as lenient to the faults of others as you are hard on your own. Remember those three gracious *F's*—*Forbear* ; *Forgive* ; *Forget*. If you detect the smallest grain of malice in your heart toward another, do not rest while it is there. You cannot be happy with the Lord till it is gone (Rom. xii. ; Col. iii. 12-15 ; Phil. ii. ; Ephes. iv. 1-3 ; 31, 32).

Oh, what a little thing can turn
 A heavy heart from sigh to song !
 A smile can make the world less stern ;
 A word can cause the soul to burn
 With glow of heaven all night long !

5th. Keep a large heart as you tread the narrow way. By a large heart is meant a heart that takes in "all saints." The path of faithfulness amid the ruin becomes *increasingly* narrow and *exclusive*, but a heart filled with the love of God expands, and becomes *increasingly* large and *inclusive*. (Look up the term "all saints," as found in the Epistles.)

Have you had a kindness shown ?

Pass it on.

'Twas not given for thee alone—

Pass it on.

Let it travel down the years,

Let it wipe another's tears,

'Till in heaven the deed appears—

Pass it on.

6th. In any difficulty, let the Lord be

your first resource. You have no wiser, kinder, nor stronger Friend. Whatever, then, be the care—be it in the home circle, the school circle, the business circle, the Church circle, the world circle, or the tiny circle of your own soul—go to Him about it. He delights to enter into our little concerns, and the simpler our faith the better it pleases Him (Phil. iv. 6 ; 1 Pet. v. 6, 7).

No human voice may cheer thee,
No earthly listener hear thee ;
But, oh, one Friend is near thee,
The kindest and the best ;
Whose smile can banish sadness,
Whose presence fills with gladness
The solitary breast.

7th. Do not be content with praying, but *grow* in the school of secret prayer. It is a *fact* that the more you pray, the more you want to pray ; and the less you pray, the less you want to pray. The principle found

in Matt. xiii. 12 abides, and is very solemn ! Depend upon it, when you feel least inclined for prayer, *then* your soul is most in need of it. Turn everything into prayer, and soon prayer will be to you a *state* as well as an *act* (Matt. xxvi. 41 ; James v. 13-16 ; 1 Thess. v. 17).

God's ships of treasure sail upon a sea

Of boundless love, of mercy infinite,

To change their course, retard their onward way,

Nor wind nor wave hath might.

Prayer is the tide for which the vessels wait

Ere they can come to port ; but if it be

The tide is low, then how canst thou expect

The treasure-ship to see ?

8th. Never refuse any ministry because it is new to *you* ; but never accept anything till you see it *for yourself in the Word of God* ! —till you get it divinely confirmed in the sanctuary. Inability to receive is not tantamount to rejection. Do not judge the

doctrine of an address by the man who delivers it, or gauge the truth of an article by the initials at its close.

Be *sure* though *slow* in acquiring truth. All that is got *from God* is taught by Him in this way. Though you may get truth *through* a human channel, get it *from God*. Learn to learn at the Master's feet and then you will have no need to learn to *unlearn* (1 Thess. v. 20, 21; Isa. xxviii. 10; John xvi. 12).

Make sure of Truth,

And truth will make you sure :
It will not shift, nor fade, nor die,
But like the heavens endure.

Man and his earth

Are varying day by day ;
Truth cannot change nor ever grow
Feeble and old and grey.

9th. In connection with private Scripture study there are five important things :—

Reading (1 Tim. iv. 13).

Searching (Acts xvii. 11).

Finding (Psa. cxix. 162).

Meditating (Jer. xv. 16).

Practising (James i. 22-27).

In *reading* you skim the surface—a pleasant exercise. In *searching* you let down your line into its depths. In *finding* you bring up something which makes you tingle all over with holy glee. In *meditating* you feed upon and enjoy what you have got. In *practising* you *show* it all in your life before others.

A glory gilds that sacred page,
Majestic like the sun ;
Which gives a light to every age—
Which gives but borrows none.

10th. Beware of evil speaking, in all its multiplied and invidious forms. Prudently, kindly, and alone tell your brother or sister

the fault, and speak to God about it, but do not whisper it to another. Evil speaking is a most prolific cause of sorrow, and always betrays a soul *out* of communion, as it always grates upon a soul *in* communion. "If we come forth from the closet of communion, the atmosphere of evil speaking will be to us as the tainted air of some great city to one that has been breathing the pure air of a mountain-top, or the fresh breezes of the seashore" (1 Pet. ii. 1, 2; James iv. 11; Ephes. iv. 25, 26, etc.).

Seek grace to speak so as to help and not to hinder.

If any little word of mine
Can make a life the brighter,
If any little song of mine
Can make a heart the lighter,
God help me speak that little word,
And take my life of singing,
And drop it in some lonely vale,
To set the echoes ringing.

11th. Keep a warm *gospel heart*. Christian experience, according to Philippians, is full of the gospel. (See the Epistle.) Paul was as hearty in gospel work at the close of his course as at the commencement. (Compare Acts ix.; Philemon; and 2 Timothy.) Never deceive yourself by the thought that because you are getting on in higher lines of truth, therefore your interest in gospel work must flag. The joy of Father, Son, and Spirit in Luke xv. is essentially a gospel joy. Muse well on that word—"Joy shall be in heaven over *one* sinner that repenteth." Take care not to follow in the wake of the elder son—"he would not go in." Remember, however, that the gospel Paul preached brought him into reproach (Phil. i. 12-14). It gave the Jew, and man in the flesh, not an inch of ground to stand upon. It did not make him popular. It did not "*please men*" (Gal. i. 4-12).

12th. Finally, never take your Christianity from Christians. If you want perfect Christianity, get your eye on God's perfect Christ. "Without Me ye can do nothing," said He. Tell Him this, and seek grace so to abide in Him that you shall intuitively follow in *His* steps, and walk as *He* walked. Avoid asceticism—monkish piety—on the one hand, and worldly conformity on the other. View all down here in the perspective of Christ crucified, risen, and ascended; and live in sweet and present association with Him where He is. Let Him daily bring you, in spirit, into His banqueting house, there to feast and to commune under the shadow of His banner, Love. Thus others will "take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus," and a gentleness of spirit, combined with all the outward activities of inward devotedness, will plainly mark you out as His.

Let us together breathe the prayer—

Lord, may our walk and service be
An image bright, of things above—
A glass to show the unity
Of Father, Son, and Spirit's love ;
A living picture to display
The love that we can ne'er repay.

S. J. B. C.

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