

Glimpses

OF

TRUTH

1870-1871



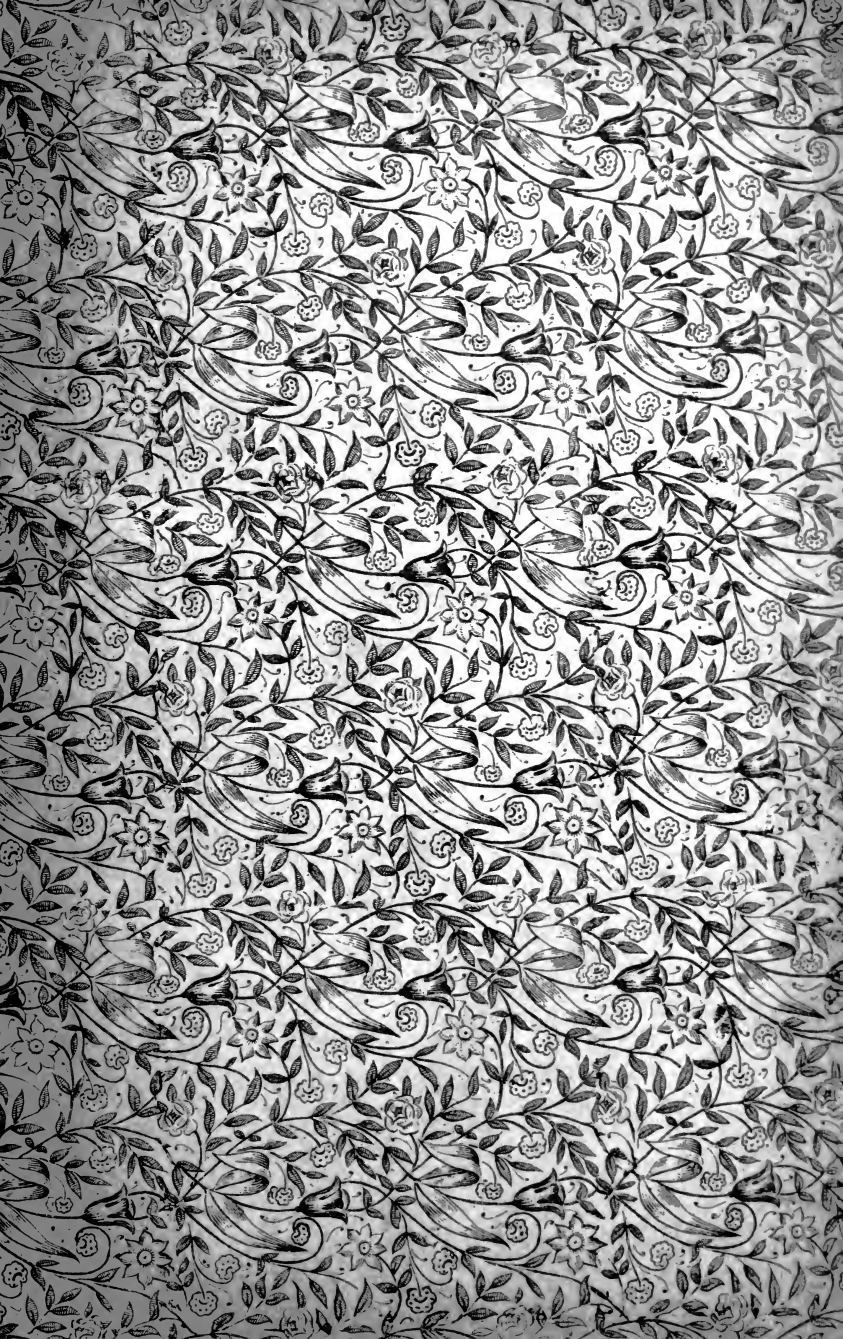
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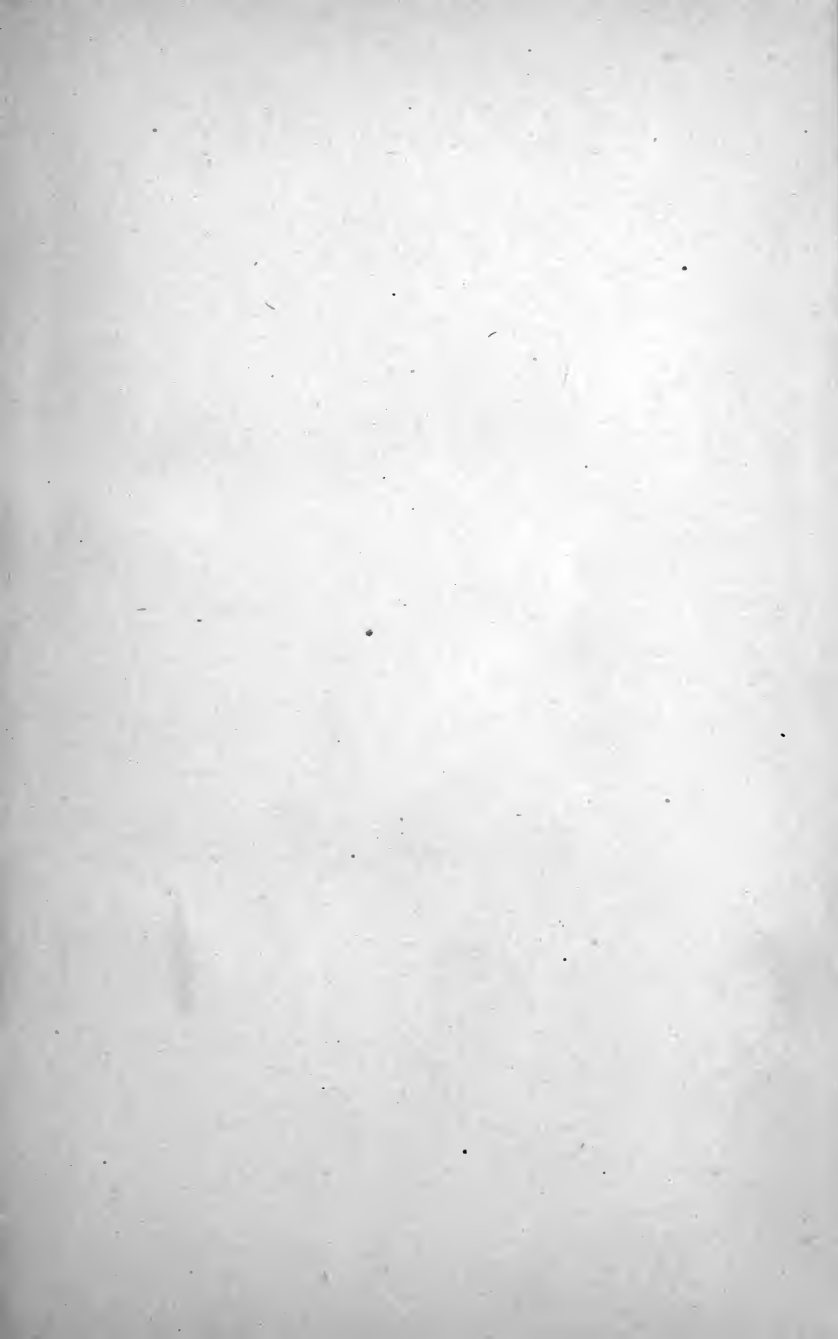
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GLIMPSSES OF TRUTH:

Spiritual, Ethical, Practical.

BY

O. P. FITZGERALD, D. D.

(NASHVILLE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, 1878-1883.)



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EXPLANATORY AND PREFATORY.

THIS book was called for by many persons in different places. I arranged the matter for the printer, and then, having misgivings, withheld it. The call was renewed in a way that looked to me like a providential intimation, and then I went forward with the matter—and here is the result. I pray that God may bless it.

O. P. FITZGERALD.

NASHVILLE, September 3, 1883.







INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

BY BISHOP GRANBERY.

THE light sword of Saladin was a match for the battle-ax of Richard. Inspiration has sanctioned the use of proverbs as a mode of instruction. Many who, for want of time or taste, will not read elaborate works may be reached by apothegms and brief essays. All have spare minutes which they may improve by reading the short, sharp sayings of the wise. All have moods in which they prefer a sententious to a copious style, and suggestions of truth to formal discussion. Throughout our Church there has been a general expression of admiration for the pointed sentences and paragraphs of Dr. Fitzgerald. They are good for the use of edifying. They are flashes of light for the understanding, arrows of conviction for the conscience, refreshing essences for weary souls. We need to be more diligent in providing and circulating a wholesome literature. These Glimpses as the author modestly names them, these Gems as they have been called by his readers, should have a wide diffusion.

J. C. GRANBERY.







Glimpses of Truth.







MAKE A CLEAN START.

MAKE a clean start with the new year. Lay aside every weight, that you may run well the race set before you. You have been in wrong ways, get out of them now. You have long purposed to make changes for the better. The time is propitious for action.

Begin the new year by healing the wounds of affection and friendship. Alienations in Church and social and home relations are heavy hinderances to the Christian life. They darkened your sky last year. The thought of the injury received, of the bitter speech reported to your ears, intruded itself upon you even in the place of secret prayer, and fettered the movement of your soul in the worship of the sanctuary. The friction in the home-life made the wheels of family religion drag all through the year. These roots of bitterness in the heart stunted the growth of every flower that blooms in that garden of the Lord. You have brooded over the wrongs or little slights that made the trouble until the arrow has gone still deeper

into your heart. It was your brother in Christ, your own familiar friend, that did it, and therein was the keenness of the sting to you. There has been constraint in your intercourse, and a shadow on your spiritual life. The cold and the stolid escape suffering and loss from this cause. The best natures are often the greatest sufferers and losers. They cannot lose a friend without keen pangs and permanent regret, nor be content while the slightest cloud is between them and those they love. The beginning of the new year is the time to cure these alienations. Readjustment of disturbed relationships is in order. But how? Get down on your knees and ask God for wisdom, and you will get the right answer for every case. First of all, be reconciled in your heart to your brother. This may be effected without any coöperation but God's. If he has done aught against thee, forgive him. It may take fasting and prayer to cast out the devil of resentment, but do it. Do not begin the new year with such dark companionship. Get your heart right, and then you may win back your brother. Do not stand on punctilio. Be not too proud or stiff to make the first overture for peace. But, you reply, he was in the wrong, and ought to make confession and reparation. You think so; but there may be another side to the question. He

may have seen it in a different light. A difference in the stand-point makes a marvelous difference in the looks of things. Do not be too rigid in your exactions. Perhaps the heart of your alienated brother is yearning for peace. He waits because you wait; the years creep by, and the end cometh. Speak the reconciling word now, and start with the new year disburdened of this load.

Make a clean start in your home. It is not more love that you need, but more self-command, more patience, more thoughtfulness. During the past year you have heedlessly given many a wound to dear ones that you would be ready to die for. You have hated yourself for doing it, and yet you have not ceased doing it. Impatient and angry speech has grown into a habit that has clung to you to the last day of the old year. Do not take this burden with you into the new year. Guard your heart and your lips. Do not, in the very wantonness of unguarded words, turn the paradise of home into a hell of petty discord and gratuitous alienation. Instead of the thistles that you sowed last year, plant now the flowers of patience and loving words. Begin with the new year to fight this battle. It may go hard at first, but you will win. Exercise your will; force yourself into the right ways, and soon the potency of

the wonderful law of habit will assert itself, and you will be victorious. And be sure God will help you.

Take no wrong habit into the new year. You are running for a prize. Lay aside every weight. Make a clean start.



THE supplemental Christian is the man who does all he can to make up for the shortcomings of the shirkers. His measure of service is the measure of need. "As much as in me is," is his motto. He keeps back no part of the price. According to his ability he holds himself responsible to the Master. What is done by others is no standard for him. He rises above the dead level. And there is a countless multitude of such—holy men and women who have no name on earth, but who will shine as the stars forever.

Nothing but the shock of the final catastrophe of the lost soul at the judgment will awaken many to see how foolish and how wicked it is to make the delinquencies of another the pretext for neglecting the great salvation.

The man who is always ready to avail himself of the benefits of Church organization, while shirking its burdens, has adopted ethics below the level of a mock-auction house.

Every shout of error over any apparent triumph this side of the judgment is premature.

When the thought of the nearness of God is delightful to you, then he *is* near.

The thought that enlarges your view of religious truth, and stimulates your movement in the new life, is doubly yours after you have expressed it. Duty and advantage prompt obedience to the command of God to Christians to exhort, comfort, and edify one another.

When a preacher finds himself opposed and denounced by men whose gains are made at the expense of the best interests of society, he may console himself with the reflection that his Master was in the same relation to such parties.

A Church cannot have momentum and speed without some friction. A train in motion can be heard. No forward movement of Christianity was ever made without alarming somebody.

When a man sets up as a reformer, if he is not better than the average of his fellow-citizens, he is sure to be a good deal worse—superadding hypocrisy to ordinary depravity.

If your child should begin in earnest to follow Christ, what change would be necessary in your life to meet the new demand upon you? Make that change now.

Some preachers seem to aspire to be only skillful empirics. They train the Church into the practice of a perpetual empiricism. Rather, they do not train it at all. They let it drift along until an emergency arises, trusting to luck, or to their fertility in temporary expedients for extrication. Two classes of men fall into this error—the incapables and the egotists. The one class have no forethought and organizing ability, and the other have too much self-conceit.

The physician who is also a Christian can place his feet directly in the foot-prints of his Master, and the flowers of paradise will blossom where he has gone.

A professor of mathematics who does not know the multiplication-table is no more out of place than a Sunday-school teacher without religion.

It is worse than folly—it is sin—to ask, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” when your inmost purpose is to please yourself only.

The intermittent laborer in the vineyard of the Lord does just enough work to make disappointment and confusion when he shirks.

The man who worked himself into a competency and respectability makes a great mistake when he keeps his son from regular habits of industry. His object may be to make a gentleman out of him, but the job, when finished, will more likely turn out to be a loafer.

A true preacher is not merely an expounder of truth; he is also a witness of its saving power. He who has lost or never had this power may get hearers, but he will not have converts.

There might be a temptation even to a good man to keep up a quarrel that has profited him, after the occasion was gone; to a bad man the temptation would be irresistible.

Only those who win can wear in any true sense of the word. You must earn all you enjoy. The attempt to evade this law makes drones, thieves, cheats, failures.

Do not wait for impulses to do good, but when you do feel a warm impulse wait not a moment. Then you can do your best.

Be sure of this: The most favored will fail if they do not strive for salvation; the least favored will succeed if they do.

Beware of lowering the standard of possible Christian attainment because of the defective practice prevalent in the Churches. Your Lord beckons you up to the heights of holiness: go, if you must go alone.

The Christian who is truly growing in grace grows also in graciousness. The very look from the eyes and tone of the voice betray the presence of the indwelling Christ.

Can a man who is not seeking to obtain all that God is willing to give please him? Do you get here a hint of the secret of your lack of spiritual comfort and joy?

When the worst elements of society praise you because of your "liberality" in dealing with the vices by which they live, it is time for you to pause and meditate.

Your high ideal of holiness is from God. That means that it may be attained by you. If it may be attained, why not now grasp the prize in the strength of God?

The man or the woman whose daily work is so hurried as to exclude prayer is busier than God wants anybody to be.

Do not be surprised when you find the same man at one moment throwing himself against overwhelming odds for his convictions, and at another trying to quibble out of his brave committal. He has cooled down. There is no glow in cold iron. _____

One Christian man in a hundred when he meets with some unexpected good fortune in business takes it as an intimation that he should do more for the cause of Christ. The other ninety-nine think of nothing but to grab for more. _____

It is sad to think how many souls may be worried, clouded, and tempted to sin by one ill-balanced, impulsive, hasty-speaking man. Do not, in assenting to this, look round for the man—look within. _____

Gray-haired Christian men go out of curiosity to hear every thing most sacred to them defamed by a professional blasphemer. Their sons go to the places that take hold on hell from the same motive. _____

When the pulpit goes as far as the New Testament goes in its teaching as to the necessity and attainability of holiness, there is always an upward movement among the people.

Good praying habits are as needful for the soul as good eating habits are for the body; but thousands are particular about the dinner-hour who make no provision for the hour of prayer.

We have known Christian women to kiss a young convert belonging to their own sex and circle with real joy and wet eyes, and then drop the whole matter. Have you known such a one?

The bill for the tuition of a daughter in one of the best schools is paid more reluctantly by some parents than that for a fashionable "hop" and its *et cæteras*.

