

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

"What is your experience, brother? Tell us what the Lord has done for you." These are expressions with which the majority of professing Christians are familiar; and the responses to such a call from the leader of a meeting are generally a narration of the feelings or sensations experienced; some very thrilling, and others exceedingly common place: in short – Christian Experience from a prayer-meeting standpoint has become largely a matter of sensation. A man or woman may have known the Holy Scriptures from a child and taken them as a guide, may have followed the Saviour and lived soberly, righteously and godly in this world, and yet, if he or she cannot relate an "Experience" after the approved order, they are almost unchristianized by some.

Do not misunderstand me. I would not belittle anything by which a believer has been brought into communion with his God, or any sensation that may be the legitimate outgrowth of such communion.

I do believe, however, that this religion of sensation has been fostered and encouraged until it has reached an abnormal growth. Turning to the Word for light, we find that the term, in the sense in which [R1022 : page 2] it is now used, is unknown. The method in conversion as well as in practice has been completely revolutionized since the days of the Apostles.

What is Experience? According to Webster it is "wisdom gained from practice;" and this definition is very appropriate for Christian as well as worldly Experience. In Rom. 5:3,4 we read, "We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience, hope." Christian Experience is not merely sitting down quietly and letting the Spirit of God work in our hearts – it is eminently practical, and it is impossible to divorce experimental from practical Christianity. He who would relate an Experience of what the Lord has done for him must at the same time

narrate what he has done for the Lord. It may do while we are nestlings to open our mouths with the incessant cry, Give! Give! but a time comes when we must put away childish things, and meet the stern realities of the new life. It is not sufficient to pray "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" unless, when the service is shown us we immediately perform the duty, and thus become doers of the word.

Christian Experience is not the exaltation of feeling, or ecstasy that finds expression only when inspired by the ardent songs, prayers and exhortations of Christian fellowship; and he who is dependent upon such "means of grace" for his vitality, is but an infant in experience.

Christian Experience is "putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Christian Experience is growth – "To grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" to be rooted and grounded in Love, and grow up in all things like unto Him who is our Head.

Christian Experience is to build up a character, "adding to faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

Christian Experience is to be laborers in the Lord's vineyard, workers together with God; and it is to be soldiers of the Cross armed cap-a-pie with the whole armor of God, following the Captain of our salvation.

Christian Experience is visiting the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. As an example of true Christian experience the reader is referred to the experience of Paul as recorded in 2 Cor. 11 and 12.

It is in such schools as these that the Christians gain Experience; and this is the true Experience that worketh hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

– *Word of Truth.*
