

Do We Grow?

A DIAGNOSTIC ON THE HEALTH OF THE SOUL
BASED ON THE THEOLOGY OF J.C. RYLE

This is not for the casual observer. This is for those who hunger for spiritual life.

“*Time is fast flying. Life is fast ebbing away. The hour is daily drawing nearer when the reality of our Christianity will be tested.*” ”



The Calibration

Distinguishing the Foundation from the Building.

JUSTIFICATION



- ✦ **Status:** A finished, perfect, and complete work.
- ✦ **Degrees:** None. The weakest saint is as completely justified as the strongest.
- ✦ **Security:** Cannot be added to or taken away from.
- ✦ **Quote:** "Complete in Christ."
(Col. ii. 10)

SANCTIFICATION



- ✦ **Status:** Admits of growth, progress, and increase.
- ✦ **Degrees:** Variable. Graces may be strong or weak, vigorous or feeble.
- ✦ **Trajectory:** Moving from strength to strength, faith to faith.

The Question "**Do We Grow?**" measures the **VIGOR** of the life within, not the **VALIDITY** of the title to heaven.

The Imperative of Progress



No Life. No Growth.



Life without Growth = Disease.



Healthy Life = Growth.

Why Growth Matters:

Evidence: It proves spiritual life exists.



Happiness: The growing man has the most joy and peace.



Usefulness: The world is shaken by those moving forward.



Pleasure to God: The Husbandman loves to see the vine bear fruit.

“The man who shakes and stirs minds...
is the believer who is continually improving.”

The Audit: 6 Marks of a Growing Soul

We require objective scriptural marks to measure progress, independent of our own feelings.