The man who believes he can live the Christian life as well out of the Church as in it has studied the Bible and his own heart to little purpose.

The preacher delivered a very able and learned discourse to convince skeptics—who were absent. The flock went back home hungry that day.

You have the right to criticise any public man, but do not whisper to another what you would be afraid for him to hear.

A man who is willing to work for Christ does not need the leverage of official position to make himself felt. Work is always ready for willing hands. A path of usefulness always opens before the advance of willing feet.

The discovery in your spiritual nature of some unexpected blemish is not a cause of discouragement but of humble gratitude. It is the first step in the process of cleansing.

The poorest of all remedies for trouble on shipboard is to jump overboard into the raging sea. People that leave the Church because of personal difficulties are just as unwise.

The man who has one code of ethics for business and another for legislation will betray a public trust at the first temptation. An apple rotten on one side is a bad apple.

The man who drew back after pledging himself to a great enterprise of the Church did not intend to kill it, but he did. Weakness and panics are contagious.

Do not let a false notion of dignity stand in the way of conciliation. Peace is worth any sacrifice except that of principle.

Watch! There is in the word security, not alarm. To watch is to make provision in time. It is to exercise forethought. The general who has made the wisest disposition possible of his forces, properly stationed his pickets, and taken all due precaution against surprise, may lie down in his tent and rest. His mind is at ease when his duty is done. The farmer who has plowed, sowed, and diligently cultivated his fields may trust in God and quietly wait for the harvest. The captain of the ship who has duly consulted his compass and chart, and prognosticated the weather, may sail on with a calm and courageous heart. The traveler who does not dread the highwayman is the one who is well armed. The watchful Christian is the peaceful Christian.

It is not to be expected that there shall be strong faith in the conversion of their children on the part of parents who are themselves only nominal Christians; they cannot well go beyond their own experience in their aspirations, hopes, and prayers for their children.

The minister leads the people in prayer. But a long, rambling, pointless prayer leads nowhere. The remedy for this sort of praying is really earnest desire for some one thing.

The field of petition is as wide as human want and capability—it is literally boundless. But it does not all come at once within the range of vision. Some things may be left for other occasions and to the infinite wisdom and goodness of God. There must be concentration of thought, desire, aspiration. If taught by the word and led by the Spirit, this concentration will take place. Believest thou this? “We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.” The providence of God, the leadings of the Holy Spirit, and the dictates of common sense coincide here, and the true believer is taught what to pray for as he ought and when he ought. In genuine revivals of religion this is graciously and wondrously illustrated before our eyes. In the lives of many Christians this truth is a personal experience so often repeated that their faith staggers not under its weight of meaning, nor shrinks back abashed at such a marvelous manifestation of the love of God to men. They have learned in all things to make known their requests unto God with thanksgiving. They understood the voice which says, “Ask, and ye shall receive.” They know that their prayers are heard, for they have the witness in themselves.

The apostolic Church was a singing Church. The disciples sang hymns when they met on the Lord's day. They sang when they were happy; they sang when they were sad. Paul was a singer—witness his taking part in that joyful duet with his brother Barnabas in jail. The earthquake that followed, making the massive prison-house shake to its foundations, might be considered symbolic of many subsequent occasions in the history of the Church, when, borne on the wings of holy song, the faith of worshipping multitudes has invited the descent of the Holy Ghost in soul-converting and soul-enrapturing power.

Let every parent remember that his child will follow his example, and not his precept, where they conflict with each other. It is in vain that you tell your boy not to do what you do. Indeed, correct precept is positively harmful when conjoined with wrong practice, for to the child it seems as if you were superadding hypocrisy to wrong-doing.

In studying the Bible, the first thing is to have a relish for it. To the renewed and consecrated soul this relish comes by its own law. If you have it not, you need the grace of spiritual perception. Pray for that.

The condition of possessing religious joy is that it shall be the chief joy of the soul. It will hold no second place. It is the joy of complete consecration. The joy of the Holy Ghost will not live in a divided heart. There must be perfect submission to God, unreserved devotion to his service, before it can be felt. The love of the world will quench it at once. It must be kept alive by prayer. It must be fed by communion with the word of God. No man may expect to know the joy of religion who does not make his religion the chief thing in all things and at all times.

This may be the bridal year of your soul. You know not the day nor the hour when the bridegroom may come. Before the next new year you may be in that wondrous sphere where faith changes to sight, and hope to fruition; where you shall see your Lord face to face, and be where he is forever. Let your lamp be trimmed and burning. Sublime possibilities are before you. Watch, and be ready.

It is the quality of ministerial labor that tells in the long run. Be concerned, therefore, only for this one thing: That you put your best into all you do, from the sermon on Sunday to the casual greeting to a child on the street.

The Church must to some extent conform itself to the requirements of the complex civilization of our times. In a more primitive state of society its organization was more simple, and there was less danger that its spiritual life might be engulfed in the vortex of temporalities. This danger is to be obviated, not by lopping off these agencies and discarding the machinery of the modern Church. This cannot and will not be done. The present system, though doubtless imperfect, is the outgrowth of existing conditions and necessities, and must therefore be maintained in its essential features. The further secularization of the Church can be prevented only in one way, namely, by using only religious methods and infusing a fervent religious spirit into all its work. Every part of Church-work must be used as a means of grace. The preacher must expect a blessing in arranging for his collections as well as in preparing his sermons. The clink of the money contributed by willing hearts to the cause of God must be as sweetly musical to the soul as the melodious revival chorus.

The trimmer is in a pitiable position when he is forced to take sides in a fight for the right after it is too late to save either his usefulness or his reputation for manliness.

Give the world six days out of the seven, and what can be expected but that the world will get six-sevenths of the man? To allow all the thoughts and feelings to flow unobstructed in a worldly channel all the week, and then expect that they can be made to take another direction at such short notice, and flow heavenward in a vigorous current, is to expect the most palpable contradiction of the laws of moral action. If the week-day life be absorbed by the world, how can it be expected that the Sunday life will be truly hid with Christ in God? The Christian life is not a parenthesis, as many seem to think.

The men and women who take delight in reading the details of the doings of vicious people of both sexes would take equal delight in witnessing or participating in them were they not restrained by the conventionalities of society. Read the foregoing sentence slowly, and then—apply it.

A joyless religion indicates to the world that its possessor has given up its enjoyments and gotten nothing instead. This is a stumbling-block to many.

To-day links itself to all days. Despair is stupidity in a soul that has immortality ahead.

In many, if not most, cases a subtle unbelief is at the bottom of the neglect of holiness. It is looked upon as the privilege of the few, not the heritage of the many. It is regarded as a prize beyond the reach of all except a few who are specially endowed and specially favored. Thus it happens that this neglect of holiness assumes the name and garb of humility itself, the blackness of unbelief robing itself in the garments of light. _____

A dying Church has a weak voice. A dead Church is dumb. Proxy worship satisfies such as have only a name to live and yet are dead. The rounded periods of the pulpit rhetorician and the artistic notes of the choir are enough for him whose religion is merely a form. When the proxy system reaches vocal solos and prayers in a dead language, it has touched bottom. _____

The man or woman who is not trying to be helpful to others cannot be more than half a Christian. The very essence of Christianity is love in action. This is the spirit of Christ, and if any man have not this spirit he is none of his. _____

Like a crack in a wall, a small fracture in a friendship endangers it all. Repair it at once.

When a body of Christian ministers comprises an unusual number of men of talent and aggressive temperament, the only way by which they can save themselves from collisions and antagonisms among themselves is to pray much for the mind that was in Christ, and be always about their Master's business. Such is the subtlety of Satan that the very gifts of the men who serve at the altars of the Church are perverted to the disturbance of its peace and the hinderance of its prosperity.

The most mischievous apostles of ignorance are not the ignoramuses that openly oppose all liberal learning and culture, but the learned fools whose pedantry and impracticability prove that their minds are mere lumber-rooms, not workshops. Unassuming ignorance is less repulsive than pretentious folly.

The true minister of Christ not only shines, but burns. His sermons have both an intellectual and a spiritual glow. He not only studies, but he prays. The trouble with some is that they shine, but burn not.

The maintenance of a reverent spirit is impossible in the circle where profanity is *quoted* laughingly by professed Christians.

The gospel of Jesus Christ embodies the only principles on which a free government can rest. It enforces not only justice, but requires mercy in the dealings of men with one another. Despotism on the one hand, and communism and all kindred errors on the other, flee before the face of a genuine Christianity as she walks the earth armed with the power and radiant with the glory of God.

Two things may be profitably borne in mind concerning the mission-work of the Church: It cannot fail, and it cannot be hurried to its consummation by any short cuts. The word of God is pledged for its success, and the Church must make the requisite outlay in faith, prayer, labor, money, and patience.

To build a flimsy story of Greek on a rickety foundation of half-knowledge of English syntax and mathematics, is not the best way of making great preachers.

The Church militant is so called because it is to fight against sin, not because of its internal strife. Mark the distinction.

The revival method that really brings the revival is the right one.

Every appointment in the bounds of an Annual Conference must be filled by somebody. The magnanimity that would give the post of difficulty and hardship to another every time is very common, but it is not of the Pauline type.

One gifted *alumnus* of a Christian college molded into the image of Jesus, and sent out under the call of God to preach the gospel, is worth to the Church and the world more than any one institution among us has cost.

As long as the vices that would exclude a man from decent parlors do not disqualify him for leadership in a party fight, political corruption is inevitable.

Christianity insists on separation from the world. The world insists on amalgamation. The pastors must see to it that the world shall not carry this point.

The time to push a thing is when you can. Do not wait until the ebb-tide before you launch the needed Church enterprise.

As to the fact, the philosophy, and the fruits of intercessory prayer, the average Christian is scarcely half awake.

When two souls have once consented to partnership in evil, they are thenceforth singularly powerless to help each other in the direction of goodness. The guilty secret strikes them with moral paralysis and dumbness.

The early Christians "laid by" the funds necessary to meet the Church collections. Many Christian men of our day are careful enough to lay by for the civil tax-gatherer, but leave God's claim at hap-hazard.

If you will be patiently silent in dealing with an excitable but honest man, all the severe things you are provoked to say of him he will say of himself. He will become his own reprover and punisher.

The soul that does not find peace in God on this side of the grave could not enjoy God in heaven. "The kingdom of God is within you."

If you have any experience that is too precious to be shared with your fellow-believers, you have gone beyond your Lord.

The promise is that you shall overcome. Do not be surprised, therefore, that you must fight; the promise implies that.

Highway robbery is respectable compared with the meanness in trade that systematically cheats the ignorant. The name of one of these pettiest frauds on the Church-register is enough to freeze the very current of salvation in its flow.

The moment a "reform party" in politics has a fair prospect for success, the rascals seek admission to its ranks. And herein is a great difficulty in the way of those who are honestly battling for reform in this very free country of ours.

All officials in Church and State are blamable for the maladministration they carelessly overlook as well as for that of which they are themselves guilty. Let executives execute, and let directors direct.

The trusting, peaceful heart invites the approach of the soul-hungry and burdened. It is a bad sign when months and years elapse and no one asks your religious sympathy and help.

Suspect the soundness of the new opinions which have come to you suddenly as the result of a change of circumstances.



THE HOLY SPIRIT NOW.

CHRISTIANITY is nothing if it be not supernatural. Its motives, methods, inspiration, and powers are of the "world to come." It savors not the things that be of men, but those that be of God. The supernatural element is not confined to the great historic facts in which the gospel had its origin. Provision was made for its perpetuation in the experience and operations of the Church to the end. The descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of the promise of the Son of God, to "send the Comforter, that he may abide with you forever," and illustrative and representative of the processes by which the integrity and efficiency of the Church should be maintained in all after-times. Here the gift was bestowed upon each member of the company of disciples. It was an individual experience. The record is, "It sat upon each of them." That, therefore, which Paul asked the twelve disciples whom he found in Ephesus, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost

since ye believed?" became the test-question of the Christian faith. All argument and appeal to believers, henceforth, proceed upon the assumption that they "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." It is the plea against the Judaizing apostasy and desecration of personal sanctity. It is the condition of success in Christian undertaking, the defense against error, the pledge of highest attainments in personal experience, and the earnest of the incorruptible and eternal inheritance. The elimination of the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit is fatal to the character of the Church of God, and to individual Christian life.

To all this, however, we must add the other side of truth. Fanaticism severs what God has joined together, and recognizes no normal relation between the natural and the supernatural. The reception of the Holy Ghost is supposed to supersede all natural endowments and render their employment useless, or even obstructive. The bestowment of "power from on high" is presumed to lift every man to the highest level of efficiency, and fit him for the discharge of any and all functions in the Christian economy, without consideration of original ability or training. The whole of God's work in the natural life is made void. It is not

brought over into the new life, purified, refined, intensified, and set in higher relations. It is simply disavowed and repudiated, as unfit for the kingdom of God; and appeal is made to spiritual powers as in no way and to no extent associated with the natural faculties.

Thus it sometimes happens that a good man is put into the ministry without any faculties of utterance or administration. His piety is assumed to be sufficient qualification. Many a raw, untrained mind is thrust into the work, and very extensive and literal application is given to special promises of help and enlargement. There is much wonder and disappointment at the years of feeble performance, or entire failure, consequent in such cases. It is sometimes claimed that by virtue of the possession of the Spirit of God the whole Church and all its members ought to be able to work miracles to-day as the apostles did. Efforts of this sort are now and then made, kindling a momentary enthusiasm to be followed by inevitable reaction and disaster to faith. In many other forms this same error repeats itself, with more or less hurt to the faith, and, in every instance, for lack of due observance of the limitations and directions imposed by God in natural ordinations.

The fact is, that one of the best proofs of the

truth of the divine origin of Christianity is to be found in the perfect correspondence between its order and operations and the character and conditions of men. Every element of the gospel is perfectly adjusted to the appointments and appurtenances of our present life. We are not taken out of the world when we are put in possession of the powers of the world to come, nor are we released from the obligation of conformity to the laws and limitations under which God has placed us. All the powers of the gospel work within the channels and through the faculties of the present life. Undoubtedly the range of a man's life is immensely enlarged by the revelations made to him. He is conscious of direct relations to God and unseen things. Motives are furnished of weight and urgency hitherto unknown. His mind, operating upon higher and subtler things, acquires a keenness and breadth far beyond what would be possible to him under mere natural conditions. Sensibility is more acute and profound. No man can know the extent to which capability of expansion may go. We do know that the current thought of to-day, even among our children and uneducated classes, is far in advance of that proper to cultivated heathenism; and there are yet to be results achieved in the mind and character of

man, through the agency of the gospel, beyond all present conception. But all this is after God's regular way of working. The spirit in man receives the inspiration of the Almighty, which gives him understanding. Neither is without the other.

Accordingly, the individual character and features of each man are preserved under the economy of Christianity, and his proper place and functions are assigned to each. Paul, John, and Peter are not lost in a dead-level of uniformity. Each is recognized by his peculiar qualities, and does a work that neither of the others can do. God distributes to every man according to his several ability. His faith, while it has the same origin, object, and end in its efficient and practical forms, is determined by the constituents of his constitution. Brain and heart, mind and will, condition the active operations of his faith. His individuality is not lost. Hence, "a measure of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." One is an apostle, one a prophet, one an evangelist, one a pastor, or teacher, and so on, through all the orders of Church-life. One speaks with tongues, one has gifts of healing, one works miracles. A special adaptation is made of spiritual truth to the endowments, conditions, and possibilities of each man.

There are diversities of gifts. Each is required to observe the analogy of faith, and confine himself to the special function for which he is prepared of God. The matter is very lucidly set forth in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, twelfth chapter, which treats of spiritual gifts, and in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which gives direction to practical life.

So, too, in preparing men for work, God has not despised his own laws. He has availed himself of descent, association, education, whenever he had a great work in view. The apostles, unlearned and ignorant, after the rabbinical notion, were taught by the best teacher the world ever saw, by the best methods which he could employ, the precise things they were required to know, before entering upon their ministry; and after their years of instruction, the Spirit enhanced their powers, and supplied the one thing needful to make them able ministers of the New Testament.

We have no reason to suppose that God does otherwise now. Natural endowments determine a man's place in the world, and the Spirit sanctifies them, brings out latent forces in him, and makes of him the best of which he is capable. Only in one regard does the Spirit work to uniformity: we are all to be conformed

to the image of God's Son. But it will require the special features of likeness in each and every one to be combined to make an approximation to a perfect image of Him who is the image of the invisible God. Eye, ear, hand, all the organs, each unlike every other, each receiving the vital force for different use, and giving to it its own functional expression, unite to make up the one body which is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.



