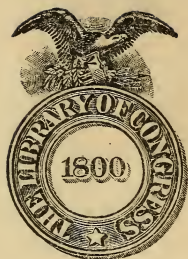


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The

Transfigured

Life,

BY J. R. MILLER, D.D.

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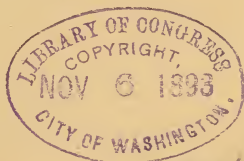
THE
TRANSFIGURED LIFE

WORDS TO HELP IN MAKING
SHINING LIVES

unes
use
BY

J. R. MILLER, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "SILENT TIMES," "MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE,"
"THE EVERY DAY OF LIFE," "SUMMER GATHERING
FOR WINTER'S NEED," ETC.



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My Dear Friend,

It will be a sweet comfort if my simple words shall become an inspiration to you. You want to be beautiful in character. There is no beauty but Christlikeness. Will you not open all your heart to Christ that he may fill you with his love? Then you will be beautiful and your life will shine.

I shall be pleased if any who are helped by these words will write and tell me of it.

With affectionate regards,
J. R. Miller
Philadelphia.

R

When Charles Kingsley was dying one who bent over him heard him whisper, "How beautiful God is!"

There is a prayer in an old Psalm which pleads: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

There is a word in an Epistle which says: "We know that . . . we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him even as He is."

THE TRANSFIGURED LIFE.

GOD wants our lives to be bright. He wants them to shine like lamps in the darkness. The world needs nothing so much as light—not light blazing in the far-off sky, but light pouring out softly, low down, close to the earth, from human lives which have been kindled at the heart of God.

The aim of the gospel of Christ is to make human lives bright with the brightness of God's own holiness. There is a word in one of St. Paul's letters which puts this truth in the form of an exhortation. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The word "transformed" suggests a change from dulness to brightness. A German tale describes a fisherman's log-hut which was transformed into an exquisite temple of silver by a lamp which burned within. This is an illustration of what takes place in a human life when the lamp of the Holy Spirit burns within it. Its earthliness is transformed into heavenliness.

The same word that St. Paul uses is used also to

describe the change which took place when our Lord was transfigured. Ordinarily there was no unusual brightness on his face, but now his features shone with dazzling lustre. "Be ye transfigured."

Of course this does not mean that our human faces shall shine as did Christ's that night. The meaning is that our life and character shall be changed, until all the beautiful things that are in Christ shall appear in us. It is a spiritual transfiguration. For example, take the beloved disciple. It is believed that in his youth he was not sweet-spirited, gentle-hearted, loving and lovable, as when we know him in his riper years, but was impetuous, with quick temper, fiery speech, and strong resentments. As the years passed, however, he grew into gentleness. He listened to Christ's teachings, and the blessed words fell into his heart. He became a friend of Christ, and in the intimacy the sweetness of his divine Friend entered into his soul. He lay upon Christ's bosom, and the beatings of love throbbed themselves into John's own heart, until lo! John loved as Jesus did. His life was transfigured.

What was possible for John is possible to every other Christian in his own measure. The same or like transformation was wrought in Peter. The rude, swearing fisherman of Galilee became the noble apostle whose influence now fills the world.

The same change was wrought in Paul, whom we first know as a violent persecutor and then as a glorious missionary.

Sometimes there is almost a physical transfiguration. Soon after Judson reached Burma, he met one day a native woman. He could not yet speak a word of the language, but touching the woman's hand he looked up and pointed upward. She went home and told her friends that she had met an angel. His very face seemed transfigured. Stephen's face appeared like an angel's as he stood before the council, witnessing for Christ. Now and then a saintly face is seen that seems to have almost a supernatural glow in it, as if a holy fire burned back of it. Every soul writes its story more or less distinctly on the face, which is the index of the inner life. Discontent soon shows its fevered spirit in fretted features. Anger soon reveals its unlovableness in the sinister lines it stamps on the brow. Unholy passion in time blots the delicate marks of purity and innocence from the countenance and leaves instead the tarnished marblings wrought by its own vileness. There is no cherished sin which does not work up out of the heart, however deeply it is hidden there, and reveal itself in some way in the face. Men think their unhallowed secret of sin is not known, but oftentimes they are mistaken; the thing they suppose hidden from all eyes but their own,

all eyes see in tell-tale signs which no art can obscure.