1



1. Increased Humility

2



2. Increased Faith & Love

3



3. Increased Holiness

4



4. Increased Spirituality of Taste

5



5. Increased Charity

6

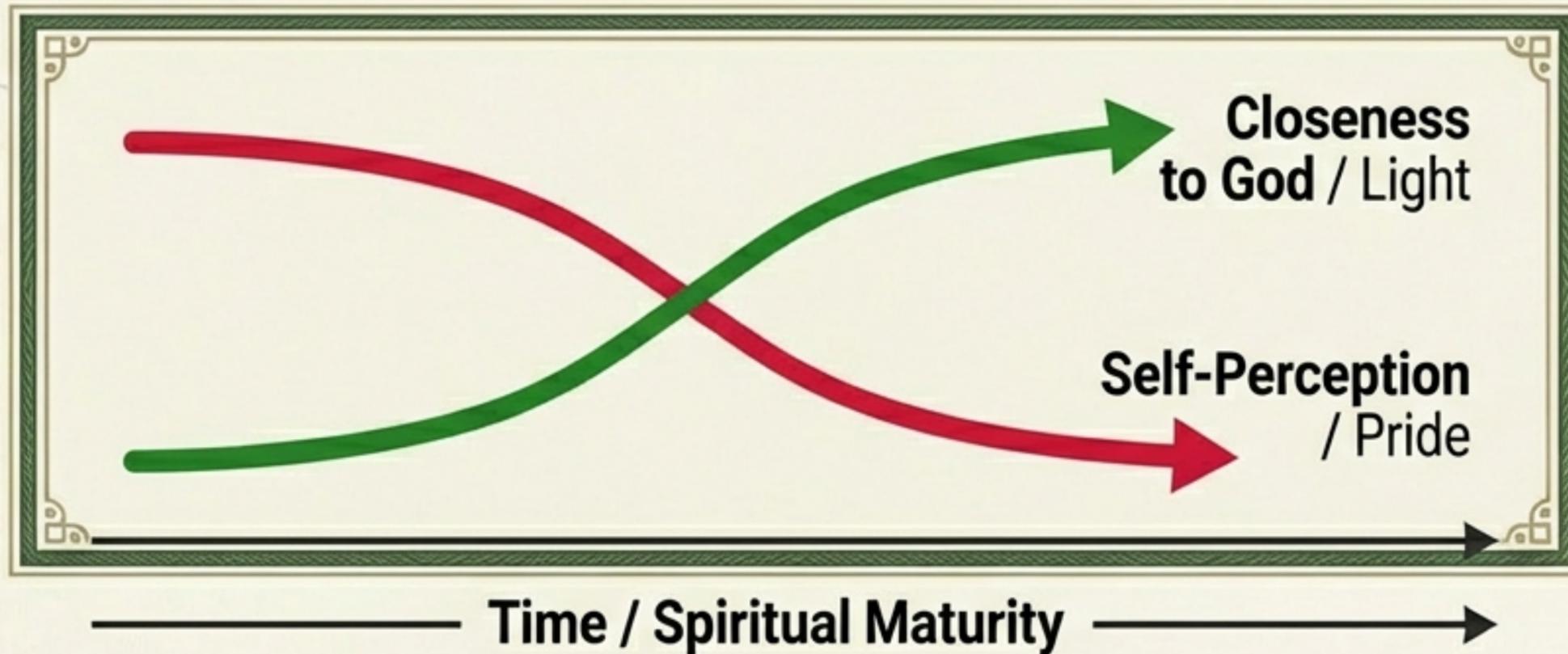


6. Increased Zeal

Warning:
These marks are the Scriptural standard, regardless of popularity.

AUDIT POINT 1

Increased Humility



The brighter the light, the more clearly we see the dust. The nearer we draw to God, the more we sense our own imperfection.

The Test: Do you see MORE of your shortcomings now than when you first believed?

The Trajectory of Saints

Daradox:

- **Abraham:** "Dust and ashes"
- **Job:** "I am vile"
- **David:** "I am a worm"
- **Paul:** "Chief of sinners"

AUDIT POINT 2

Increased Faith & Love

THEN (At Conversion):

Faith lays hold of the atonement for safety.



NOW (In Growth):

Faith discovers a thousand things in Christ not originally seen.

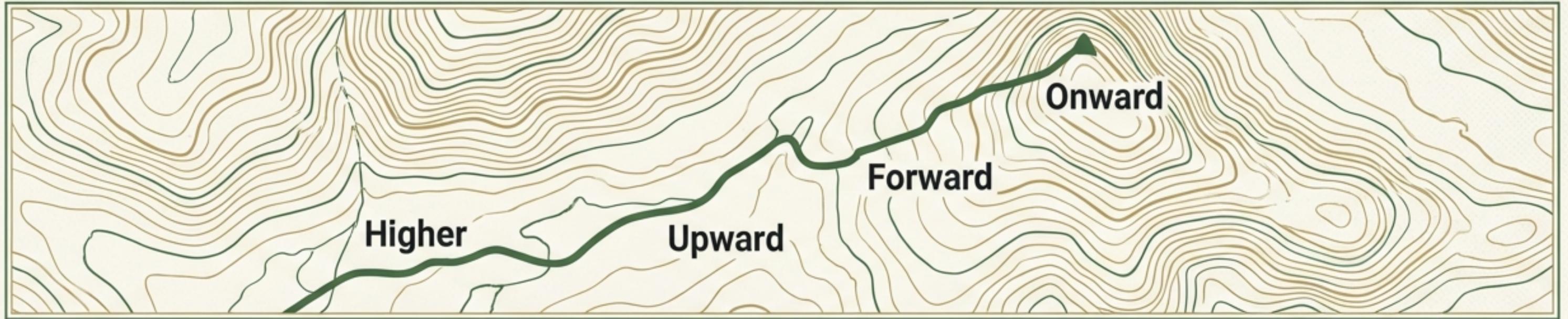
Resting on the Offices of Christ:

Substitute | Intercessor | Priest | Advocate | Physician | Shepherd | Friend

Key Metric: Finding more value in Him every year.

AUDIT POINT 3

Increased Holiness of Life



Definition: Getting dominion over sin, the world, and the devil.

The Practice: More careful about temper, words, and actions. Not content with “old attainments”.