SO strong is the tendency to forget what are the real elements of the power of the gospel, and such is the fatal readiness of men to turn blessings into curses, that the genuine triumphs of New Testament Christianity at one period become a snare and a cause of weakness and disaster at another. The spirituality, the zeal, and the aggressiveness that result in the conversion of multitudes, and the enlargement of the Church in numbers and in wealth, are lost sight of, and the Church which in its beginning was mighty through God, despite its fewness and its poverty, becomes impotent for the glorious spiritual ends of the gospel, despite its numbers and its wealth. The conquering army becomes a fortified garrison. Its banners, which had waved over advancing hosts, and were planted on the strongholds of the enemy, flap lazily over sleeping encampments, or trail the ground in ignominious defeat. The strength of the Church becomes weakness, its light is turned into darkness, because it substituted a carnal policy for the supernatural forces of the kingdom of God.

The times demand men for public office that have not only good intentions but strong wills. Weakness yields to organized wickedness. The day of figure-heads is past—we want men.

The unity of the Christian Church is dear to every true Christian. Some would attain it by alluring or coercing all professed followers of Christ to come within their own inclosure; others would attain it by breaking down all doctrinal walls, and turning everybody loose upon the unfenced commons of creedlessness. Both fail of success. The only practical unity now is the unity of the Spirit. Where this prevails, there is no biting or devouring one another. The lamb-like spirit will insure peace in all the folds of the one flock of Christ.

Education for your children, under the best moral, mental, and physical influences, is the best investment you can make for them. And yet there are men who are hoarding money to be left to half educated, idle, aimless sons who will spend it in a way that will look like retribution for paternal folly.

The philanthropy that confines itself to its own social circle exclusively is not Christian philanthropy. Let it be called by what name it may, it is only selfishness.

Many a Diotrephes, in seeking to have the preëminence, only puts himself into the pillory by succeeding in his ambitious desires.

In a ride through the country a few days ago we observed that, while the plum-bushes and peach-trees were in blossom, and the beeches budding, the old gnarled oaks showed no sign that spring had come. But in a few days more these monarchs of the woods will also show the effects of the genial rays of the sun, and soon forest and hedge and orchard will rejoice together in the revival of their leafy summer glory. So, in nearly every revival of religion that has ever come under our direct notice, the work of grace has first begun with the children. From the least to the greatest seems to be the law.

It is the man, not the place, that tells. Put a drone in a garden, and he will starve or be supported by others. Put a genuine worker in a desert, and he will make it bloom as the garden of the Lord. This is not hyperbole—it is what is constantly taking place before our eyes.

No minister of the Lord Jesus Christ ever had his own spiritual life become deeper and stronger without witnessing a corresponding effect in the fruits of his ministry. The converse is also true. This thought is one to be prayed over in the secret place.

Importunity is a test of true faith. True faith is not easily shaken or discouraged. It walks not by sight only. Deep within it feels the persuasion of God's faithful loving-kindness even when his face seems to be hid; behind the cloud it knows that the sun is still shining. It waits patiently for the Lord, knowing that he is faithful who hath promised. The delay that calls for importunity is often the preparation for the blessing sought. God waits that he may be more gracious. The delay in answering prayer is sometimes the best part of the answer.

The number of people who will do their duty spontaneously, without special reminders and stimulation, has always been small. The injunction to us to admonish and exhort one another was based upon a correct knowledge of human nature.

The flaw in character shows itself just where it is most fatal to false aspirations. This is the safeguard to society and the Nemesis of falseness.

The preacher who on all occasions is specially anxious to take care of his own dignity and comfort takes care of nothing else.

The joy of religion is the only effectual antidote to the fatal attraction of the world that draws so many Church-members into its vortex. The hungry heart will seek something to satisfy it. If there be no joy in the Church, it will look for it elsewhere. Weary of the monotony of a mere form of religion, it will rush into almost any thing that will stir the stagnant waters of life. If there be energy, impulse, enthusiasm elsewhere, and only genteel deadness in the Church, it is not to be wondered at that the theater is filled and the prayer-meeting almost deserted, the race-course thronged and the class-meeting discontinued, politics exciting the multitudes to enthusiasm and religion regarded as a tradition of past wonders rather than as the present glory and joy of the earth.

When a common danger or sorrow lifts two men who have been alienated to a higher plane, then is the time for them to strike hands and stand together on that higher plane for all the future. Let him that readeth understand.

The Christian who could not travel five miles over muddy roads to attend the quarterly-meeting, but went fifty miles to see a star-actor, has somehow inverted the relative value of things.

The time to help the enterprises of your Church is when you are able. There is a fearful discount on mere intentions looking to the future. There is no discount on duty done. God will bless your present benefaction to his cause, but he makes no promise that he will ratify any plan of yours that looks to future possibilities at the expense of present certainties in the way of opportunity for doing good.

The aged or invalid follower of Jesus who is no longer able to attend the services of the sanctuary must not therefore conclude that she is of no value to the Church. The only condition of fruitfulness is fidelity, and fidelity shines as brightly in prayerful patience as in energetic service. It is faithfulness, not strength, that wins the crown.

The close-fisted brother who shirked payment of his proper share toward the support of his preacher last year will be hardest to please for the next. Stinginess and fault-finding are twin uglinesses.

It is not wise for the preacher to show his morbid side to his people. He is a leader, and must not forget it. Self-command is an indispensable requisite for leadership.

Every thing in this world has to ripen. The process cannot be hurried. The contrary belief makes quacks in medicine, bogus political economists, cheats in trade, impostors in religion. Every law of God works for good to all who will let it work out its results. But whoso will interfere with its working and seek either to hurry or to obstruct will fail at the last.

The preacher who is inwardly conscious that his consecration is imperfect, and his life not what it ought to be, will have no heart for the work of bringing disorderly members of his flock to account. The arm of Church discipline is paralyzed by pastoral delinquency.

If you do not train your child to self-command and systematic beneficence while young, do not be surprised that avarice or sensuality ruins him when he gets hold of money.

He is a nominal member of the Church. That is the way his pastor classifies him now. There will be no nominal members in the Church triumphant.

Laziness and cowardice are the chief hindrances to fruitfulness in many Christian lives. Which of the two is your weakness?

The Church that does not present to the world a spectacle of unselfish devotion to truth and self-sacrificing service to humanity loses its hold upon the hearts of men, and sinks below the level of merely secular organizations. The instincts of the human soul revolt against an institution that claims to be inspired by the spirit of Jesus Christ, who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich, while it never rises above the dead-level of the world. The scorn of men toward an unfaithful Church is measured by the immense difference between the divine ideal of what it ought to be and the dark and dead thing that it is.

Truth in the sphere of religion can be vitalized only by experience. To know, in the fullest and best sense, you must do. The faith that does not work is dead. The love that does not express itself in beneficent activities will become morbid and perish. The prayer that is not accompanied or followed by correlative exertion is fruitless.

The true minister of Jesus Christ is a soul-saver. This does not merely mean that he gets persons into the Church—it means also that he watches over those that are in.

There is just enough friction in the itinerancy to reveal the true grain of ministerial timber. A broken spoke now and then shows where there was a flaw in the wood or a blunder in the workman. But the damage is quickly repaired, and the wheel keeps in motion.

Holiness in the dim and distant future, or in the world of spirits, is not that to which you are called. God will never be more willing to lift you up to the heavenly heights than he is at this moment.

That body of ministers which most resembles Jesus in holiness and zeal will have the strongest hold upon the heart of this republic, and will be blessed with the largest measure of success.

The minister who defers beginning a needed work until he can be sure of ideal completeness in the results must wait until his activities shall be employed in another sphere than this.

The attempt to excite mere emotionality instead of producing conviction of sin is a great error. To expect real conviction without emotion is just as foolish.

Consciousness of short-comings and imperfection will not seal the lips of an earnest man or woman in whose heart burns a genuine love for Jesus and for souls. The humility that shrinks from all self-praise is compatible with the courage that rebukes sin and stands up for Jesus.

The perfect pastor would be as hard to find as the perfect people. Both pastor and people must be content to bear with each other's imperfections and limitations. This is not the world of perfection, but that of preparation for it.

If you lend a too willing ear to the disparagements of your predecessor in the pastorate, be not surprised when the echo of some belittling epithet coupled with your own name reaches you.

The miracle of grace that convinces the doubting soul is found in the patience and self-abnegation of the home as well as in the public exercises of the Church. Let *your* light shine.

The Church that turns over its children to be educated by others gives a mortgage upon them with strong probability of foreclosure.

The revival that left the Church like an exhausted battery was defective in its management, or lacking in the essential elements of a true work of grace. Never does the Church more need all its power than when it has had an ingathering of new members. A mother should be able to nurse her own children.

The time comes in every human life when its bottom principles are revealed. When, in the testing hour, failure takes place, men say he broke down under the stress of temptation. Not so: the timbers were already rotten, and only waited the first pressure to give way.

The new preacher is unlike his predecessor, but is not therefore to be excluded from your regard and support. You will love him when you know him and get used to his ways. All good horses are not gaited alike.

The stingy man who covets a reputation for liberality has a harder time than his equally stingy brother who, caring nothing for popular opinion, only wants to save his money.

When your presence in a prayer-meeting excites special remark because of its infrequency, it is time for you to consider.

The man who will not bear his part of the expense of keeping up a secular secret society is suspended from its privileges and benefits. The man who will not bear his part of the expense of maintaining the Church to which he belongs is left untouched. His case will be adjudicated in the highest court at the last.

It is foolish to go to doubting or whining because you discover unexpected elements of alloy in good men. The existence of similar elements in yourself ought to teach you that a man may have many infirmities and yet be a true man at the core of his heart.

The satire you uttered concerning a brother, with no worse motive than to air your wit, was repeated to him, and left a wound that will be sensitive to the touch of memory many days to come. O these idle words!

The remedy for want of sensible and comforting evidence of God's answer to prayer is—more prayer. The door will open and let you into the precious secret of the Lord.

The "almost Christians" in many congregations are the drift-wood rafts that impede the current of salvation.

The large-hearted brother who strained a point to make up for the short-comings of his penurious neighbor opened a channel through which a fresh influx of light and love will flow into his soul. Let him not forfeit this blessing by inward complaint or outward murmuring.

The pastor who lets half or two-thirds of the year pass by while he is getting ready to do something makes a poor figure in the yearly exhibit of results. He is so long taking aim that his game takes wing and escapes.

The brother who paused in his work to engage in a controversy about matters of no interest to the general public violated that injunction of the Discipline which warns us against being "triflingly employed."

A check in carrying out his own plans is to a true man only a challenge to him to show his real metal in the exhibition of fortitude. The man who despairs has a morbid spot near the core of his being.

Many good men have been slandered, but no man has ever been permanently damaged except by himself.

The Judas that sells his Master always hates the sight of the purchase-money, and if he does not throw it down in scorn or despair at the feet of his tempters, he will be made to feel, sooner or later, that he has made a bad bargain with the devil.

“A dead Church is a curse,” said the pastor of McKendree. The words are true and weighty. The barren fig-tree cumber the ground. The false light lures to shipwreck. It is a solemn thing to be a member of the Church of God.

The preacher who is instrumental in the conversion of souls is a soul-saver. The preacher who builds up his flock in holiness is also a soul-saver. The preacher of the New Testament pattern does both.

Go, preach the gospel to every creature—except those who do not want to hear you. So it does not read. Those who least want it are those who most need it from your lips.

It were better for you to carry a deadly bodily disease than a grudge through the new year. Unload without delay all such burdens at the foot of the cross.

There is a solemn and awful side to human life and destiny, and it is startlingly vivid to many. Nothing but a full and joyful belief in the abounding mercy and grace of God, and an inwrought experience of it in the soul, can give an observing and reflecting man or woman cheerful and hopeful views of human life in the midst of its actual perils and sorrows. He that stops to think much on these things has need also to pray much. In the depths of his own believing, peaceful heart he must find the solution of the problem of existence, and a counterbalancing influence to the suggestions of doubt and the croakings of despondency. It may sound paradoxical, and yet it is true, that because of a lack at this point the purest, truest souls in the Church may shed around them an influence that repels rather than attracts them that are without. God be tender with these fearful ones who walk under a clouded sky all their days! He is tender with them, for he knoweth our frame, and will not break a bruised reed. He loves them because they are true, and he compassionates their infirmity and will heal it. There are many who will read these lines who would die for their Lord, who bear his cross uncomplainingly, and are true in every purpose and aspiration of their lives, but yet lack one thing, and that is the joy

of religion. This one element would light up their whole being with a brightness and beauty that would draw many to glorify their Father in heaven by the sweet compulsion of a heavenly power. Two things are true: First, the prime object of religion in this life is not pleasure, but salvation; second, in the service of God through his own appointed channel, the Church, is to be found the true enjoyment of every good thing that this life can give.

The money saved by the neglect of the poor and ignorant and helpless is worse than thrown away. The law of justice and mercy will avenge itself in the end. This lesson is written in the calamities of all nations and communities that have disregarded it.

The Church of God the enemy of pleasure! As well say that the sun is the enemy of light, or motherhood the enemy of childhood. The Church is that garden of the Lord in which blooms and grows to ripeness every sweet and blessed thing in human life.

God uses human agency in the conversion of the world. He will convert the world no faster than his people will do the work. Your responsibility grows out of this fact.

Perhaps one reason why more women than men are religious is because the responsibility of training the children of the household devolves more directly upon the wife and mother. Many a man surrenders all his time to business, whisky, and politics, knowing that his good wife is looking after the children at home. Parental responsibility is the last and highest means of moral development. The father who devolves this responsibility upon any other person not only sins against his child, but against his own moral nature as well.

The laborer in the Lord's vineyard who makes many pauses to tell the world how hard he is laboring, and how many sacrifices he is making, loses time thereby. It is better to work on and leave the record to the Master.

The preacher who trains his people to unemotional Christianity sometimes succeeds beyond his wishes. He wants quiet and gentility, but the result is that he finds on his hands a corpse that cannot be buried.

When the membership of a Church has grown faster than its activities and its benefactions to the cause of Christ, let the pastor pause before he begins to blow his trumpet.

Whether for good or for evil, less and less stress is laid upon the creed, and more and more upon the life. The battle for the evidences of Christianity is being fought upon the arena of physical science, so far as the mere intellectual aspects of the question are concerned. But the real contest is in the daily lives of men and women. A religion claiming a divine origin, support, and guidance must also exhibit heavenly fruits, or it will be rejected with indignation and scorn.

The disciples were doubtful and perplexed until after the Pentecost. Thenceforth they had the witness within them, and went forward to duty and to death with a faith that never faltered, and a joy that never failed. The full baptism of the Holy Spirit will give this assurance to every believer now.

Exclusivism in religion, like exclusivism in social life, often seems to become more arrogant in proportion as it becomes more pinched and poverty-stricken. It makes up in pride what it lacks in power.

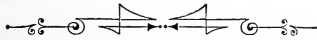
While cunning and vanity work together, the multiplication of new societies will go on in this much-befooled-and-swindled country.

It would be a good rule to require of every writer who attacks existing institutions to propose a remedy for the evils of which he complains, or to present a substitute for the system he condemns. The chronic complainer is a nuisance. Of course nothing is perfect in this world. We must be content with the best we can get, and improve as we can. There is no easier way to acquire a cheap notoriety than by universal disparagement or denunciation. But it is not the best way to advance the welfare of society.

Guarding their children from even the slightest contact with the depraved elements of society, parents allow them companionship that invades the sanctities of home and turns the very bed-chambers of maiden innocence into receptacles for the vile literature that is debauching the minds of our young people.

The little indirection employed to carry a point that seemed to you good in itself spoiled all the sweetness of success. Shun such successes as you would moral suicide.

The holy exercises of heaven will come awkwardly to the brother who never prayed or sung in the Church on earth.



THE REAL BARRIER.

IS it possible for a thinking man, in the midst of the unbelief and scoffing of these times, to have an unwavering faith in the supernatural verities of the Christian revelation, and the perfect tranquillity of spirit that is the result of clear and satisfying views of the great questions of religion? Or must we concede that, surrounded as we are by an atmosphere of icy negation and doubt, we must of necessity feel its chill, and lose some part of the fixedness of an assured belief and the glow of an assured hope?