In like manner, good in the heart works its way up into the face, and prints its own beauty there. Love in the life softens the features and gives them a warmth like the gentle beauty of spring flowers. Peace in the heart soon gives a quiet calm to the countenance. Many a perturbed, restless face grows placid and reposeful under the influence of peace. Purity in the soul shows itself in the upward look and the thoughtful reverence which tell of communion with God. Benevolence writes its autograph on brow and cheek. Thus in a sense even the physical features share in the transfiguration of the life of faith and holiness.

But there is another transformation. The face may not grow bright and beautiful under the influence of grace in the heart, but when one is a true believer in Christ and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, there is a transformation of the life which always takes place. It is compared to a change in the dress. The "old man" with his corrupt deeds—malice, wrath, blasphemy, filthy communication, lying, and all that belongs to the flesh—is put off, and the "new man," with his tenderness, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness and peace, is put on. It is the same that is meant

here in the exhortation, "Be ye transfigured by the renewing of your mind."

It is very important that we learn how this process of transformation may be wrought, for who would not have a transfigured life? The words that cluster about the exhortation already quoted in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans may help us to answer this question: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not fashioned according to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

The first step is the consecration of the whole being to God. "I beseech you . . . to present your bodies . . . to God." Surrender to God must always be the beginning of spiritual transformation. We must get our life into the divine hands before the heavenly beauty can be wrought upon it by them. Mark well, too, that you must present yourself to God, must bring the offering to his altar with your own hands. No one can do it for you, no saintly mother, no godly friend. We are our own in a strange, mysterious way. We are sovereigns of our own lives. But we are our own with the obligation to give ourselves to God.

This truth is put in a striking way in Tennyson's "In Memoriam:"

"Our wills are ours—we know not how ;
Our wills are ours to make them thine."

There can be no transforming work done in us until we have made this surrender. We must be laid upon God's altar—brought and laid there by our own hands.

Another step is indicated in the words "a living sacrifice." Our powers are not to be crushed and broken and mutilated, but are to be devoted to service, to activity. The old mediæval monks fancied that the truest sacrifice was a life withdrawn from the world, spent in hermit caves or monasteries, where they crucified the flesh by fastings, tortures, and penances. That is not the kind of sacrifice God wants. That is marring, wasting, destroying God's blessed gift of life. He desires us to make the most of all our powers of being—body, mind, and spirit—and then to give all to him for use in the blessing of our fellow-men.

Nothing helps more to develop the transfigured life in us than work. Some people chafe because they have so much to do. Their days are filled from morning to night with dreary, monotonous task-work. With men it is the never-ending work of the farm, the office, the store, the shop, the

mill. With women it is the thousand duties of the household, the care of the home, the tending of children, the weary formalities of social life. There are many people who think their greatest obstacle in the way of spiritual growth and transformed character is in the drudgeries to which they are indentured by their condition. They fancy that if they could be freed from these and could have leisure for reading, for study, and for elevated social fellowship, they would grow into far more radiant beauty of character.

But this is a mistaken impression. The one only perfectly transformed life the world has ever known was spent, "not with a book, but with a hammer and a saw." The school of common task-work, with its perpetual round of dreary duties, is the best place in the world in which to attain noble spiritual culture. There is no other way in which one's life will be so surely, so quickly transfigured, as in the faithful, happy, cheerful doing of every-day tasks. We need to remember that this world is not so much a place for doing things as for making character. Household life is not primarily a sphere for good cooking, tidy keeping of rooms, thorough sweeping and dusting, careful nursing and training of children, hospitable entertainment of friends, and the thousand things that must be done each day; it is a sphere for transforming women's souls into radiant beauty. The

shop, the mill, the factory, the store, the office, the farm are not primarily places for making machines, selling goods, weaving cloths, building engines, and growing crops; they are, first of all, places for making men, building character, growing souls. Right in the midst of what some people call drudgery is the very best place to get the transformed, transfigured life. The doing of common tasks patiently, promptly, faithfully, cheerfully, makes the character beautiful and bright.