**“A will more entirely in unison with God’s will;
a thirst for complete separation from sin.”**

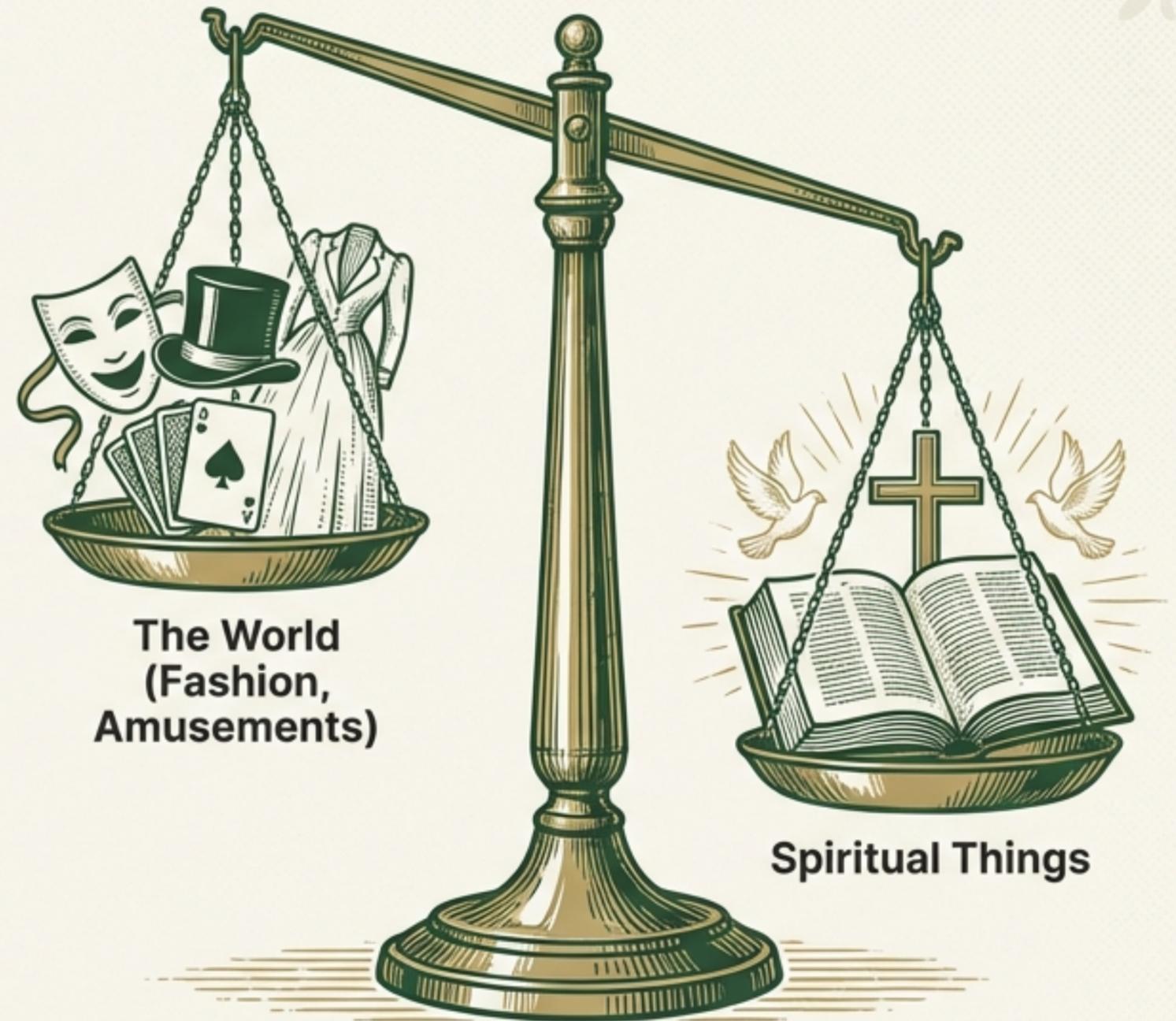
AUDIT POINT 4

Increased Spirituality of Taste

The Shift: The world has a constantly DIMINISHING hold on the affections.

The Analogy: The difference between a child's toys and a grown man's business.

Note: Not necessarily condemnation, but a change in value.