These questions are answered by different persons according to their different theories of religion, and still more in accordance with their different experiences. There are many who have come to look upon doubt as the normal attitude of an honest and inquiring spirit. They glorify it as the badge of sincerity and independence. They often quote Tennyson's questionable lines, affirming that there is more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds,

and are fond of the fiction and other literature of the day that analyzes and apotheosizes the struggles of miserable and morbid men and women who would believe if they could, but whose lofty souls are too sublimated to grasp firmly and hold joyfully the great facts and promises of the gospel. The poetry, the fiction, the philosophy, the science, and no small part of the theology of the times, are pervaded with this spirit; and it has come to pass that the doubter, instead of bewailing the condition that allows his feet no solid resting-place and blots the light of hope from his sky, actually felicitates himself upon the fact that he belongs to the class of choice spirits who are too finely toned to be satisfied with the faith that in other days glorified the great and comforted the lowly ones of earth. They glory in their disability. This is the fashion of the times in many circles, and as it is a fashion that harmonizes with the perverse impulses of unregenerate human nature, it has no lack of followers. This was the temper of Keats, Shelley, and Byron, and it is now the temper of a multitude who possess their morbidness, their pride, their perversity, minus their genius.

It is time to enter a protest against this folly, whether it be expressed in the musical verse of a poet, or the intricate workings of a

modern novel of the subjective school, or the mock Byronics of a conceited sophomore, or the heroics of a silly girl who mistakes impiety for intellectuality, or the compromises of a too "liberal" pulpit that confounds the agonies of a striver after truth with the flippant skepticism of the inflated manikin whose doubting is the result of an absurd pride rather than of deep thinking or extensive reading. It is time that this solemn question were looked at in its true light. It is time that men and women had stopped toying with this tarantula of unbelief as if it were a butterfly. It is treated very differently in the word of God. Unbelief is there presented as an awful thing, as the sin of sins, the sin that severs the tie that binds the human soul to God and to hope. He that believeth not is condemned. And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light. This is the assumption everywhere made in the Scriptures: invincible unbelief lies in an evil heart rather than insufficiency of evidence. It is the evil heart, not the bewildered head of unbelief, that is denounced as the obstacle to salvation. The organ of spiritual knowledge is obedience. If any man will do he shall know, is the law of the case and the promise of God. They who reverse the rule may not

expect the fulfillment of the promise. The knowledge of heavenly things cannot be revealed to mere curiosity, to pride, or to disobedience. It is only to the man of a humble and contrite spirit that the Lord will come in the clear and satisfying revelations of his truth, and the joy-giving manifestations of his grace. It is not argumentation, but prayer, that the unbeliever needs. It is not more light on the external evidences of Christianity, but a direct movement of the soul toward God in the path of humble obedience. It is taste and see, not see and taste. This is the strait gate of entrance into the kingdom of God, which is forever barred against self-will and pride, but opens of itself at the knock of the humble and contrite sinner. This is the gospel. Let it be proclaimed with divine authority, and enforced with all solemnity and tenderness by its ministers. Let men no longer go on piling up those barriers of unbelief between their souls and the mercy of God by inverting the process of recovering grace. Let unbelievers no longer sleep under the delusion that it is super-intellectuality that keeps them from faith, when it is only the spirit of disobedience.

ENTIRE congregations are sometimes conformed to the world in their atmosphere and methods. Their very deportment on entering the house of God, the manner in which they conduct themselves during the services, the indefinable but unmistakable chill that pervades a congregation where there is somewhat of the form but nothing of the power of godliness, tell the story of conformity to the world. It is the drawing-room in the house of God. It is respectability as a substitute for zeal and love. Such a congregation is crucifixion to a right-minded pastor. If he yields in any measure to its worldly influence he feels that he is sinking to the same level, and he loses his fire in the pulpit. If he resists the downward tendency, and antagonizes the worldly conformity that pains his heart and is destroying his people, he may expect harsh criticism and opposition. Worldliness antagonizes whosoever and whatsoever antagonizes it, in the Church or out of it. You must go with it, or it will go against you. Nothing but the power of God acting through the most faithful human instrumentality can turn back the tide of worldliness when it thus takes in its sweep a whole body of Church-members. The heroism that attacks this worldly conformity when it is fortified by long indulgence, by numbers,

by respectability and wealth, is equal to that demanded in any field of service to which God can call a truly consecrated man. The wisdom of the serpent, the harmlessness of the dove, are needed for this work now. The courage that can withstand friends as well as enemies, the courage that is ready to stake popularity for principle, is also demanded.

The man who gives his whole time now to money-seeking, purposing great things for religion and philanthropy after he has succeeded, is the victim of a miserable delusion. God is a party to no such arrangements, and he will not condone present neglect of opportunity for a future which does not belong to you. "Go work to-day in my vineyard" is the command.

One man can accomplish wonders. One man can arouse a whole Church. One man can turn the scale of victory on the side of truth. One man can shed light over a whole community. One man can stand as a pillar to support the cause of God in times of danger and declension. Reader, you may be that man.

Is the genius of the world on the side of infidelity? No. Infidelity is abnormal, weak, and fussy. Faith is steady, strong, and quiet.

No greater calamity can befall a man than the loss of faith in his fellow-man. Theories of human nature that make it wholly evil are blighting in their effects. No flower of goodness or joy can bloom under the leaden sky of such a belief. Men who sneer at the dogma of total depravity as a dogma act as if they believed it continually. They satirize every noble sentiment; they receive every record of generous action or self-abnegation with a smile of incredulity; when a good deed is done, they are quick to suggest a selfish motive for it. He is an enemy to society who holds up to view the dark side of human nature exclusively. Whether that man be editor or preacher, he is an enemy to society.

True faith is serene and full of charity. He whose soul has anchored itself to rest on the deep, calm sea of truth does not spend his strength in raving against those who are still tossed by the winds of error. Not without reason do the "Friends" make the sign of assured faith an undisturbed and devout silence.

Sins of omission are those which give the least pain to the conscience. In the judgment, many will be surprised and appalled when this side of their account shall be presented.

You think that because luck has been against you, and you are poor and in debt, harassed by care and burdened with anxiety, you are absolved from all obligation to extend sympathy or help to a distressed fellow-man. Your troubles, you say, are all you can carry; let him go to those that have been more fortunate. You are wrong: you are the very man who can understand the heart of trouble; you are the very man who can feel a sympathy that is genuine; you are the very man who knows how much good a little help will do when the pinch is on. If there are the elements of cohesion in villainy, if the butterflies of fortune flutter together in the sunshine, much more should the children of adversity stand by one another. There is no freemasonry so sacred as that of sorrow or misfortune.

A preacher's field of labor may sometimes be smaller than his capacity, as estimated by himself and his friends. But a small field enlarges in the hands of a large man. Arnold at Rugby was greater than the Chancellor at Oxford.

Earnestness is the enemy of prolixity. A labored exordium is the tedious prelude to nothing in particular. The man who is eager to reach his point takes the shortest line.

The spiritual needs of man are as real as his bodily needs. There is no danger that the materialism of to-day will blot out the spiritual world or destroy the spiritual hopes of humanity. The strong faith that holds its precious treasure in a firm grasp is serene, unaffected by the eddying gusts of conflicting opinion in an age of transition, and is too happy in its undoubting belief in God and immortality to feel any thing but kindness for those who do doubt or deny. The army that feels secure in its invincibility does not attempt to frighten the enemy by beating Chinese gongs.

The moment a sinner comes to think a minister of the gospel is temporizing for popularity's sake, he is beyond that minister's reach for good. Every nature with the least spark of manliness prefers even honest fanaticism to a time-serving spirit.

Ignorance is often more discouraging than willful perversity. Perversity may be fought, ignorance must be borne with. Invincible patience is rarer than indomitable pluck.

Never stake your happiness upon any issue the decision of which depends upon the volition of other persons.

The thought is a pleasant one to us that when right principles are once impressed upon a human spirit, and holy affections enthroned therein, it is but rarely, if ever, that these treasures are wholly lost. The seed survives. The blossoms may fall away from the tree, but the root lives, and under genial influences sprouts afresh. The most imperishable things in the universe are truth and goodness.

The semi-apologetic sort of religion that some men take into public life with them only serves to subject themselves to suspicion of hypocrisy. It does not disarm a foe or make a friend. Satan himself despises a dough-face.

The preacher, no matter how young, whose talk is altogether of what he has done is infected with a spiritual dry-rot, and will be likely to crumble to pieces under the first pressure.

Let all earnest laborers in the Lord's vineyard bear in mind that there are but two ways of escaping ungenerous judgment, namely, to rise above or sink below rivalry.

The peace that was destroyed at the first breath of misjudgment by men was not the peace of God.

Aggressive Christianity is that which does its work with simple fidelity, making no ado about it. It is the earnest impulse, the constant activity, and the steady progress of genuine religion—nothing more nor less. Aggression is the law of the Christian life. Keep that life burning in the Church by the use of the means of grace, and it will make no halt in its onward march to the conquest of the world.

Friendship does not require us to adopt all the partialities and espouse all the quarrels of our friends, but it does demand that when a friend is suffering for righteousness' sake that we make his cause our own without waiting a moment. This is the chivalry of Christianity.

The Christian mother who flatters herself that her daughter can give her young womanhood to the world rather than to God, and not suffer permanent loss, has shallow views of religion, and is ignorant of the most elementary principles of religious experience.

The heads of families who are indifferent whether their servants have the opportunity to enjoy some of the privileges of the Sabbath-day have need to be taught both the letter and spirit of the fourth commandment.

Where there are no conversions, the very air becomes spiritually malarious from stagnation. The unfruitful Bride of Christ loses her divine beauty, her eye grows dim, her step feeble, and her voice loses its sweetness. The absence of young life around the altars of the Church deprives the family of God of the freshness, the energy, and the enthusiasm without which it is divested of half its charm and potency.

There is a tendency in many earnest Christian laborers to undervalue those lines of Christian service to which they are not specially called. The specialist depreciates his brother specialist in a different line, and thereby does more harm than he is aware of.

It is very convenient and economical to substitute sentimental declamation in behalf of those beyond reach for practical benevolence toward the needy and oppressed that are within reach. Whole communities reek with this hypocrisy without knowing it.

The man who waits to have his duty thrust upon him, so that he cannot avoid it, may wait a long time. Any man can find a field of service for the Master if he wants to find it. And if he does not want to find it, he will miss it.

The analysis of the constituent elements of bread and meat is interesting to a competent chemist, but to live he must eat as well as analyze. So, to read or study the Bible critically for the sake of exegetics and homiletics is interesting to a competent scholar, but to live and grow religiously he must also use the Book of books devotionally.

If you want to enjoy a most delightful surprise when traveling, take a little pains and use a little tact for the purpose of finding a fellow-disciple of Christ. There are many Philips moving on our modern highways.

The Church-member who expects to make a good impression on his preacher by disparaging his predecessor has a very slight knowledge of human nature—except the meanest sort of human nature.

When the child of Christian parents hesitates to speak to father or mother on the most sacred of all subjects—religion—it is time to inquire the cause.

The man who can work as heartily under a plan he did not approve as if it were his own is a jewel.

The man who makes himself the exponent of the strongest prejudice and hottest passion of his party is called a hero; but this sort of glory is as ephemeral as it is cheap. The party idols in Church and State melt like snow-balls in the blaze of posthumous judgment. It is only the granite of conscientious independence that will stand. _____

The passionate cry to be made happy is very often an ill-disguised selfishness. And often, when men think that they have their answer and their blessing, there is delusion and damage. It is so easy to mistake getting happy for substantial religious progress. It is as often followed by spiritual exhaustion as invigoration. _____

The Christian heart surcharged with the love of Christ is a magnet. It attracts opportunity for doing good at all times and under all circumstances. Demagnetized, it is a dead and fruitless thing. The only condition of perpetual and abundant fruitfulness is union with the true Vine. _____

What gift can be too precious, what service too arduous, for the Church which, under God, was the agent of your conversion and that of your children?

It is an inquiry worthy of a Christian man's consideration whether it is not true that the laxity of the Church in meeting its obligations to its pastors does not react disastrously upon the morals of the public at large. The Church ought to be the most punctual and exact of all bodies in the discharge of all financial obligations.

God is constantly reminding the Church that it must walk by faith in all its labors for the evangelization of the world. Its greatest successes have been surprises to the half-asleep masses. Its greatest disappointments have followed the greatest preliminary flourishes of trumpets.

When a politician who is a Church-member is found guilty of crime, he is treated with peculiar severity by the partisan and independent press. This is right. He makes higher professions than other men, and it is proper to hold him to them.

If that book in which are written the names of those who have indeed passed from death unto life could be seen and compared with the registers of the visible Church, pride would give way to penitence and prayer in many hearts

The man who talks infidelity on the streets, and patronizes infidel literature, would be horrified if his wife were to teach the same sentiments to his children at home. His conjugal and paternal instincts revolt against what his evil mind leads him to half hope to be true.

The Christian magnanimity that does not disparage a rival, even when that rival is successful, is rare. But it exists. The conflicts of interest and ambition in this life are intended by God to put this finishing touch upon Christian character.

There are many Christians who curtail their contributions for the gospel when their financial matters do not turn out as well as they expected. But do they make a corresponding increase when they turn out better?

We have not yet seen the man who could wholly overcome the influence of his "environments," to use a current expression, in modifying his views, and his likes and dislikes. Let us be tolerant toward one another.

If change of residence exposes a person to new temptations, it just as often brings fresh opportunities.

Softly, O bleeding and burning heart! Your experience is not exceptional. All around you there are others traveling the same path with you. It is the path of real sorrow. It is the way our fathers trod. It is the path in which we find the footsteps of Jesus. You belong to the blessed company of the elect in virtue of your faith in the crucified One, and sorrow is the badge of your membership. It is the peculiarity of real sorrow that it strikes where it hurts most. The one bitterest element in your trouble is that which is intended to lead you to the fullness of the blessing in God. The intensity of the burning pain in your heart will, if you draw not back, bring you closer to the tender, loving Christ, who will draw you to his bosom and give you his peace.

The fact that a pastor's salary, according to popular opinion and usage, is not collectable by legal compulsion, furnishes a strong reason why a fine-toned Christian man will be the more certain to pay his part of it. It is a debt both of conscience and honor.

It is only the modesty of the "advanced thinkers" who say we must have an "expurgated" Bible that prevents them from writing a new Bible altogether.

No human life can be kept pure and wholesome without the element of self-sacrifice. The very wish to avoid it takes the light and the music out of existence. God in his mercy has so ordained our relationships and obligations that this healing branch is cast into the Marah-waters of our wilderness-journey, and they are made sweet. The conflict with the evil that is in the world; the hardness and enmity that try the patience and exercise the charity of the servants of God; the waywardness and folly that make anxiety, anguish, and midnight tears in our homes, are all in the plan and method by which the soul of the believer grows in the life of God.

A man may be very "liberal" in his opinions, as liberality is now estimated, and yet be very ungenerous and discourteous in his treatment of honest men who have a constitutional bias toward strict construction and conservatism. It is a bogus liberality that expends its force in sneering at orthodoxy.

True self-denial sometimes means that you must moderate morbid grief—that is, you must deny yourself the luxury of nursing a sorrow that makes you less helpful to others near you who are also bearing heavy burdens.

Humility is the child of knowledge. Pride is the offspring of ignorance and superficiality. The atmosphere of a Christian college or university is killing to conceit. The first lesson it teaches to the teachable is the limitations of human thought. The young man who leaves such an institution inflated with vanity is organically a fool, and would have tried the patience and excited the disgust of sensible people all the same had he never trod the halls of liberal learning.

David challenged all that feared the Lord to come and hear what had been done for his soul. He proposed no parade of his own goodness or greatness. So a Christian who testifies to the sufficiency of grace to sanctify and save glorifies not himself but his Master.

Christians must not be deterred from thinking and speaking about holiness because of mistakes or infirmities in any of its special advocates. It is a blessing to be sought, a goal to be attained, by every believer.

What some call persecution: To make continual assaults upon others until one of the assailed deals in return a blow that hurts, and sets the aggressor whining.

The bogus Christian charity that gushes in honeyed words when there is no practical test of its genuineness, and breaks down under the first strain, has often brought reproach upon the name of Christ in these United States. The sudden transformation of an evangelical lamb into a partisan wolf inspires a manly sinner with disgust and doubt.

The cold-blooded professor of religion who maintained during the revival services the attitude of a spectator and critic felt greatly dissatisfied with himself and everybody else at the close. No function is allotted to mere spectators and critics in the Church of Christ; to such no blessing is promised.

It is a lamentable fact that some Christian men will secretly approve a virulence and coarseness on the part of co-partisans of which they would scorn to be guilty themselves. They possess not more conscientiousness or refinement, but more caution—that is all.