But we must take heed always that we do our tasks, whatever they are, with love in our heart. Doing any kind of work unwillingly, with complaint and murmuring, hurts the life.

There is another suggestion as to the way to have the life transformed, in the counsel: "Be not fashioned according to this world." If we are Christians we are not of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven. We are foreigners here. It is our duty to live the heavenly life in the midst of this world's atmosphere, its circumstances and conditions. We are here for our Master, to do his work, to reveal him to men, to do, in our little measure, the things he would do if he were in our place.

We are therefore to be in the world as Jesus was in it. He maintained the heavenly life without spot, in the midst of all the sin there was

about him. The world made no impression on his holiness, his purity.

We need to guard our lives against the unholy influences of the world. We are in danger of lowering our standard of conduct and character to be more in harmony with the people about us. We are in danger of slackening the restraints of virtue and falling in with the easy-going morality of the times. But that is not the way to the transfigured life. The world's touch tarnishes and dims the lustre of holiness.

Some of us meet injustice, wrong treatment, harshness, rudeness, unkindness, from those among whom we live and work. It is not easy to keep our hearts sweet and loving all the while, in such experiences. It is easier for us to do as the world does—harden ourselves against the injustice or rudeness, or grow bitter, resentful, soured. That is what too many do in the midst of the selfishness, harshness, and wrong they meet in their condition. But this is not the transforming that is toward Christlikeness. The struggle between the good and the evil in us goes on continually, but when the world is getting the better of us, when the good in us is being smothered, when the lamp within our bosom is being quenched, when its flame is growing dimmer, we are losing in the struggle. Instead of being transformed our life is being darkened.

We need to keep an incessant watch upon ourselves, in our contacts with the world, lest we become conformed to its life. It is a sad thing for any of us, if instead of growing daily into a clearer, fuller likeness to Christ, our spiritual life is failing and the features of our Lord's beauty are becoming dimmer and dimmer in us. People say: "I cannot help it. I cannot resist the incessant grind and pressure of the worldly life about me. I cannot keep my heart gentle and my spirit sweet amid all that is mean, unjust, selfish, unreasonable, and even cruel about me." But while never easy, it is possible to be more than conquerors over all these antagonistic influences, through Him that loved us.

"We who are of the earth need not be earthy ;
God made our nature like his own, divine ;
Nothing but selfishness can be unworthy
Of his pure image meant through us to shine.
The death of deaths it is, ourselves to smother
In our own pleasure, his dishonored gift ;
And life—eternal life—to love each other ;
Our souls with Christ in sacrifice to lift."

Another lesson to be well marked is that the transfigured life can be gotten only by the renewing of the mind. "Mind" here stands for the whole inner life—the will, the affections, the desires, the feelings, the motives. The change must begin within. We must be born again, born

from above. A new divine life must come down from God and enter into us. The New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit is given to every one who believes in Christ. To be a Christian is to have a new life in the soul. Christ himself lives in each one who believes in him. St. Paul puts it very graphically when he says that he is dead, crucified with Christ, that is, as to his old life. Then he adds, "Yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me." These words reveal the secret of St. Paul's wonderful life. It was Christ living in him that made him the man he was. This is the secret of every transfigured life. There is no other way to get it. We must open our heart and let Christ enter into us and fill us. He is ever eager to do this and will possess us just as far as we yield our life up to him.

What are the qualities that transfigure a life? We all know the things that are beautiful in character. St. Paul gives at least two lists of such qualities. In one place he writes: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things"

—all of these are shining qualities and make a life bright and radiant.

