

**APOLLOS: OR DIRECTIONS  
TO PERSONS  
JUST COMMENCING  
A RELIGIOUS LIFE**

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Apollos: Or Directions to Persons Just Commencing a Religious Life by Kendall Gould & Lincoln Gould

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**KENDALL GOULD & LINCOLN GOULD**

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# APOLLOS:

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1. REMEMBER that the commencement of the Christian life is to be like the "dawning light, which increaseth more and more to the perfect day." Therefore, when the hope of peace and pardon dawns in the heart, do not consider the great business of life as accomplished, but only as begun.

2. Do not expect so sudden and remarkable a change, as to leave no doubt of its reality. Did religion enter the soul in perfection, and to the entire exclusion of sin, the change would be so marked and obvious as to leave no room for doubt. But, usually, the Christian character is full of contrarities. There is a perpetual struggle between good and evil, and thus a continual competition of evidence for and against, according as the good or evil prevails.

3. Evidence of piety is not so much to be sought in *high emotions* of any kind, as in

real humility, self-distrust, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, sorrow for sin, and a *continual effort*, in every-day life, to regulate our thoughts, feelings and conduct by the word of God. It is the *nature* and not the *degrees* of our affections which is to be regarded in the examination of our evidences. Some persons are so *constituted*, that they are not susceptible of very strong emotions, and ought not to expect them, in reference to religion, any more than other subjects that interest the mind. The best way to know our feelings is, to see how they influence the *conduct*. "By their fruit ye shall know them."

4. Do not expect to find in your own case, everything you have heard or read of in the experience of others. For, it may be, many things we hear and read of, are not correct feelings, and do not afford just grounds of confidence to any one; and if they are *correct* experience, it may be the experience of a *mature* Christian, and not to be expected in the beginning of a religious life. It must be remembered that as no two countenances are formed alike, so no two hearts are fashioned alike, or placed in exactly the same circumstances; and it would be as vain to seek all the varieties of Christian experience in one

person, as to seek all the varieties of human features in one face.

5. Do not expect that the evidence desired will all come immediately and at once. It must come *progressively*, as the result of continued effort in obedience to the will of God.

6. Do not suppose that religion is a principle of such self-preserving energy, as that when once implanted in the soul it will continue to thrive and increase without effort. The plant of divine grace can no more thrive without care, and diligent and patient cultivation, than can those rare and valued plants, that demand the physical efforts and culture of man.

God will not sustain and bring to maturity the work of grace, without your own voluntary concurrence in the diligent use of means. He will not do it any more than he would cause the harvest to whiten in the field of the sluggard. Indulge, therefore, no such ideas of inability and dependence on God, as shall impair a full sense of perfect obligation to do whatever can be done in working out your own salvation. God never assists any but those who make efforts to aid and advance themselves.

7. Entertain no such ideas of the sove-



reignty of God in the bestowment of his grace, as would awaken any doubt of his affording needful aid, where he sees sincere endeavors to grow in grace. If some Christians are more eminent than others, it is simply because they make more *efforts* to be so, and God aids these efforts. So that all worldly-minded and indifferent Christians continue in this state, because they do not choose to make efforts to get out of it. Any person can be an eminent Christian that chooses to be so. Christians are too apt to feel as if eminence in piety was a distinction made by the sovereignty of God, and to suppose that high attainments are not within the reach of all, and that languid and inefficient piety is the result of divine sovereignty rather than negligence and sloth. A more false or more pernicious opinion cannot easily be adopted by Christians. The truth is, that the road to eminence in gifts and graces, and the means of obtaining them, are open to all who seek them, and if any do not obtain them, it is owing to their own sloth and inefficiency, and not to any deficiency on the part of God in blessing diligent efforts. It always pleases him to crown with success the hand of the *diligent* instead of the hand of the

slothful, not only in temporal but in spiritual things. This thought cannot be too strongly impressed upon the minds of those who are just commencing a Christian life. To them, *peculiarly*, are such promises as these directed: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. *Every one* that asketh receiveth," &c.

Do not be afraid of indulging in feelings which may seem to be right, from the fear of deception. On the contrary, cherish such feelings, and try to recall them often. Go forward and *do your duty*, and God will save you from deception while thus employed.

8. There is one caution which is *peculiarly* needful to those who have been greatly interested in the subject of religion, and that is, *to take particular care of the health.*

There is such a mysterious and intimate connection between the mind and the body, that one cannot be wearied or suffer, without affecting the other. When the mind is fatigued or exhausted, it affects the body, and this again reflects on the mind.

Every person ought to be aware, that the more anxiously and intensely the mind is interested on any subject, the greater is the

need of *exercise, sleep and frequent relaxation*. Attention to religion, does not demand that *all* lawful business be suspended, and forbid the neglect of all needful rest and exercise.

9. Do not expect to be made happy by religion, unless you become *eminent Christians*. A *half-way* Christian can neither enjoy the pleasures of the world nor the pleasures of religion; for his conscience will not let him seek the one, and he is too indolent to obtain the other. The Christian may be the happiest man on earth, but he must be a faithful, active and devoted Christian. None are disappointed in finding religion a source of unfailling peace and joy, but those who refuse to drink deep of the wells of salvation; unless we except those who, from some derangement of the nervous system, or failure of health, do not enjoy the clear and undisturbed exercise of their faculties. A healthy mind in a healthy body, may always be made happy by religion.

10. Do not look at the practice and example of *other* Christians, in forming the standard of piety at which you aim. The allowance of this thing has probably had a more disastrous influence on the church and on the world, than all other causes that