Forgive the malignant and pity the misguided among your enemies, and reënter your Master's service with renewed consecration, and your life will rebloom in new joy and fruitfulness. This is for whom it is written.

The traveler who jumps out of his wagon every five minutes to examine whether or not something is wrong with his vehicle or harness will lose much time. The laborer in the Lord's vineyard falls into a similar error when he is perpetually pausing in his work to criticise the methods to which he is committed by his vows as a minister of Jesus Christ.

The high-tide of Christian sympathy in a time of calamity sweeps away the barriers of sectarian exclusiveness: at low-tide they are reërected. When our Lord's sacerdotal prayer for the unity of his people shall be fulfilled, it will be high-tide all the time.

The orchard that is not replenished by fresh plantings from the nursery will perish. The orchard that is left unpruned will lose its fruitfulness and value. The two processes must go on without ceasing in the Church.

The method that reaches the people and brings them to Jesus is a good method, whether it is the one you like best or not.

We are all opposed to personal defamation in politics—unless it be defamation of the candidates on the other side.

A father, on returning home, was met by his little girl, who said: "Father, I am so glad to see you! Did you bring me any thing?" Should we not sometimes approach God and delight in him on account of what he is in himself, as well as on account of what he does for us? Let us look at the Godward side of our religion.

A man who sits down to hunt for a sound spot in a tainted joint of meat must be very hungry, or good meat must be scarce with him. So the professed Christian who goes upon the enemy's ground to get a little doubtful pleasure must be very hungry for enjoyment, or must know very little of the pure pleasures of religion.

The old preacher does not always find that the tender consideration of the people he served in the days of his prime increases as health and strength fail. Ingratitude is a hideous thing, whether exhibited by natural or spiritual children.

The pastor who weakens in the presence of a Church difficulty sends weakness down all along the lines of his forces. He may survive the unmerited opposition of his people, but not their contempt.

If there is conscious selfish alloy in the motive with which you begin the labors of a revival-meeting, lie at the feet of Jesus until the evil leaven is banished—and then, O brother, you will feel the breath of power and have the tongue of flame.

The man who adopts the modern nonsense that the Bible is inspired “in spots” feels like a boy skating on a pond with patches of thin ice here and there. He is afraid to move. The true believer feels that under his feet is the solid rock.

The Christian man who, when he goes to a new place to live, uses at once his business-letter but carries his Church-letter until it is worn out or obsolete, shows plainly enough where his heart is.

That is a wonderful climax in the description of a good man where it is said he shall not be afraid of evil tidings. That was Old Testament faith. Have you reached this height?

You resisted the impulse to give expression to your sympathy for one in affliction or peril for fear of being obtrusive. Now it is too late. The person is forever beyond your reach.

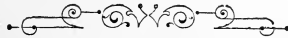
Resistance to a peace-making impulse causes the heart to harden into a more incorrigible obduracy. The blessing promised to the peace-maker is not only forfeited for the time being, but its attainment at any future time is rendered more difficult.

Strong government is inseparable from revolutionary danger and dread. If it does not find them already existing, it makes them. Sooner or later the slumbering volcanoes of individual resentment and popular wrath will explode.

“This one thing I *do*,” said Paul. Put the emphasis on the word *do*. He stuck to one thing, and did it. Had he wasted his efforts on a dozen things, none of them would have been done.

Are you one of those inconsistent Christians who blaze with wrath when Nihilists and other infidels assail the Sabbath-day, and yet devote the larger part of it to secular reading and feasting?

An ocean of excited political declamation is better than a sea of blood. The very extravagance of free speech within the limits of the law is the safeguard of liberty.



BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING.

NO say outright that worry is a sin would jar upon some sensitive spirit. Evil foreboding is a distinct symptom of some forms of disease. Robust health is often insensible to actual perils; imaginary ones rarely cast their shadows upon its path. But in the midst of the friction and discord of the world many really good people live in almost perpetual apprehension and discomfort. There is trouble in their nerves, whatever may be the state of their hearts. These thorns in the flesh afflict them sorely. Some, like Paul, are driven to their knees in prayer for relief; others are thrown into a feverish and chronic disquietude that grows upon them until it becomes the trial and trouble of their unhappy lives. Harsh speech concerning such as these would be unjust condemnation of many of the Lord's children who must bear this cross of suffering. In such cases grace may alleviate the difficulty and lighten the burden; but it is organic in the constitution, and will be laid aside only

when mortality puts on immortality. We must avoid judging ourselves or others too harshly. We must not put human infirmity in the category of sin. The word of God recognizes the difference.

But, on the other hand, there are anxieties that have their root in a lack of faith in God, and are therefore to be shunned as sinful. Against this sort of anxiety was directed the injunction, "Be careful for nothing." This precept does not condemn a reasonable prevision for the future. Nor does it condemn rational solicitude concerning whatever affects the material and spiritual interests of our own lives and those of our friends. But it does condemn that distrust of the providence of God which makes us sink under the burden of the afflictions, losses, or disappointments of life.

The Christian who is doing his whole duty has no right to be gloomy. Such a state of mind is a contradiction of his avowed belief. It is saying that all things do not work together for good to them that love God. It is proclaiming that the professed disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ stands on the same level with the world, that he has no rock of defense against despair, no light in darkness, no reserve of divine force within that gives him songs in the

night. Now, the man who is truly living the new life, and has Christ formed within him the hope of glory, has something more than belief in the God of providence. He knows. It is written on the fleshly tables of his heart that God is good. It is an inwrought persuasion of his renewed soul. Like Abraham, he knows God in such a way that he submits to his will in the face of apparent contradiction and insurmountable difficulty. Like Job, he says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." With the psalmist, he is not afraid of evil tidings. He does not tremble in opening a telegraphic dispatch. He does not torture his soul with forebodings of possible disaster to those nearest and dearest to him. Like Paul, he can rejoice in tribulations. Like James, he counts it joy when he grapples with the trials and temptations of life, because he not only believes that all things work together for good to them that love God, but he feels it deep down in his trusting and loving heart. He has the witness in himself. He knows the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. There is no worry in such a life as this. It is anchored in the still waters of God's everlasting love.

The Christian who has not reached this point has yet a secret of the Lord to learn.

He who has learned it—and there are many of the elect who have graduated into this knowledge—has left the region of worry, and his peace is as a river.



THE Church was a witnessing Church at the start. Wherever planted, there were as many witnessing voices as there were believers. A single convert fresh from the Pentecost kindled a blaze wherever he went. The apostles had as many helpers as converts. The mighty joy overflowed the channels of conventionalism, swept away the prescriptions of priestcraft, and from Antioch to the farthest limit of apostolic evangelization, the voice of a witnessing Church was heard, and the melody of its songs was as the sound of many waters. It was the Pentecost in detail. It was the Pentecost perpetuating itself. It was the Pentecostal wave flowing on over the world. The voice of the whole Church gave expression to the faith and hope and joy that were in its heart. Every gift was exercised. Teaching, exhortation, interpretation, song, prayer—all the gifts that give variety, attractiveness, instructiveness, and power to the Church as an agency for bringing men to Christ—were employed according as God had dealt to every man the measure of faith and the gift of utterance.

The true man finds his true vocation. The vocation is in him, not in the conditions created by other men.

A grudge will lie unsuspected in the heart for years until its object exposes himself to a telling blow, which is delivered with an alacrity that is a revelation to the one who has so long carried the sleeping serpent in his bosom. The judgment-day will bring terrible surprises to many who neglect self-examination at this vital point. _____

We have noticed that when a seeker of religion is able to formulate his prayers in Bible language he is sooner brought to see the truth and lay hold of it. There are no words like God's words. _____

If you seek a voluntary alliance with those whose influence will make it harder for you to live a true life, the sin is your sin, and the loss will be your loss. _____

Are your daily habits of devotion less regular than those you would expect one of our missionaries to teach a Chinese convert? _____

You did not seek for distinction, but now that it has come unsought, beware lest it prove a snare to you. _____

A Christian man has no more right to hoard his learning than he has to hoard his money.

Your thought that if you could live your life over again you would do better is a delusion. You might escape some of the dangers you have met and from which you have suffered, but others would meet you, and the foolish heart that led you astray once would do it again.

Brother preacher, is your ideal of a holy life lower now than it was when, standing before the Bishop and your brethren, you answered affirmatively the question, "Are you going on to perfection?"

The brother who put on the brakes while the Church was making a tight pull uphill was ill-timed in his action. He would have done better had he pushed or pulled along with the others.

If you pray for holiness, and then fail to watch against whatever is opposed to it, your pretense of prayer will go the way of all insincerity—it will not reach the prayer-hearing God.

The reserve force in Christianity has never failed to show itself in any crisis of its history, and it never will—because God is the preserver and defender of his own cause.

If our missionaries in heathen lands should prove as indiscriminating in the reception and retention of Church-members as are many of our pastors at home, the type of evangelization in such heathen lands will be very low.

Preach a risen, reigning Christ. You have not time to stop and dispute with every crank who attacks Moses. The attitude of a live Christianity is not apologetic, but aggressive.

In a personal controversy there is sure to come a time when the magnanimous instinct will assert itself in a generous disputant. It is always safe to act upon that instinct.

Converted—what then? If a true conversion, service for Christ in his Church. Lose not a day in lodging that conviction in the head and heart of every young convert.

To make a real start in higher Christian living would require a readjustment of your social relations. Nevertheless, make that start now—it will soon be too late.

The physical disability that curbs your too ardent spirit is the brake you need in passing certain dangerous places on the road.

When you discover that a man in whom you believed has done a mean thing, do not conclude that he is all bad, and that nobody is true. Perhaps he is repenting already. At any rate, be sure there are others in the world who abhor meanness as much as you do.

The preacher who was nervous about his appointment was not necessarily lacking in fealty to Methodism. The soldier who turns pale at the beginning of the battle is often the man who is first inside the intrenchments of the foe.

As the elements combine for the destruction of exclusivism in religion, by the perverse law of its being it becomes more and more exclusive. Its great swelling words of vanity are mingled with the death-rattle in its throat.

To expect salvation otherwise than by God's way is not only presumption, but absurdity. God is not to be trifled with. His love to sinners is great, but he gives no promise of mercy to self-will and pride.

The most potent factor in true Christian culture is the constant necessity for the exercise of the will in making choice of the right in the midst of temptations to go wrong.

The complaint is often made that Christian men are visited with harsher judgment than others for wrong-doing. It will be an evil day for Christianity when this ceases to be so—it will show that professed Christians in practice have sunk to the level of the world.

If you have attempted a sort of compromise with your Lord, making secret reservations in your consecration, do not be surprised if in some moment of spiritual illumination, when you see yourself as you are, your peace shall prove to be a false peace.

When you get an unexpected harsh criticism from one you thought was your friend, first ask yourself whether or not the criticism was just; measure the degree and permanence of your resentment afterward.

If you experience joyful fervors in devotional exercises, and yet lack serenity and sweetness of spirit amid the cares and collisions of actual life, you must take another degree in Christian living.

When a true man finds that the enemies of the Church applaud him and that its friends grieve, he will pause and take careful bearings.

The Christian women of to-day are doing the very work done by them when Phebe, Priscilla, Dorcas, and others, were exponents of gospel truth, and living examples of its divine power. Woman's work for Christ in this day is a restoration, not an innovation.

Two things should be avoided by Christians: Confounding their infirmities with willful sin, on the one hand, and a frittering away of the meaning of the vast number of Scripture-texts which promise victory over sin, on the other.

The preacher who builds a house of worship for the Lord builds a monument for himself more durable than marble or brass. The man who never builds up any thing will have his name printed in the Minutes.

It seems strange to you that you have been kept on one line of Christian service when you have all the time preferred another. Never mind. The current that bears you on flows as God would have it.

The prodigal who "comes to himself," and yet delays his return to his Father, incurs danger of perishing with the swine. It is an awful thing to trifle with a clear conviction.

It is sickening to hear so many Christian men of large means wishing that some very rich man would do this or that for the great enterprises of education, benevolence, and evangelization. Full-handed pauperism is doubly contemptible.

The joy of religion can be possessed only by him who discharges its duties. If sought as the end of a religious profession it eludes the grasp of the deluded professor who has not learned the first letter of the alphabet of salvation.

To allow the laws against gambling and other vices to remain a dead-letter is to do a double mischief—the public morals are sacrificed and the sanctity of law obliterated from the minds of the people.

The spectacle of a living preacher in awful earnest will do more to arouse an apathetic community than a hundred descriptions of dead men who were earnest while they were living.

The cooling process in red-hot political reformers may be measured by their remoteness from the people and proximity to the sources of political corruption.

There is a class of thoughtless men who sneer at the Church, but they would be very sorry to see the sixteen millions of believers in these United States disbanded, and as many imported atheists take their places. Be careful, gentlemen; do not tear down the house that shelters you. _____

Simultaneous with the increased activity of women in the service of the Church, there is a manifest decline in the movement to carry them into politics. This is a significant and encouraging fact. _____

The selfishness of the man who wants the place you are seeking excites your disgust or indignation. Perhaps he reciprocates your feeling. And perhaps you both are grieving the Master. _____

High intellectual culture does not foster pride, but humility. True learning discovers the limitations of the human intellect, and is the happy companion of faith in the illimitable God. _____

The devil and his publishing agents are turning education itself into a curse. While we multiply schools let us multiply good books and periodicals.

The indwelling Christ does not give new mental faculties nor solve all the mysteries of the universe; but he does give what is worth more than all—peace. That satisfies now. The fuller light will come by and by—and we can wait.

Your prayer is a small thing and weak in itself, but it makes a channel for Omnipotence. Then go with your burdened heart to God, and pray, and faint not.

The faith that saves is not a comprehensive grasp of a great number of correlated principles and facts, but laying hold of an almighty personal Saviour.

It is a good thing for a Christian man to be subjected to hostile criticism at times. It tests his temper, and may reveal to him unsuspected weakness.

The influence of a faithful Christian life either reproveth or attracts every soul touched by it. The life that does neither is not a Christian life.

The good hunter does not wait until he sees his game before he begins to load his gun; but the unstudious, indolent preacher does.

If you think the missionary to the heathen had a call to his work, and that your work is left to hap-hazard or caprice, you make a mistake that will take from your life its unity, its sweetness, its joy. _____

When you take a young person into the Church unconverted, and only superficially convicted, do not be surprised when he seeks his pleasures on the world's ground instead of Christ's. _____

The discovery of unexpected alloy in one in near relation to you is a call to you to be truer and stronger. That soul is pivoted on your influence. _____

The hideousness that begins to reveal itself in a wicked old age is an awful premonition of the consequences of eternal separation from God. _____

If you wait for company in your upward movement in the Christian life, you may not start at all. The multitude are going the other way. _____

The emotional element in the religion of our fathers was conspicuous, and so also was their strong common sense.

Every Christian must decide for himself the best way for him to become a peace-maker, but he must work to that end in some way with earnest purpose, or forfeit the highest blessedness—namely, to be called a child of God.

Twenty times a day is the quality of your religion practically tested in your intercourse with your business or home circle. You are a “living epistle,” and every moment a page is visible to watchful eyes.

At the very last you purpose to let go your besetting sin—it is too dear to you to be given up sooner. This means that you will carry its guilt with you into eternity. You must choose while choice is free.

This is the Pentecostal dispensation; and yet when we would consider displays of the power of God we look back eighteen centuries.

When you are to lead others in prayer, it does not mean that you are to pray at them, or argue with them. Your prayer is to God.

Faith is practical choice. If you stop short of actual choice, you may call it desire or aspiration, but it is not faith. *Choose.*

Holiness is not found at the end of a long controversy, but at the foot of the cross, where, by the exercise of a mighty faith, the soul, renouncing sin and worldliness in all their forms, receives then and there the fullness of God.

If your object is reformation instead of defamation, you will first make your criticism or accusation in private rather than in public.

The injury you often recall to mind has not been fully forgiven. True forgiveness is attended with at least partial forgetfulness.

With some families family worship means a prayer when the preacher comes—that is, if the preacher is one of the praying sort.

A few words spoken to the new member of the Church now will do more good than many regrets after he has gone astray.

Do not condemn and reject a man for a single blunder. Had this rule been adopted with you, where would you be now?

Because another preaches holiness in a way that you do not like, is that a reason why you should not preach it at all?

The dancing Church-members are not expected at the weekly prayer-meeting. The praying Church-members are not expected at the dance. Everybody has a practical understanding of these things.