Another cluster of transfiguring graces St. Paul names in another place: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." These qualities are given as the fruit of the Spirit, of divine, not of human origin. When the Holy Spirit lives in a heart, these things appear in the life. A character is transfigured when it has in it these features.

The first is "love." We all know that love is a transfiguring quality. But what is the love that is a fruit of the Spirit? Love for lovely and lovable people? Yes; but love for all sorts and conditions of people, as well. Some of the most selfish and disagreeable people you ever saw had an intense love for a few particular individuals. Anybody can love those who are kind, sweet-spirited, and unselfish. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them." The love which the Holy Spirit kindles is love for unlovely people as well as the lovely, love for those who are not gentle and kindly, love for enemies. It is a love that is stirred by human need, wherever it appears, and that rests not in mere sentiment, but reaches out its hand to help and bless.

We never tire of reading St. Paul's wonderful

description of love in his immortal thirteenth of First Corinthians: "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

"Love suffereth long." That is patience in enduring things from others, things people would say you are not under obligation to endure: "Love envieth not." That is the spirit that gets as much enjoyment from seeing others have things as if you had them yourself. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." That means good manners. Some one defines a gentleman as one who will never give pain to another. Love has regard for the feelings of every one, no matter who it is. This spirit makes one always gentle, thoughtful, kind. Good manners are a very important part of a true Christian life. "Love seeketh not its own." That means unselfishness. Even its own, that which it might claim as a right, it does not seek. It has learned the sweet lesson that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." "Love is not provoked." That means good temper. A great many people seem not to regard bad temper as anything more than an amiable weakness, but really it is a sad blot on a disposition. Love does not get pro-

voked. It keeps itself always sweet—at least, that is the ideal.

It is wonderful how love transfigures a life. It changes all the world to our eyes. People are not seen now with critical spirit, watching for faults; nor with sensitive spirit, shrinking from every unkindly touch and resenting every rude, disagreeable, or unjust thing in their treatment of us; nor with exacting spirit, demanding attention, claiming rights and measuring and counting favors due. Love sees in every other person one to be served, to be ministered unto, to be helped, to be patiently borne with, to be treated kindly in spite of his faults. Love transforms all conditions of life, all circumstances. Its business is to be sweet, no matter the weather, or the wrong, or the suffering. Thus it takes the bitterness out of whatever would otherwise be bitter. Thus it makes the life bright and radiant. Love is a transfiguring quality.

So is "joy"—another of the fruits of the Spirit. Joy brightens a life. It shines in the face like sunlight. It makes the eyes sparkle. But what is this joy that is a fruit of the Spirit? Anybody can be joyous when all things go well, when health is good, and business is prosperous, and the cup of love runs over, and the circle of friends is unbroken. The joy the Holy Spirit gives lives on in the heart when all earthly sources of gladness have

failed. It hides like a rainbow in the bosom of the darkest cloud and shines out in the gloom. There is a legend of a wondrous golden organ that was in some ancient monastery, which once, when in danger of being stolen, was cast by the monks into a deep river, to be hidden from the robbers; and in the waters, buried out of sight in the floods, it still played on, pouring out its sweet music. This legend illustrates the heart which has in it the secret of Christian joy. Floods of sorrow may roll over it, but in the depths its song is not silenced.

A certain sun-dial bears the inscription, "I mark only the hours that shine." That is what true Christian joy does. It does not take account of the dark hours. There are some people who see always only the gloomy side. Meet them on the brightest days, and they will have some sad thing of which to complain. With abounding mercies which they ought to remember and speak of, they find only the few little hardinesses of their lot and fill their speech with unhappy murmurings about these. With beauty all about them, they lament over the little specks and flaws that fleck the loveliness, and work themselves into a fever of discontent over these.