AUDIT POINTS 5 & 6

Output: Charity & Zeal

5. Increased Charity (The Disposition)

- ◆ **Active:** Growing disposition to take trouble for others.
- ◆ **Passive:** Growing disposition to bear provocation.
- ◆ Putting the best construction on conduct.

6. Increased Zeal (The Action)

- ◆ **Focus:** Greater interest in the salvation of others.
- ◆ **Persistence:** Working despite lack of results.
- ◆ **Sign of Decline:** Decreased interest in the souls of others.

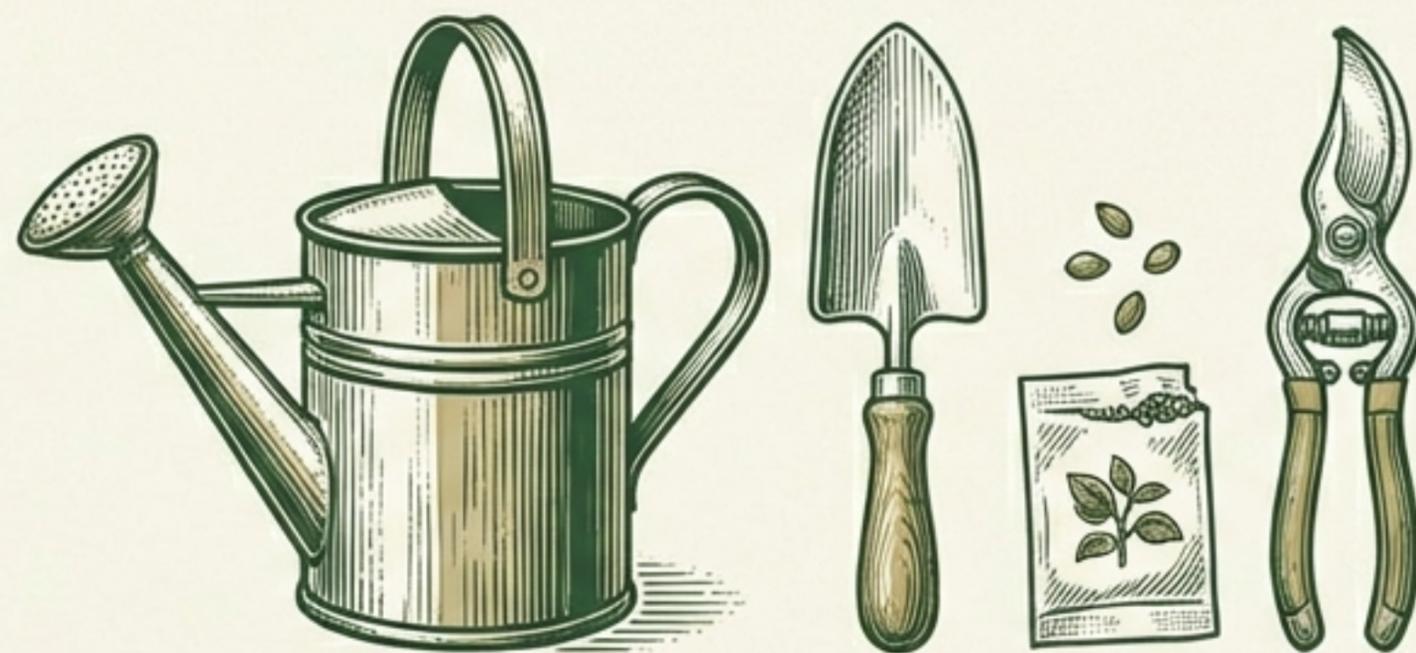
The Protocol: The Means of Growth

Agency and Diligence.

The Principle: Growth is a gift, but God works through means.

The Error: Waiting for a 'special grant' while sitting still.

The Truth: "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (Prov. xiii. 4)
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The Framework List:

1. **The Roots** (Private Means)
2. **The Atmosphere** (Public Means)
3. **The Habit** (Communion)

Means 1: Diligence in Private



Definition: Things a man must do by himself alone.

