

*a community called ...*

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## THE STALWART CHRISTIAN.

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*He is regenerated.*—If he is not now in possession of entire sanctification, he is striving to attain it. He is going on “unto perfection.” He is determined to possess all there is for one in the divine life. Let others quibble about non-essentials, waste their time in splitting theological hairs, and form frivolous excuses for non-fulfillment of duty, his cry is, “I follow on to know the Lord.”

*He is in earnest.*—He is not blind to the fact that the devil is in earnest; that, day by day, he is going about as a “roaring lion,” seeking whom he may devour. He sees the fearful marks of sin every-where in blasted lives, broken hopes, crushed hearts, and ruined homes. He hears its notes of discord borne upon every breeze; its wail fills the earth. Millions are dying without hope in God. The

world is struggling in the toils of the evil one. He marks the earnestness of God in giving his Son. He beholds the toiling, uncomplaining, and suffering life of the Redeemer. He hears the groans echoing from an earnest Saviour in the deep shadows of Gethsemane. He looks upon the pain-racked body upon the cross, with his pale, sad, sweet face turned heavenward in earnest longing for the human race. He catches the spirit; his heart is set on fire; he acts.

*He lives among realities.*—His struggles are not with imaginary foes. His life is not a romance. He is not as “one that beateth the air.” He is not following after “cunningly devised fables,” or pursuing fleeting shadows. Life is real; sin is real; heaven is real; hell is real. He is not so absorbed with the gross materialities of this life—money, houses, lands, business—that the spiritual life seems a myth. He finds time to often commune with the spiritual world. He realizes that he is a soul, not a bunch of flesh and bones; and that when

every wheeling world shall be scorched by fire, and ground to dust by the hammer of the ages, that soul will be living somewhere. Faith, love, sympathy, benevolence, kindness, meekness, etc., are not chimerical, but real virtues, to be incorporated into his life.

*He is not easy to take offense.*—His heart is so full of grace, and his head so full of brain, that he cannot see the many real and imaginary slights and unkind acts of thoughtless brethren. He does not desire to place wrong constructions upon their words or acts. If the church is not built and furnished according to his idea, if the choir or official board is not composed of such as would be most desirable to him, or if any department of the Church work is not executed according to his views, yet he goes forward cheerfully in discharge of his Christian duties.

He knows that offenses must come; that some weak persons will talk. It's a disease they have; they must talk or die. Others will misconstrue his motives; others still will criticise and find fault. But with him life

is too short to stoop to remove every obstacle. "The king's business requires haste."

*He is an intelligent Christian.*—He is able to give "a reason of the hope" within. He is not of those who perform their duty only when they feel like it. He knows that a stalwart Christian is not made by feeding the emotions, regardless of the mind. God gave a head as well as a heart. His reason tells him that he ought to go forward on the line of right, feeling or no feeling; hence he is found at his post. He studies his Bible, examines his Discipline, carefully reads the literature of his Church, and endeavors to know all that an earnest, broad-minded Christian should know. He is not necessarily a Christian because his parents or great-grandparents were, but because his reason is convinced that it is manly and sensible and right to be one. He does not measure the onward march of Christianity in the world by the state of his feelings, nor by the happenings in his immediate vicinity alone, but by the weekly collocation of events gathered from every

quarter of the field, through his Church papers. Hence religious periodicals, instead of appearing tame and uninteresting, are to him a constant source of inspiration, for he learns from them how the conflict is going on elsewhere. And though that portion of the line of battle where he is may be temporarily submerged in the thick clouds of smoke, yet through these messengers of the Church he learns that other parts of the line have emerged from the darkness, and stand as victors on the field. Thus his arm is nerved and his heart strengthened to greater deeds.

He is not oppressed with the thought that he is alone in the conflict; but, through these weekly reports, he realizes that he belongs to a mighty host, whose footsteps shake the globe as they move Zionward to celestial music, and to certain victory.

*He is a willing worker.*—He does not need his pastor or leader to follow him with a goad. To him the “yoke is easy,” the “burden is light.” Is there a social service to be conducted, collections to be made, sick

to be visited, or a Sunday-school class to be taught? he is ever ready and willing.

*He willingly assumes his portion of the financial obligations of the Church.*—Like David at the threshing-floor of Ornan (1 Chron. xxi), he will not accept the blessings and benefits of the Church without paying for them. He is not one who is ever trying to see how little he can pay. He is not willing to dead-head his way, and allow his brethren to pay for him. If he is ever so poor, he never fails to do his part financially. Every time he is waited upon by the stewards he does not pour a bucketful of complaints upon their innocent heads, against the pastor, or somebody else, in order to avoid the payment of his just dues. He does not remind his pastor how the early fathers lived, or that ministers “nowadays” are just preaching for the money. He is a man of common sense. When his pastor calls upon him for his missionary or other benevolent dues he does not accuse the Church of misappropriating the funds, or tell him that the mission-

aries are a lazy set of people who live in luxury and idleness. He wants to do his part. He does not stand and haggle with the Church to beat it down a few cents. All he has is from the Lord, and all he has is for the Lord. He is as jealous of the financial standing or character of the Church as he is of his own. He does not want to see the Church of Christ go begging as a tramp for subsistence.

*He is faithful in his attendance upon all the means of grace.* — He is crowded with business, but is such an efficient manager that his business and Church work do not conflict. He knows that the best business men are those who can always find time to care for the interests of the Lord. He is not a “protracted-meeting” Christian alone, and he does not attempt to draw a sufficient supply of spiritual rations during one or two months of the winter to keep him all the rest of the year. He is a steady, every-day Christian.

The stalwart Christian is a great-hearted, broad-gauged, whole-souled, symmetrical man.



It is an inspiration to meet him, to grasp his hand, to look into his face, to hear his cheery voice. It is a joy to preach to him. There is no yawning or gaping, no lolling upon the the pew, no consulting of watch, no indifferent or "hurry-up-I'm-tired" sort of a look; but his intelligent face full of love and sympathy, his bright eyes fixed upon the preacher, his ears open to every word, and his look of warm appreciation compel his pastor to preach.

Diogenes, come here with your torch! Look! Here is the man you were looking for! Here is one who bears the burdens of a dozen or more of his weaker brethren; and, like a great strong giant, moves on in storm and sunshine, with a happy heart, a clear conscience, a charitable soul, and a generous nature. He holds up the hands of his pastor. He is mighty in faith and works, and will at last die triumphant, without a fear, leap to heaven in a chariot of glory, and live forever!

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