It is a sore misfortune when one has formed the habit of seeing the dark side, the blemishes, the spots, the unpleasant things, while his eyes have

become blind to the loveliness, the happiness, the goodness. It is largely a matter of habit. We see always what we are looking for, and if our mind has become trained to look for trouble and difficulty and all dark and dreary things, we shall find just what we seek. On the other hand, it is quite as easy to form the habit of looking always for beauty, for good, for happiness, for gladness, and here, too, we shall find precisely what we seek. It has been said that the habit of seeing always the bright side in life is worth a large income to a man. No doubt this is true. Then it makes life a great deal brighter. None of us are naturally drawn to a gloomy person, who finds everywhere something to complain about. But we are all attracted to one who sees some beauty in everything and delights in that, while he does not fret over what is not bright. Joy is a transfiguring quality. Its secret is a glad heart, for he who has the bird in his heart will see a bird on every bush.

“Peace” is another transfiguring quality. When there is peace in the heart the face is always radiant. But what is peace? Its element is not a quiet atmosphere, with happy conditions. Any one could have peace, of a sort, in a sweet garden spot, on a quiet summer evening, with only fragrance and bird-songs in the air. But Christian peace is a holy calm that stays in the heart when the external conditions are antagonistic. There

is a picture which represents it—a storm-swept sea; waves rolling high and strewn with wrecks, and here and there a drowned human form appearing; above, a sky filled with dark clouds, rent and torn by fierce lightnings; then, rising up out of the wild waters, a great rock, and above the waves, in a cleft of the rock, in the midst of a clump of green herbage and flowers, a dove sitting quietly and peacefully on her nest. Christian peace is the calm of the heart which is not dependent on any conditions and which no circumstances, however full of danger or alarm, can break. Its secret is, perfect trust in God.

The lesson of peace is one that has to be learned in the school of life. It is not gotten by the changing of life's conditions so as to hide one away beyond the reach of storm. Nor is it acquired through the deadening of the feelings and sensibilities, so that life's pains and trials will no longer hurt the heart. This would be paying too great a price even for peace. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It comes through the encircling of the life with God's own peace. "The peace of God shall guard your heart and thoughts in Christ Jesus."

When you have this peace you live in a citadel where care cannot disturb you. Life's troubles come as they come to other people. Its disappointments break into your plans and hopes. Its

petty trials and its great sorrows are yours as well as your discontented neighbor's. But you have a secret which others have not. None of these things fret or move you. You accept as God's will the things in your lot which you cannot change, laying them all out of your hands into God's.

There is a wonderful secret of endurance in acquiescence, in simply giving up to things which we cannot change and not fretting over them; in bearing cheerfully what must be borne; in making the best of unpleasant conditions in which we must stay for the time. This acquiescence takes out of circumstances the bitterness, the hardness, the power to hurt us, and makes them serve us and do us good.

Peace is a transfiguring quality. It causes the very face to shine. It adorns the life with radiant beauty. It makes the whole world bright to the eyes. It robs trouble of its power to disturb the heart. It paints rainbows on storm-clouds.

"Kindness" is another of these transfiguring qualities. Kindness is love doing little things, things that seem scarcely worth doing, and yet which mean much to those for whom they are wrought. Kindness lends a hand when another is burdened. It speaks the cheerful word when a heart is discouraged. It is always doing good turns to somebody. It goes about performing,

almost unconsciously, its wayside ministries, with a touch of blessing for everybody. It scatters its small, nameless favors everywhere. Until we think of it specially, we do not realize how large a factor in the most useful and helpful lives in this world is kindness. Few qualities do more to make a life bright and beautiful.

“Goodness” is another transfiguring feature. God is good, and goodness is being like God. It includes holiness, which is pure and shines in crystal clearness in the life which possesses it. It includes all of love’s excellence. Nothing does more to transfigure a character than simple goodness.