The Roots:

- Private Prayer
- Private Scripture Reading
- Private Meditation

We live in an age of hurry, bustle, and excitement. Many run “to and fro” hearing sermons but neglect to be still. If you are wrong here, you are wrong all the way through.

Means 2 & 3: Environment

Public Means

The Snare: Familiarity. Mechanical repetition of prayers and hymns.



The Fix: Appetite. Use ordinances with freshness. Loss of appetite is a sign of disease.

Caution in Company

The Reality: Disease is infectious; health is not.

The Prescription: Intimacy with worldly friends harms the soul. Seek friends who stir you up about your Bible.



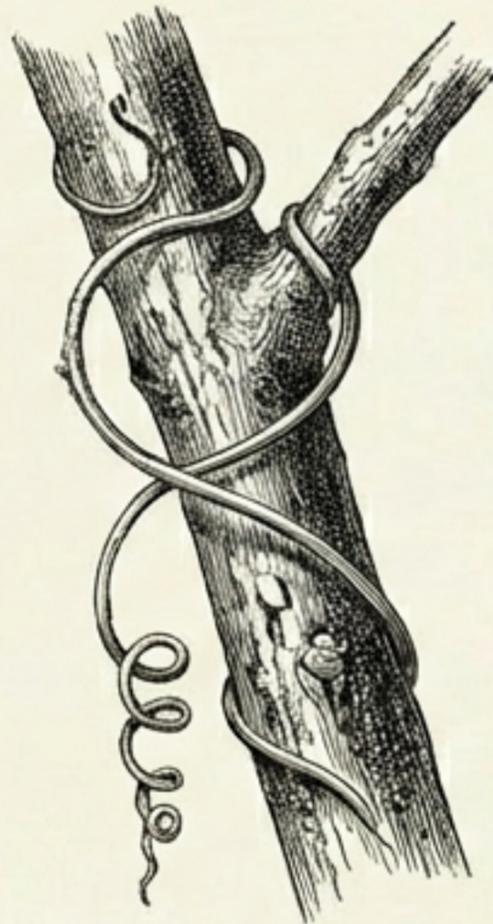
Means 4 & 5: Micro-Habits

Means 4: Watchfulness

Focus on Little Things: Tempers, tongues, use of time.

Analogy: Decay begins at the extreme end of little branches.

Thought: We serve a precise God.



Means 5: Habitual Communion

The Distinction: One may have UNION (Salvation) but little COMMUNION (Intimacy).

The Habit: Daily pouring out of the heart to a Friend. Consulting Him on every step.

The Prognosis

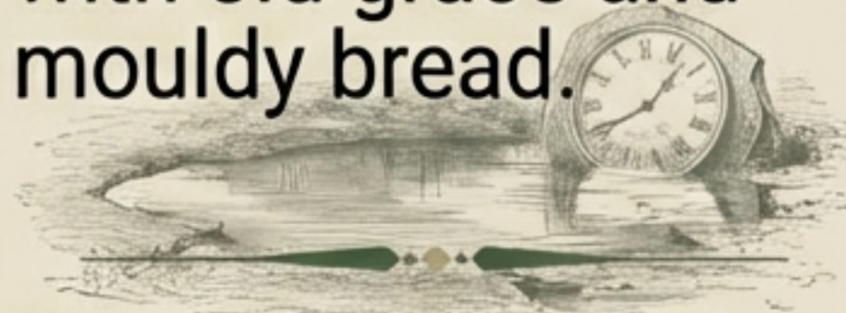
The Dead

Condition: Know nothing of growth. "Sunday clothes" religion.

Prescription: Awake! You are you are committing suicide of the soul.

The Stagnant

Condition: Content with old grace and mouldy bread.



Prescription: Find the secret sin. Resolve to find the reason you stand still.

The Unaware

Condition: Growing but feel small. Face shines but they do not know it.

Prescription: Do not look at your own attainment. Look at Christ.

GO FORWARD.

The Reality:

Growth often requires the “pruning knife” of sickness, loss, and disappointment. Winter weather kills weeds and deepens roots.



Final Charge:

Ignore the lie that you can be “too holy”. Mind your own business. Follow Him.

In the great matter of personal holiness, are we getting on?