If there be no carnal temper to catch fire, the flame of enmity will go out of itself. The man whose nature is a tinder-box will always be burning in a world like this.

The touch-stone is Jesus Christ. If you deliberately reject him now, a future probation is the dream of folly and presumption.

In your disposition to evade personal responsibility for your own sins, is there not an element of meanness as well as of folly?

You travel on Sunday to save a day for secular work. Put it down as a certainty that it is a day lost, not gained.

The man who really has the mind of Christ is more interested in the spread of the gospel than in any thing else.

The great moral issue that gets a hearing in one canvass will get a victory in the next.

It is unquestionably true that the distribution of reputation and emolument among the ministers of the Lord Jesus is not in every case proportioned exactly to the measure of talent possessed and the amount of labor performed. But what of that? Are reputation and emolument the things sought? And does not the day hasten when the righteous Judge will himself distribute crowns of rejoicing and every man be rewarded according to his work? The true man can afford to labor and wait.

These are the last days in which is fulfilled the prophecy that the Spirit of the Lord shall be poured out upon all flesh. This is the Pentecostal period. The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, has come into the world—and he has come to stay. The first grand Pentecostal outpouring was not a meteor-flash across the midnight heavens, but the rising of the sun to shine through all the day. That sun is still shining.

The aspiration of a Christian in the line of spiritual progress cannot go beyond the measure of possible attainment. The struggles and delays that sometimes discourage the impatient soul make the very attrition by which it is polished to reflect perfectly the image of Christ.

A Christian father who does not pray in his family would feel awkward in the presence of his converted child, whose young heart is glowing in its first love and filled with prayer and praise. The mother whose worldliness and waywardness of temper make her conscious that she is not adorning the doctrine of God her Saviour would not know what to do with a child whose heart was burning with love to Jesus, and whose conscience was tender and true. This may not be a conscious motive, but we doubt not that in many cases it enters into the opposition or indifference of parents concerning the conversion of their children. Parents whose own spiritual life burns low cannot be expected to have strong faith in behalf of their children.

Some men seem to have a talent for being persecuted. They spend their lives in protesting against the non-appreciation of their contemporaries, and in defending themselves against persecution, real or imaginary. This is surely a poor way for a Christian man to spend his life.

Christian liberality is not communism. In order that there may be good neighbors, it is not necessary to abolish the family relation.

Communism, agrarianism, and similar theories, have no support from New Testament teaching, but we may rest assured that when the principle of unselfish regard for the poor and the ignorant, inculcated therein, is disregarded, all these monsters will lift their hideous heads from the depths of human wrong and wretchedness. —

Now and then you meet a man who can do justice to another who crosses the path of his interest. When you find such a man take him to your heart—such are not met often in a lifetime. It is only the full development of the Christian spirit that raises human nature to this height. —

He who does not enjoy religion may question whether he possesses it. The true believer relishes all the duties and devotions that belong to the Christian life. Healthy spiritual life is happy life. The servant may obey from fear; the son obeys in the joyous freedom of love. —

Do not preachers and writers on moral and religious topics err when in warning young people against vice they tax their powers in describing its fascinations? Thus young people are started to hell through curiosity.

The Good Shepherd who commanded us to feed his lambs would have them fed in the fold, not outside. A Church from which all children are excluded would be a monstrous thing. If some may be admitted, why not all who are willing to come? Who would dare to forbid them? Who will say that the child shall not kneel by the side of its father and mother at the altar of the Church? Invite the children to Jesus. Bring them into his Church. They have a right to come. They are needed there. The Church is as incomplete as the family would be without them.

When the country-church is open only once a month, and the whisky-shop in sight is open every day and every night, it will not be strange if the devil's work should enlarge and the Lord's diminish. The cross-roads whisky-den is Satan's recruiting-office and base of operations.

The people are not always infallible in their impulses, but now and then, when some deep moral instinct is appealed to, they move with the irresistibility of a tidal-wave.

The question of holiness cannot be postponed. Postponement is rejection. Delay is disobedience. Have you thought of this?

Covetousness is a snake that comes out of its hole when the sun shines. The man who seemed content to make a comfortable living, and was ready, out of his scant earnings, to give his quota to religion or benevolence, when he, by some lucky chance, got a taste of accumulation, suddenly developed a greed for gain that astonished all his friends. It mastered his whole nature. It became a fire that consumed his religious life. The man who had food and raiment, and therewith was content, as soon as he had gotten a little more than these, seemed to be insatiable.

Christianity has had to fight for every inch of ground it has won. It will have to fight for every inch it will win hereafter. The world may tolerate and smile upon a sham piety, but it is only the renewed heart that loves, or can love, genuine godliness.

The cotton or corn or tobacco field is not so dangerous to a white man's health as the cross-roads whisky-shop. But some who are terribly afraid of the former have no dread of the latter.

When you review at night your conduct for the day, do not forget to consider your sins of omission.

The sorrow of the world worketh death. George Eliot represents a peculiarly unhappy man as saying: "Continual suffering had annihilated religious faith within me; to the utterly miserable—the unloving and the unloved—there is no religion possible, no worship but a worship of devils." This is the fatal experience of many, but in every case it is owing to the fact that the sufferer turned away from God, refusing blessedness because pleasure was denied him. This may sound harsh to some readers, but it is true.

There are constitutional whiners who cannot be cured. They must be pitied and endured. But there are whiners who were born for better things, but have, unconsciously, fallen into the weak and unmanly habit. Such may be cured. Prescription: Prayer in faith.

Are all Christians stewards of all they possess? Then there are many who will be perplexed at the great day when asked under what head they placed some of their expenditures.

The Christian reverence that defers to age and eminence is not more beautiful than the Christian courtesy that takes no advantage of modesty and timidity.



HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS.

THE religion of the cloister has given way to the religion of the street. Mysticism has had its day. The saints that saw visions of heaven and prayed all night have given way to the saints that found societies to take care of sick and impotent folk, orphan children, and dumb animals. The change is not altogether a bad one. It is well that Christianity should resume its function as the friend and benefactor of man on earth as well as his guide to heaven. Giving the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come, it is but right that she should make that promise good by using the resources at her command to lighten the burdens and heal the wounds of a broken and suffering humanity.

There is a phase of Christian character known as heavenly-mindedness to which all believers are called, and to which all may attain. What is it, and what are the means of its attainment? To such as will pause long

enough to follow us in this inquiry we will respond in a few words.

To be heavenly-minded the thoughts must be directed to heavenly things. The carnal mind destroyed, the spiritual mind is established. The new world of spiritual light and beauty is brought within the range of the purified vision of all who have tasted of the heavenly gift and been made partakers of the heavenly calling. The spiritual mind discerns spiritual things, and is ravished with their loveliness. The beauty of holiness is revealed to the pure in heart. Henceforth his conversation is in heaven. The sublime truths of revelation fill the measure of his thought, and its blessed promises fill the measure of his hopes. These things grow upon him. They cheer his heart. They inspire fortitude to endure and strength to do. Limited as he is by earthly conditions, jarred and pained by earthly discords, he finds infinite consolation in the promise and hope of the perfection of being and blessedness that awaits the people of God. The divine ideal attracts, exalts him. Planted in the soil of this rough world, the fair flower of his spiritual life catches the beams of the eternal Sun of righteousness, and takes on the hues and exhales the odors of heaven. Seeing God as he discloses himself to the spiritual eye, he

becomes like him, being changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. This is heavenly-mindedness— heaven in the mind, heaven in the thoughts. This is heaven on earth, the foretaste of the fullness of the glory that shall be revealed in him at the manifestation of the sons of God.

Thinking thus on heavenly things, they take possession of the heart. Sought as the chosen treasure of the soul, this choice of the will carries the entire moral nature with it. Its whole movement is Godward. The affections are set on things above, not on things on the earth. The heart yearns for heaven. Willing to remain here to work for Christ, the heavenly-minded believer feels it is better to depart and be with Christ. Yes, far better. It is an exchange of imperfection for perfection. This is the consummation short of which no Christian heart can be satisfied. For this consummation the longing increases as the believer grows in knowledge and grace. As the goal is neared the racer becomes more eager for the prize. This is heavenly-mindedness—heaven in the desires, heaven in the hopes, heaven in the longings of the believing heart.

And herein is a mystery of grace. The heavenly-minded believer is at once equipped for the duties of this life and ready plumed

for his upward flight. The image of such a one is before us as we write—a holy Christian woman, whose beautiful life was the joy and whose ministries had blessed two generations of the family circle and the Church to which she belonged. Her human love was fresh and sweet to the last; her affection was responsive to that which she inspired in all who knew her: little children loved her, and she entered freely into all their little joys and griefs. And yet she longed for heaven, and counted the days that kept her here. This sweet-souled child of God yearned for the perfect vision, and the bridal-day of her soul was the day of her death. The heavenly mind had sweetened her life on earth and made it fruitful, and fitted her for her change. The heavenly-minded are the fruitful.



OUR children are moral agents as we are, and, after we have done all we can do, they may harden their hearts, stiffen their necks, and take the wrong path. It is well to see this clearly, and admit it; for it is so. To deny it would be to transfer the responsibility from them to us, and thus subvert the very foundations of moral government. But while this is true, it remains also true that parental fidelity shall have its reward and bear its fruits. While some may prove incorrigible, the larger part will yield to religious influence, and the harvest will be according to the sowing. Whoso doubts this does so in the face of Bible promise and general experience. It is not claimed that piety is hereditary, but it is claimed that God hears and answers prayer; that religious example, persuasion, and argument are moral causes that will in all cases be followed by certain results, modified only by free agency on the part of the subjects of such prayer, example, persuasion, and argument.

If the idea of self-denying service be not impressed upon the young Christian at the start, it will be extremely difficult to do it at all. The mold taken at the white-heat of conversion hardens into permanence. Pastors will do well to give this a thought.

Carnal policy has achieved temporary triumphs for ecclesiasticisms at times, but they have cost dearly in the end. When the kingdom that is not of this world entangles itself with worldly alliances, and relies on worldly patronage, it abdicates its true position and renounces its claim upon the homage of men and the favor of God. Neither the strong arm of secular power nor the sorcery of genius has ever been able to avert the catastrophe that follows when the Church, the bride of Christ, consents to such compromises and complications. Great establishments, thus buttressed, have fallen with a crash that has startled the world. Men of genius have again and again, by bending to popular fancies and flattering the popular vanity, achieved a wide popularity, but when death or a sudden turn of fortune has tested their work, its collapse has been quick and complete. Compromise is suicide. Cowardice is the path of danger. To give away a part of the truth to save the remainder is to give the tiger a taste of blood to satisfy its thirst.

The amount of thought bestowed directly upon religion by the average Christian is astonishingly small. Try to be something more than an average Christian.

Christianity is evermore a new life. It is always reaching forth to the things that are before. Its genius is progressive. Its every goal is a fresh starting-point. Likeness to God is its aim and promised result. In kind this is at once attainable, but in degree eternity itself will not find where to stop. As we climb the horizon broadens below, heights beyond heights invite above. Our ideal enlarges and recedes before us as we advance. It is the new life not only when it begins, but forever. This is because the source of its supply is inexhaustible. Hid with Christ in God, the believer's life is replenished from a fountain that is always full as well as free. God is his portion; and he has the promise that he shall be filled with the fullness of God. That fullness is measured only by the receptive capacity of his children.

Religious experience is the best practical help in the study of the deepest spiritual truths. Rationalistic exegesis never touched the heart of the Bible. A spiritually-minded disciple of Jesus in the class-meeting will tell you things that no mere book-worm or Biblical critic could find out in a million of years. We must do the will of God if we would know it in the deepest sense.

Much of the narrowness of many men is owing to the fact that our country is overrun with innumerable "societies," organized for the promotion of special interests or particular classes, and sometimes on principles of avowed hostility to other classes. The Republic is honey-combed with them. Thus the elements are being prepared for some daring demagogue, in an evil hour, to fire the train which has been laid by our own selfishness and folly.

Let no good citizen ever forget that God gives to every people civil institutions suited to their moral character. No amount of political sagacity can give genuine prosperity to an immoral people. True patriotism, therefore, is more concerned for the elevation of the masses than about tinkering at law-making.

No man's real quality is seen until he has been tested by defeat. A mean man hardens or withers under it. The noblest natures never stake what is necessary to their happiness upon the action of other people.

The Christian mothers and fathers who allow their children to go where they dare not go themselves must possess a brilliant genius for casuistry or uneasy consciences.

The habit of turning to the Commentary the first thing to get the meaning of a text is a bad one. It is better to do your own thinking. When difficulties arise as to the true rendering of the text, or when a text is obscure, it is well enough to seek helps. Theology made easy is theology made weak and valueless.

To make the Government stronger without strengthening the virtue of the people of these United States seems to be the tendency in some quarters. That is the road to despotism that other republics have traveled. Liberty will dwell only with virtue.

If ministers of the gospel would be faithful in dealing with one another face to face, and utterly cease their criticisms of the absent, great would be the gain to themselves and to the cause of Christ.

A low-spirited leader will take the heart out of the bravest army. When the pastor's courage wavers and his faith grows dim, let him go to his knees, telling the secret only to God.

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira is in every heart that professes to give God what is consciously withheld.

The carnal, unrenewed nature cannot be expected to relish religious enjoyments. It is of the earth, earthy. The tendency of natural appetite is in the direction of the forbidden and excessive indulgences which come specifically under the head of what is worldly and sensual. We cannot overlook this truth without a strange disregard of the plain teaching of Scripture and the most obvious facts of human life. Therefore it should be borne in mind by all candid persons, young or old, that in very many cases the difficulty does not lie in the fact that the Church is really an enemy to true enjoyment, but in the fact that objectors have a false conception of what true enjoyment is. The demand should not be that the Church should change or lower her standard, but that they should elevate theirs. The Church cannot come down—they must go up.

The men and women in the Church who pass weeks, months, and years without the use of the social means of grace must have peculiar spiritual resources within themselves, or they must be very lean and barren.

Innocent men never shrink from investigation. This simple aphorism will reveal the true character of many plausible rascals.



DO WE DETERIORATE?

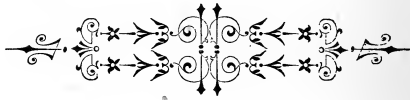
DO Christians usually deteriorate as they grow older? Many think so, and the thought gives them pain. And certainly there are few sadder thoughts than this. The fading of the colors of a beautiful painting excites a peculiar sense of regret in the lover of the beautiful. The change of the autumnal glory of the forest into the wintry nakedness and desolation makes those days the saddest of the year. But what is the fading of a picture or the denudation of a forest to the visible or conscious deterioration of character? This is the saddest spectacle to be witnessed in this world, and the saddest experience of this life. But we are inclined to think that as a rule Christians do not deteriorate as they grow older. Of those who are truly born into the Christian life, and have its germ in their renewed natures, we indulge the hope that the larger part do really go on in the path that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

A peach-tree in bloom is a more beautiful object than when loaded with ripe fruit. There is a freshness and novelty in the early religious experience of a Christian that make it inexpressibly delightful, just as the first conscious experiences in the world of sense are intensely joyous and hold the chief place in the memory through all after-years. There is more vividness of enjoyment, but not a truer life in the beginning. Self-knowledge comes, and with it the struggles that make the soul stronger.

The sterner conflicts of the Christian soldier develop the glorious power to endure, which is no less a blessing than the capacity to enjoy, when considered in reference to the complete development and final destiny of the soul. The ideals of the true Christian constantly become more exalted, and the horizon of his hopes broadens forever. He judges himself, therefore, by a higher standard. Falling, as so many believers do, far below this ideal, they feel a keen self-reproach, and discount unduly their whole present religious life, looking back with a misplaced regret to the period when their self-satisfaction was greater because their self-knowledge was smaller, and their aspirations being more vague, involved less risk of the anguish of conscious failure. And then

the young Christian is often young in years. Youth is the season of beauty and hope and promise, and flattery throws its pleasing illusions around it. Care-worn, bent, and wrinkled age loses this enchantment and escapes this snare. It sees things in a clearer light. It no longer hears the voice that whispers what human nature so dearly loves to hear. Moral action stands naked in the cold, piercing light of reality. The glamour is gone. And so it may happen that the loss of the smiles and homage of men becomes the cause of a feeling that there has been a loss of somewhat that was a part of the true riches and sweetness and beauty of the soul. Few of us realize how much our own estimate of ourselves is affected by what others think of us. An atmosphere of non-appreciation blights some souls as a killing frost does the tenderest flowers. There are many who think their souls are dead who only want the sunshine of favoring association to make them rebloom into a new spiritual life. Thank God for the hope that many, many blighted lives will rebloom in the future life beyond the grave! Thank God for the hope that many a self-distrustful but true-hearted follower of our Lord will then find that while the winter cold and ice and snows killed the flowers that brightened the spring-

time with their beauty and shed their perfumes on the air, they also protected the growing wheat and helped its growth for the garner of God!