“Faithfulness” is the next quality in this cluster of fruits of the Spirit—the faith that makes faithful. This includes faithfulness to God. No fidelity in life’s common relations and in the duties of man to man can ever make faithfulness to God unnecessary. The first of the commandments is “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” This duty of love to God is first, in the sense that nothing else counts unless this comes before it. Then follows faithfulness in all other relations and duties. Too many people are not faithful in little things. They are not to be absolutely depended upon. They do not always keep their promises. They break engagements. They fail to pay their debts promptly. They come be-

hind time to appointments. They are neglectful and careless in little things. In general they are good people, but their life is honeycombed with small failures. One who can be positively depended upon, who is faithful in the least things as well as in the greatest, whose life and character are true through and through, gives out a light in this world which honors Christ and blesses others. Says George MacDonald, "To know one person who is absolutely to be trusted will do more for a man's moral nature—yes, and even his spiritual nature—than all the sermons he ever heard or can hear." Faithfulness transfigures.

So does "meekness," the next in this list of shining qualities. Meekness is not a popular word. Many of us do not like it. We pronounce it weakness. We say we ought not to submit so easily to wrongs; we ought not to allow others to rob us of our rights; we ought not to give place so readily to selfish persons who do us injustice, who crowd us aside, who use us as stepping-stones on which their own feet climb upward. Still it remains true that meekness shines as one of the brightest qualities in the character of Him whose was the one perfect life; "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He gave love for hate. He lifted not his hand to resist any wrong. He

uttered no word to claim any right. He was meek and lowly in heart. In his teaching, too, our Lord gave high commendation to meekness. He put it among the beatitudes, with a promise of great blessing. Meekness makes a life beautiful, radiant, Christly.

There is a legend which illustrates the excellence of meekness and humility. Long ago, there lived a saint so good that the angels came down to see how a mortal could be so godly. He went about his daily work, diffusing virtue as a star diffuses light, as a flower emits perfume, without being aware of it. Two words told the story of his days—he *gave*; he *forgave*. Yet these words never fell from his lips; they were only expressed in his smile, in his forbearance and charity.

The angels asked God that the gift of miracles might be given to this good man. The answer was, "Yes; ask him what he wishes." So the angels spoke to him about it. Would he choose that the touch of his hand should heal the sick? He said "No." He would rather God should do that. Would he have power to convert souls? He answered "No;" that was the Holy Spirit's work. What then did he desire? He said, "That God may give me his grace." When pressed still further to choose the particular power he would have, he replied, "That I may do a great deal of good without ever knowing it." Then it was de-

cided that every time the saint's shadow should fall behind or on either side, so that he could not see it, it should have the power to cure disease, soothe pain, and comfort sorrow. So it came to pass that, falling thus out of his sight, his shadow made withered plants grow again, and fading flowers sweet, gave health to pale children and joy to unhappy mothers. But the saint was never aware of the blessings that flowed from him. And the people, respecting his lowly humility, even forgot his name and spoke of him as 'The Holy Shadow.

Such is the blessing of lowly meekness. It transfigures the life, while he who wears the brightness is not aware of it. Moses wist not that his face shone. This unconsciousness of spiritual beauty is itself the highest element of the beauty. When a man knows that he is good, the lustre of the goodness is dimmed. When one is aware that he is doing noble things a large part of the nobleness is gone.

There is one other element named in this group of transfiguring qualities—"temperance." The word is used in a broad sense and means self-control. Not much thought is given usually to this element. The word "temperance" is unpopular with many people, and, besides, is used almost exclusively in a restricted sense. But self-control is a vital element in character. It is the hand on

the reins. To have a life whose powers we cannot control is a fearful thing. The more magnificent the life may be, the more terrible it is not to be able to rule it. The true object of all education and discipline is to develop all the powers of the life to their highest possibilities, and then to hold them in perfect mastery. A word of wisdom tells us, "Better is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." We all admire the power in a man which enables him to stand quiet and strong amid provocations, not letting loose the pent-up feeling of anger, growing a little pale, perhaps, but speaking no bitter word. "Oh, if I had not uttered that sharp retort, and given way to that uncharitable judgment, how much better it would have been!" was the pained confession of one who had been thrown off his guard at a critical moment. Happy are we if we have never had like painful experience. One minute of unbridled passion has oftentimes left consequences of shame and sorrow which years could not undo.