BLESSED are the peace-makers. And there is always work for them to do. Not by compromising with sin or winking at wrongdoing. That does not make peace, it only lays the foundation of future disturbance and conflict. Peace-making is subserved by charitable judgment, by patience, by combined kindness and candor, by waiving self-defense where no injury has been sustained, and by giving an erring brother an opportunity to retrace his steps instead of pushing him over the precipice. The blessing promised to the peace-maker is often within our reach when we are too dull of sight to see it.

When a preacher preaches beyond his assimilated acquisitions of thought, by pirating and parroting from stronger men, it is contemptible in the eyes of the judicious; when he preaches beyond his actual religious experience, by using the language while lacking the fervor of saints, it is matter of grief to the godly. Honest mediocrity is better than the stolen jewels of genius; the coldness of a sleeping sensibility is better than simulated fervors in the pulpit or out of it.

To make a devil look like an angel of light, put the uniform of your own party on him.

It is not the whole of the evil that parents are careless as to what is read by their children. They allow themselves a latitude that is indefensible. For their own reading they bring into their homes books that ought never to have been printed, and should never be read. Their principles and habits may be fixed so firmly that they can read these books without injury. Conceding this—though in many cases the facts would not justify such a concession—what may be safe for maturity and experience may not be safe for youth and inexperience. What to you may be only a matter of amusement, or a subject of curious study, may be the influence that shall chill and kill the buddings of your child's moral life. Parental restriction at this point, if in conflict with parental example, will be justly regarded as tyrannical.

Fragmentary moral reform is well enough as far as it goes, but Christianity goes deeper, and redeems the whole man. The world needs Christianity, and nothing less. As the divinely appointed agency for the salvation of men, it is adequate to its purpose. When Christians forget this, and direct their time, their enthusiasm, and their money into other channels, they sacrifice the higher for the lower, the stronger for the weaker, the divine for the human.

It is not impossible that history may yet repeat itself in the exhibition of huge ecclesiastical organisms from which the breath of life has departed, for which nothing remains but to be buried, or to poison the air with their putrefaction. There is only one way by which this catastrophe can be escaped. The Church must go directly to the Source of its spiritual life, and seek the renewal of its strength. It must stop multiplying societies, and multiply its devotions.

Plain preaching never does harm when the truth is spoken in love. But when carnal temper is mixed with the threatenings of God, the hearer is hardened and repelled. Hell is not to be uncapped before the sinner with a chuckle, but with awfulness and tears. Jesus weeping over fated Jerusalem is the attitude toward sinners of every minister who has the mind that was in him.

The large boys and girls who receive instruction from the best trained intellects in the day-schools will not listen to men and women who come to the Sunday-school lesson without preparation and without earnestness. If we would hold the older pupils, we must give them something to hold to.

God has no use for the Church except as an instrument to be used for the spread of the gospel. It is made the depositary of the truth only that it may disseminate it. It is the recipient of grace only that it may be its dispenser. The sword of the Spirit is placed in its hands only that it may be wielded for the conquest of the world. Propagandism is the law of Christianity, and the condition of its life and health.

You have no more right to make it harder for your neighbor to save his soul than to destroy his bodily health by non-sanitation of adjoining premises. In ruining yourself you ruin others. This is a double crime—suicide and murder.

Jesus never deputized another to perform an act of mercy which he could do himself while in the flesh. In this he was our exemplar. Doing good by proxy is not the best method, except where it can be done in no other way.

The scriptural rule is to give "as the Lord hath prospered you." This embraces soul-prosperity as well as that of the purse. If the pocket be full and the soul empty, the liberal hand will be wanting.

Repentance, faith, the new birth, and the new life, are the themes that come to the front whenever the Lord's ministers work for the salvation of souls by the direct methods employed by him and his apostles. These doctrines involve duties. Their reception compels to action. Their proclamation is a call to men to enter the Master's service, not to engage in doubtful disputations. Give us doctrinal preaching and teaching of this sort, but spare us the necessity of trying to obtain spiritual aliment from the old soup-bones that have been boiled over and over again and again until they are as juiceless as last year's cak-balls.

Happy is the pastor who has not been surprised and disheartened by the shrinkage that has met him on entering upon a new charge. Happier he whose thoroughness, humility, and moderation of statement have given no occasion for his own work to be justly discounted by another. Happiest of all will be he whose work will stand the test of the day that shall declare it in its true motive, quality, and measure.

We can retain the grace of God only by sharing it; blessings multiply only by division.

One class of egotists is composed of those whose self-consciousness expresses itself in perpetual verbal self-disparagement. These egotists are fussy in parading their unworthiness and short-comings, and they never allow you to forget how candid they are in dealing with themselves. Their humility is self-conscious and self-proclaiming to such a degree as to make it painfully offensive to average human nature. This is perhaps its subtlest form, and its victims will read this article in blissful ignorance of the fact that they are sitting for the picture drawn. They think this ugly weed growing in the garden of their souls is a beautiful and fragrant flower.

The courage which enables a man to stand between contending factions, displeasing both while waiting for time and reflection to do what hurry and passion can never effect, is as rare as it is valuable to Church or State. The men who possess this splendid quality of courage are often crucified by popular prejudice or misconception, but with the "sober second thought" comes their certain canonization.

A bad man elected on a platform of good principles will either betray those principles or bring them into disgrace by his advocacy.

An unpruned orchard becomes a thicket of stunted trunks and unfruitful branches. The crowded trees cumber the ground. There is a brave show of leaves and waving boughs, but no fruit is brought to perfection. So is the Church where the great struggle is for numbers, and where the pruning-knife of a godly discipline is not used. It may make a fair show in the census, but it will be surely overrun with worldliness and sin, the beauty of holiness will not adorn its members nor the fruits of holiness be brought forth unto eternal life. The unfruitful branch must be excinded, and the fruitful branches must be pruned.

One text well studied is of more value than a whole book of the Bible hurriedly run over. But where one stops to think a score hurry from place to place like a gold-pro prospector who picks up a pebble anywhere and everywhere, but never sinks a shaft to reach the rich veins that lie deep in the bowels of the earth.

The peril of those we love is the strongest call to holy living. The love that does not excite the Christian to better living for the sake of those he would save is not Christian love. It is on the plane of the world, not that of the Spirit.

The Lord's quiet ones—blessings be upon their heads! They sound no trumpets. They give no alms to be seen of men. They make no long prayers standing on the corners of the streets or in the synagogues. They simply let their holy light shine, with no flourish of Chinese lanterns or glare of sky-rockets. They simply bring forth the fruits of righteousness, being as trees planted by the rivers of water. They make melody in their hearts unto the Lord when the clamor of coarser voices deafens the ear of the public. Their lives flow on as quietly as a river whose channel is deep and whose banks are high, and their peace is symbolized by its current, which is ever strong, but never violent. Blessed be God that there are such sweet, quiet, beautiful souls among us. They sit in holy calm and in listening attitudes in the pews of our churches. They move noiselessly about our homes, but shed the light of love upon all around. Their words are few, but their lives are poems divinely sweet. They come to the social meetings of the Church, not with labored polemics or eloquent prayers, but bringing with them the silent influence that tunes the hearts of their brethren and sisters to receive the touches of the Holy Ghost. They have their appointed place, their blessed function, and they shall have their reward.



ALIENATIONS.

WE do not speak of antipathies. They are inevitable and ineradicable. The sympathy of certain persons with other persons is imperfect. Their natures are neither congenial nor complementary to each other. There is no point of contact between them in temperament, taste, and social affinity generally. They feel this to be so at first sight, and they feel it always. They may try, from one motive or another, to overcome this feeling, and may succeed in maintaining conventionally friendly relations, and even work together for some common end without friction. They may be just in their dealings with each other, and may reciprocate the courtesies and good offices of life. But they never go beyond this. They touch one another, but never cohere. They are pitched on different keys, and cannot be tuned together. Discord, not harmony, results from all attempts to evoke the music of social intimacy from such incongruous elements. We do not forget that Christian

love does expel from the heart in which it dwells all envy, malice, hatred, and uncharitableness, and inspires good-will and incites to ministries of service in behalf of every human being within its reach. This love is without partiality. A reflection from the eternal Sun of righteousness, its equal beams shine on all. It is patient toward all men; it prays for all men; it does good to all men as it has opportunity. But intimate friendships and confidential intercourse are reserved for the smaller circle where heart answers to heart in the exchange of a reciprocal sympathy spontaneous to each. They know each other quickly and always. Conversely, and almost as certainly, antipathetic natures recognize each other, and accept the situation, and adjust themselves to inevitable limitations in their intercourse. Despite an occasional and partial exception to this view, this seems to be the law of imperfect sympathy between human beings. But it is not of these antipathies that we would speak, but of alienations.

Alienations! There is a world of sadness in the word. In many a heart it wails a dirge that mingles with the glad music of the new year. It brings up the images of faces whose smiles of love changed to frowns of aversion; awakens echoes of words whose music changed

to discord; it recalls warm hand-clasps that changed to constrained greetings, and then to the silence of dead affection or friendship.

The minister of God thinks of the time of his glowing love and joyous faith in the bright morning of ministerial life, and sighs to think how his pathway along the years has been strewn with alienations and the wrecks of broken ideals. The early faith in men is partially lost, and with it a part of the blessedness of life. There is a darkness on his path, cast by the shadow of alienated friendships.

These alienations creep into the Church: A little difference of opinion concerning the management of some interest of Christ's kingdom, equally dear to all, divides the workers into parties or cliques; and it comes to pass that true-hearted men and women, who would die for their Lord, scarcely speak to one another. They drift insensibly into this current, and are startled with a great surprise when they awake to see the situation as it is. Many streams of Christian love and labor have been frozen into deadness by the icy breath of these petty alienations.

The husband and wife think of the time when the gentle tones, the loving looks, the nameless little expressions of tenderness made in their homes music and sunshine, contrasting

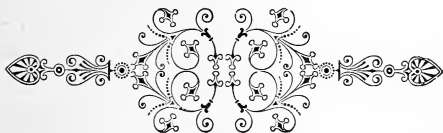
painfully with the asperity, the coldness, and seeming indifference, that have settled down upon their lives. The alienation has gone far enough to make them both unhappy, and must end in one of two ways: it must drift on in the fatal current to the utter extinction of the love that once made the world a blossoming paradise, or there must be a rekindling of the dying embers by a breath from another world than this.

Parents and children are alienated, in whole or in part, by little irritations, or they fall apart, when separated in bodily presence, by simple neglect. There is the sting of wounded parental love on the one side, and the sullenness of jealousy or mistrust on the other. But, underneath these, there is yet the yearning for love, and the abiding sense of dissatisfaction.

Brothers and sisters, too, fall apart in this way, drifting away in different directions on the currents of life. There is absence, silence, forgetfulness at times, but, with all these, a sense of regret that will not be quieted, and a longing to hear the voices of the old days, and to clasp again the hands that once they held in theirs.

If Jesus were to come back to earth in person, the first thing he would do would be to heal these wounds in his body, the Church.

In every home he entered he would say, Peace to this house, that the shadows of alienation might flee before the presence of ineffable love. Brothers, sisters, he will come into Church and home to bring this peace with the new year to every willing heart.



FRICITION is a factor in all dynamics. It is necessary to the existence and regulation of all movement on the earth. It is only when it is put on at the wrong place, or in excessive measure, that it becomes a source of mischief. Then, instead of regulating, it unduly retards or destroys. The mechanician who fails to calculate this force, or does it loosely, invites loss and disaster. So it is in the Church. Friction is inevitable, and, within proper limits, wholesome. It is good to have the cross-lights of differing minds, and the advantage of viewing matters from different stand-points. Collisions of opinion disclose the weakness of error and establish the right. Antipathetic temperaments balance one another; the cautious and phlegmatic moderate the more reckless and fiery; the daring and active prevent caution from sinking into cowardice, and prudence into cunning.

The man who expects to enjoy a happy and fruitful religious life while he neglects prayer, reading the Scriptures, Christian fellowship, and Christian benevolence, is a fanatic.

The man who is carrying a heavy burden may be thankful for advice kindly offered, but what he wants is help.

When the soul has gone out of a word it is time to bury it. The live coal after it has become a dead cinder is of no use. The language of truth will cease to be uttered by the lips when its spirit has died out of the heart. This, however, does not always follow immediately. The empty words are repeated after they have ceased to have any real significance to the speaker, and the effect upon the hearer is scarcely less baneful than the undisguised proclamation of error.

Much of the apparent sympathy with the sneering infidelity of the times has no deeper root than the persistent purpose of the multitude not to obey the gospel now. The presence and pressure of Christian influence are so positive and powerful that obedience or hostility are the alternatives.

The man who puts the worst construction on an unexplained fact or rumor is not the noblest type of manhood. He interprets appearances by his own nature.

The number of men who will scrupulously respect the sacredness of private conversation is smaller than many warm-hearted and impulsive people think.

There is a difference between the wholesale and retail liquor traffic—it is the difference between the explosion of a camphene-lamp and the conflagration that destroys a whole town or city.

Open disparagement of a brother is often cruel and unjust—insinuated disparagement is always mean and cowardly. That which you are not ready to speak out in plain words, leave unsaid.

The lecture the preacher gave to the absentees did not do the “stand-bys” present much good. It was a waste of words and temper.

The brother who was secretly glad for the rain that kept him from attending Church would not have been much benefited had he gone.

The man who has it in his power to please God reaches a height of attainment beyond all estimate. Think of this, and it will grow on you.

If the preacher is too manifestly conscious of his rhetoric, his hearers are not likely to get any strong impression of his earnestness.

The Bible is a revelation from God to the common sense of mankind. They who study the Book itself, instead of perpetually reading about the Bible, get its truest and deepest meaning.

The purest love is the inspiration of the truest courage. It prefers the welfare to the good-will of the one beloved. If it fall short of this, it is not pure love; it is only a counterfeit.

A hopeful sign of growth in grace is the abatement of the hypercritical spirit. The man who hears nothing but discords is himself out of tune.

The person, young or old, who is capable of real self-denial for the family future has already laid the foundations of a character of infinite value.

The identity of deep religious experience despite all the diversities of temperament or accidents of fortune is a strong evidence of its divinity.

Universal suffrage and universal intelligence are correlatives, and if we forget it a universal crash will be the probable result.

There is a radical difference between the Christian and the carnal idea of pleasure. This difference is everywhere recognized and emphasized in the New Testament. It has caused perpetual conflict in the Church from the date of Paul's caustic letters to the Church at Corinth to this present year of our Lord. Spirituality and carnality have met around the altar of the Church, but have never mingled. What concord hath Christ with Belial? or light with darkness? The dominance of the spiritual element in times of religious prosperity has, by the operation of the law of spiritual affinities, repelled from the Church the carnally-minded and those who were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. And by the operation of the beneficent law that error and evil have a tendency ultimately to work their own cure, the very corruptions resulting from the admission of improper persons into the Church, and their retention, have led to those great upheavals and mighty revivals by which dead ecclesiasticisms have been uprooted and destroyed, and the Church of Christ again re clothed in the beauty of holiness and armed anew with the power of God.

The time to push a thing is when it is doing well.

The Apostle Paul says he warned "every man." This means that his interest in the salvation of men was so intense that he yearned over every soul he met. It means, also, that in a world like this men in the Church and out of it need to be warned against dangers that surround them on all sides.

Earnestness always produces activity, but it is not every man who is active in religious work who is religiously in earnest. There is an activity that is the result of temperament; there is an activity inspired by love of notoriety; there is an activity religious in its letter but carnal in its spirit.

Selfishness is never readier to show itself than when a Christian is suffering injustice or persecution. The old Adam feels that he has a license to go almost any lengths in a defensive warfare; and so, adopting the devilish law of retaliation, that which should be a blessing is turned into a curse.