Our aim should be to obtain perfect self-mastery, and never to lose it. Then shall our rule over our turbulent life keep it from folly and sin. Not our tongue only, but our temper, and all the lower qualities of our being, shall be then held in control. There is not an element in our nature that needs to be crushed or destroyed; everything is meant to be under control of conscience and will,

and to be used to honor God and bless the world. Men found a wild torrent in the mountains. They built a flume for it and it turned a thousand wheels and spindles. That is what God wants us to do with the torrents we find in our being. Self-control is having the mastery; it is ruling all the life's powers for Christ. Self-control is a transfiguring quality.

These are illustrations enough to show what is meant by a transfigured life. These are some of the qualities that appear in it. In a word, it is the beauty of Christ shining in a human life. There is a little prayer in one of the Psalms, which says, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us!" This is not too high a prayer for any one of us to use every day. Christ came into this world, and lived and died, to make it possible for us to wear the divine beauty. We may wear it not merely as a holyday dress or high priest's garment, when we are engaged in some religious service; we may wear it also when we are at our daily work. The beauty of the Lord shines just as bright in home-spun attire, in the midst of the dust and clatter of the shop or the mill, or amid the lowly duties of the kitchen, as it does in the special dress of the Sabbath, in the sacredness and quietness of the sanctuary. The transfigured life is not a matter of place or time or occupation: it is a matter of character. Many of the world's

most radiant saints walk the earth in lowliest disguises.

Transfiguration is wrought in human life by the indwelling of Christ. In what measure Christ enters into us and fills us and abides in us, depends upon the measure of our surrender to him. He is ready to fill us and live in us. A perfumer bought an earthenware vase and filled it with attar of roses. The rich perfume entered into the material of the vase and completely permeated it. Long after it ceased to be used by the perfumer it still carried the fragrance. Even when it was old and broken, the shattered and worthless fragments of the vase retained the sweetness. So it is when the love of God has been shed abroad in a human heart by the divine Spirit, and the earthly life has been struck through with the life of Christ. It is all Christ. Self dies; Christ lives in the soul, and his beauty shines out in the life.

The object of all Christian culture is to attain the likeness of Christ. We read the Bible to get glimpses of his beauty, that we may assimilate it in our own character. We pray, that our longings for his holiness may be realized. We resist temptation and seek to do what is right, that we may shape our life into the pattern shown to us in the holy mount. In every heart in which the Holy Spirit dwells there is a new life seeking to express itself in new tempers, dispositions, and

affections, in new developments of character, in new conduct, new aims, new service. The transfiguration of Christ was the shining out through his human flesh of the divine glory that dwelt within. A transfigured Christian life is the Christ within us so possessing all our being that the brightness glows in the outer life and character.

“Wonderful the whiteness of thy glory ;
Can we truly that perfection share?
Yes ; our lives are pages of thy story,
We thy shape and superscription bear ;
Tarnished forms—torn leaves—but thou canst mend
them,
Thou thine own completeness canst unfold
From our imperfections, and wilt end them—
Dross consuming, turning dust to gold.”

Yet the highest reaches we can attain here are only broken fragments of the full divine beauty. At the best, we can only become dimly transfigured ; only faintly does the beauty of the Lord appear in us in this world. The last design made by the great painter, Albert Dürer, was a drawing showing Christ on his cross. It was all completed except the face of the divine Sufferer, when the artist was summoned away by death. At the end of the longest and holiest life, we shall have but a part of the picture of Christ wrought upon our soul. Our best striving shall leave but a fragment of the matchless beauty. The glory of that blessed

Face we cannot reproduce. But when we go away from our little fragment of transfiguration, we shall look, a moment afterward, upon the glorious divine features, and, seeing Jesus as he is, shall be like him.

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