The manliness of a robust piety does not shrink from a fair blow, and can forgive and forget a foul one. The man who broods over slights or disparagements has not attained the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Every soul born of the Spirit is a witness of its saving power. To bear this witness is the duty and privilege of all. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Under the afflatus of the Holy Ghost the soul rejoices in the conscious liberty wherewith it has been made free, and what it feels and knows with confidence it tells. _____

The prevalent tendency to ignore or ridicule the emotional element in religion, while it may be the result of a reaction against fanaticism, is full of danger. The sensibilities are as much the creatures of God as the intellect, and their functions are no less important in the work of salvation. _____

The criticism you made of your brother behind his back did not do him the least good. You did not expect it would. Why, then, did you make it? _____

Your hopefulness as to the power of the gospel to save all men is measured by the strength of your consciousness that it has saved you. _____

The man who soured hopelessly under ill-treatment or hard fortune lacked some element of sweetness in his character at the start.



FAMILY UNITY.

THE unity of the family has been lost in modern life. The husband has a world of his own separate from the wife. The children have a world of their own separate from the parents. The home, so called, is but a common boarding and lodging place. The various members of the household meet at meals, and nowhere else. They have scarcely any thing in common except the family name and in a limited sense the family purse. They have different sets of visitors and friends. Their lives flow in different channels, and the separations which time and the stern necessities of mature life make inevitable are anticipated by this folly that thus throws away the sweetest earthly joys that God places within the reach of mortals. The interplay of reciprocal influence and affection is interrupted, and God's gracious educative purpose in the institution of the family relation is thwarted.

The gravest aspect of this matter relates to

the religious welfare of the family. The lack of unity at this point is fraught with consequences equally painful and injurious. Here indeed the parents and the children live in separate worlds. The mother and father are in the Church, and their children are out. The parents kneel and partake of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of their Lord while their children saunter out of the church with the non-professing throng, if indeed they have not staid away altogether. The mother goes to the prayer-meeting, and the daughter to the theater or the dance. The father is an officer in the Church, and the son trains with scoffers, gamblers, and debauchees. If family prayer is kept up, the older children shirk it, or show plainly that it is a bore and a burden to them. The one subject that is ignored as not being of general interest is religion. A sermon from a new preacher may be commented upon, or some special event of the spectacular or popular kind may elicit passing remark; but conversation relating to Christian experience, bearing upon the practical phases of the Christian life, and bringing out the inward thought and purpose of each soul with reference to this most vital, solemn, and tender of all questions that could engage the thoughts and evoke the speech of persons

who love one another, is unknown. There is coldness and constraint, if not repulsion, in the circle that ought to type the sweetness, the concord, and blessedness of heaven. There is a painful sense of misadjustment all round, and a shadow that rests upon all. This evil, once existing, has a self-perpetuating tendency, and nothing but a mighty sorrow will melt and remold these discordant elements into family unity. By the side of a death-bed or an open grave it has happened that the separated lines of family life have converged in one supreme moment when the eternal realities like a lightning-flash struck each throbbing heart with resistless power.

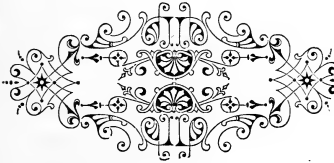
We would not exaggerate. The evil we deplore is no new thing. From the days of David and Absalom there have been division and grief and heart-break in families. The last hours of unnumbered fathers and mothers have been embittered by the reflection that their children had no sympathy with their highest joys and no share in their sweetest hopes. But it does seem to us that this evil is increasing. The centrifugal tendency is fostered by the conditions of modern life. The family is disintegrating, crumbling. The activity of the divorce court is a symptom of this disease that, like a cancer, is gnawing at the

vitals of society; but that subject would require separate and thoughtful treatment.

He who will unfold the producing causes of this evil will entitle himself to the thanks and benedictions of all good people. Several suggest themselves to us: The business habits of men, hotel life, the influence of our educational systems, the customs and usages of fashionable life among women—all these contribute each in their measure to the unhappy result. But our solemn conviction is that the chief cause is to be found in the feeble, halting, half-hearted type of religion that prevails in the Churches. It is a religion without heart. It is a religion that is dead and dumb. It is a religion of mere decorum and forms. It is a religion without experience, and therefore giving no testimony and bearing no fruit. It kindles no light and wakes no song of joy in the home. In some homes there is just religion enough of this sort to insure separation in feeling and living. They are not wholly given up to pleasure, and so do not bow together at her shrine. They do not meet at the foot of the cross. What is the remedy? Begin early, and make religion the dominant influence in the home circle. From the very beginning put God into the family. Erect the home altar. Arrange the plan of home-life for

both worlds. Plant the cross in the home, and let it be the radiant center of its life, the blessed bond of cohesion. It is too late for some who will read these lines with aching hearts. It is not too late for thousands of others.

10



WHILE Christianity is the benignant mother of all the benevolent institutions and humane ministries which are the peculiar glory of modern civilization, there is a strange forgetfulness of the fact with many, and an ungrateful attempt on the part of others to array these very children of Christianity against their mother. The most noted and most sacrilegious of all its opposers constantly attempts this trick of infidel legerdemain, holding up to the admiring gaze of noisy scoffers, as a substitute for Christian ethics, the identical code (in its essential features) proclaimed by Moses and reënacted by Jesus Christ. The devil and his children thus seek to steal the weapons of the celestial armory to battle against God. And Christians themselves have done much to strengthen the hands of these assailants of their faith. They have allowed their enemies to put them in a false position with reference to this matter of doing good to men's bodies as well as their souls. Though the inspiration of all that is best in the spirit and methods of modern philanthropy comes from Jesus Christ, the glory of it is not given to him. Though by far the larger part of all the vast expenditure of the various benevolent organizations of our day is contributed by Christians, it is dispensed through other channels; and so it happens that

the Church, robbed of her rightful revenue and crippled in her function as humanity's friend and benefactor for both worlds, is put to shame by her own children.

An enforced pause in the Christian labors of a true man or woman is often the preparation for future fruitfulness. The field that lies fallow this year will rejoice in an abundant harvest another season. This applies only to enforced pauses. A voluntary pause is renunciation of discipleship.

Your labor is not in vain in the Lord, therefore you need be careful but for one thing: let your labor be in the Lord and for the Lord. God will give the increase, in due time and in every case. There is no provision for doubt.

No man or woman ever finds time for religion. All who would gain this treasure must take time to seek it. It is never stumbled on by accident. It is never thrust into the idle hand of indolence or indifference.

Simulated zeal, while it is very fatiguing to the actor and very damaging to his self-respect, deceives nobody. Coldness in the pulpit is fruitless; artificial fervors are disgusting.

Humility is the genuine diamond of religion. It has many imitations, but they deceive only the spiritually unlearned. The self-consciousness of a false humility cannot be hidden. True humility is the fairest flower that blooms in the garden of God. Mock humility is the sorriest daub that ever caricatured perfect beauty.

The prominent member of the Church, whether preacher or layman, who makes the impression that he does not attend the social meetings of the Church because he lacks a genuine relish for them makes the Lord's little ones to stumble.

The novice in science is full of new theories. So it is in theology. Novices are always mending the highway of holiness. Wiser men are content to help their fellows to walk in it.

It no more "pays" to half starve a preacher than it does to half starve a work-horse. The poorest farmers and the meanest Churches only are guilty of this folly.

The Sunday-school is called the nursery of the Church. So it ought to be. But if the nurse so trains the child as to alienate it from its mother, what then?

To take a strong-willed, energetic man into the Church and give him nothing to do is a great folly. Such men must be active. If you do not give them something to do inside the Church, the devil will be likely to find them a job outside.

Unexpected antagonisms or disparagements do not either embitter or discourage the man who has the mind of Christ. He regards such things as challenges to his Christian manhood and calls to greater watchfulness and prayerfulness.

A little "sour" is he?—the old preacher. He has had trials that would have broken you down years ago. Sweeten his life by a little kindness to him in his old age. He has a heart yet. Try it.

The truest souls always draw closer to the causes or the objects they love when they are unpopular or imperiled. The meanest do just the contrary. There is no surer test of human spirits than this.

The devil laughs at the folly of the mothers and fathers who close the doors of their houses against vicious persons and yet admit books and periodicals reeking with pollution.

Egotists when thrown into association with one another always find mutual repulsion. Each one is quick enough to detect the flaw in his neighbor, and often is swift to expose it. It might be expected that the sight of what is so unlovely in others would be as a mirror reflecting their own deformity. But it is not so. Nothing but the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit will expel this ugly thing from the soul, and impart to it the mind which was in Christ Jesus.

The religion of some people is like certain delicate articles of trade—it will not bear transportation. They seem to think that a temporary change of residence is a dispensation absolving them from religious obligation and service. Think, unfaithful disciple, of this question: Will the religion that will not bear transportation a few hundred miles now bear the scrutiny of the judgment?

When wicked men can give no better excuse for their wickedness than the inconsistencies of professed Christians, they practically confess judgment against themselves, and anticipate the awful hour when, not daring to trifle thus with their Almighty Judge, they will be speechless.

The brother who failed to put in his Church-letter and renew his membership in the Church when he changed his abode was a dead branch before he left; his connection with the Church was formal, not vital. The complaint that is heard from the frontier that so large a number of new-comers fail to identify themselves with the religious bodies to which they belonged in the older States is, in many cases, a disclosure not so much of sudden backsliding on the part of these delinquents as of the fact that they were only withered branches before they started. True religion does not lose its voice and its power so easily. It is not of so frail a quality that it cannot stand the effects of a journey by land or a voyage by sea. The plants that wither so easily never had any root.

The command to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit means just what is said. To explain it away is impossible; to refuse to obey it is to rob the Christian life of its sweetness and glory.

The romance of the mission-work excites and attracts a class of persons, but it is only the baptism of the Spirit of Christ that will insure steady service and unflinching liberality in this holiest of all enterprises.

In these days we often hear the remark made of this or that man who has fallen into crime, "What a sudden fall!" There is a mistake here. Men do not fall into crime suddenly. The downward course is gradual. It is an inclined plane leading to an abyss, and the man who tampers with sin approaches the edge by degrees. There comes a moment when the verge is reached, and then he goes over. It seems sudden, for only the final, fatal plunge is seen by mortal eye. The beginnings of evil in all cases involve the possibility of such a dreadful ending. Do not start down the inclined plane. Resist the beginnings of evil.

When the Church appeals to self-indulgence instead of self-denial, in raising money for the support of Christianity, it inverts the true method, and pursues a course which tends to the extirpation of genuine Christian liberality.

The man who does one generous deed and shirks and higgles the remainder of the year is deceived if he thinks himself other than a stunted growth in the garden of the Lord.

A consecrated Christian in the full sense of the word is one who does his duty and delights in doing it.



HOLINESS FOR YOU NOW.

BE ye holy now. Now is the day of your full salvation. Let nothing hinder you from grasping now all your Lord offers to give you now. But some are disputing as to what holiness is. Let them dispute, but be ye holy. If you wait until they cease, you will die without the blessing.

The feast is spread now. Do not stop to wrangle about the order of the different courses; only come, and the Master himself will attend to that.

It is well enough to know chemistry, but the unlearned must eat whether they can analyze the constituent elements of their food or not. So the soul that would be holy may have its aliment even if the polemics fail to settle their disputes.

It is the will of God that you should be holy now. This lays upon you the weight of imperative obligation. His will is the law of your life. You must obey or be condemned. No excuse will avail. No delay can be justi-

fied. Duty or disobedience is the plain issue. Listen to no sophistry, whether from man or devil, that would tempt you to doubt or to dally. The will of God is your sanctification.

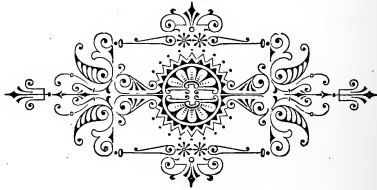
In saying it is God's will that you should be holy, the attainability of the blessing is affirmed. Nothing can thwart his work in the willing soul. He can work, and none can hinder. Are you unworthy? So much the more is his grace magnified in making you holy. Are your associations inimical to holiness? They should but drive you closer to the blood that makes you whole. Are you fighting a hard battle with adverse worldly conditions? That only shows that you are planted in the soil in which it pleases God that the heavenly flower of holiness shall take root, grow, and bloom in its divinest beauty. He will not take you out of the world, but he will help you to put it under your feet. He will not exempt you from care, pain, and sorrow, but he will make all work together for your growth in the new life. Jesus is head over all things to the Church, and by him all things are made tributary to the growth, security, and full salvation of his followers. It is his voice that says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy; let your empty vessels be filled, for the fountain is full and free forever. All mine is yours. You are a

joint-heir with me, and you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Holiness is union by faith with this Living Vine which imparts life, growth, fruit—life more abundant, growth unceasing, fruitfulness ever increasing.

Holiness is an experience within the reach of every believer, not a theory to be mastered only by a few skillful spiritual anatomists. It is a blessing for the Lord's little ones, many of whom, we may hope, grasp the prize while the gladiators are filling the polemical arena with the dust and noise of their strife. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." While partisans are saying, Lo here, or Lo there, the child of God has an infallible Guide. And he has an infallible Witness: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." That satisfies, let the din of disputation rage as it may. The believer knows that he is a child of God in the new, sweet sense. And if a child, then all else follows in the orderly evolution of the true Christian life. Sonship and heirship are inseparable now and forever.

Yes, now is the day of this complete salvation. "Now are we the sons of God," may be the grateful, joyful echo of every earnest soul to the apostle's triumphant pæan, rejoicing in

the believer's heirship of both worlds and of all things. Every one of us may share in the blessing and join in the rapturous strain. We may be holy now. Amen.



OUR Lord Jesus Christ is the head of his own Church, and the leader of his own forces in the earth. There is no contingency possible for which he has not provided, there is no opposition for which he is unprepared. As in the past, so in the present, he is the head over all things to the Church. The living Church is the living miracle that cannot be gainsaid. Books are read by the few—the Church is read by all. The best books number a few volumes—Christ's witnesses number millions of all ranks of society and of every grade of culture. _____

Liberality must not be confounded with indifference. Liberality must not be confounded with diluted Christianity. Liberality must not be confounded with the spirit which gives a hospitable reception to every new-fangled notion that is thrust upon the religious world. We have no right to be more liberal than the Bible. _____

The man who is glib in telling a commercial lie justifies himself because his business competitors do it. This at least is the only excuse he makes to his own conscience. But it satisfies no man who is not a fool. What will it be worth at the bar of God?

Sanctification is not an exceptional state of religious experience—a blessing for the few, not to be enjoyed by the many. It is offered to, and enjoined upon, all believers. It is not something peculiar in the Christian life, but the orderly development of grace in every regenerate soul. It is not a mystery revealed only to an elect few, but hidden from the little ones of Christ's flock. Its attainment is a duty, and all duties are made plain to the humble and obedient in spirit. It is not a goal, but a stage gained in an endless upward and onward career.

What poor, weak creatures we are! You may enjoy a friend for years, but let his interest clash with yours, and lo, he is your enemy! "Rivals never love each other," is an adage of the world. Let the world have it and act on it if it will. The followers of Jesus should be above it. A mark of the true disciples is that in honor they prefer one another. Who bears that mark now?

When a Christian man becomes so strong in his religious life that he can afford to dispense with the means of grace offered for his use in the social meetings of the Church, he is certainly stronger than the New Testament standard of strength.

A certain class of Christians spend their time thinking of their feelings instead of their conduct. They become morbid from excessive introspection, and suffer a sort of paralysis of moral energy. Let all such go to work for Christ as they find opportunity, and they will find the stagnant waters of their souls turn sweet as they go singing on in the way of obedience.

Said a good lady to the preacher, as he came out of the pulpit, "You preached a good sermon to-night." "What is your standard of a good sermon?" "When a sermon makes you feel that you ought to do better, and that you can do better, I call it a good sermon." It would be hard to find a better definition than this.

The religion, by whatever name it may be called, and whatever pretensions it may make, that does not concern itself for the physical welfare of suffering humanity will not be believed when it expresses great concern for the salvation of souls.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the surest preventive of doctrinal difference and difficulty in the Church. Under that divine influence Christians emphasize the right things.

Now and then special services are held in half-alive congregations for the purpose of converting sinners: Deep and thorough conversions can scarcely be looked for in such an atmosphere of coldness and formality. If any are born into the new life, it is like casting forth tender lambs upon a snowy north hillside in midwinter. They are likely to freeze to death, or be permanently stunted in their growth. A healthy spiritual offspring cannot be expected from such a sickly motherhood. Either the new "converts" fall away or they remain to swell the ranks of those who have the form but not the power of godliness.

The study of the Scriptures is enjoined upon all believers. The hurried reading of a chapter or two daily does not meet this requirement. That is not study. With many it is only task work. Study means thinking. Better read one verse and then meditate on it earnestly than read whole books, as many do, hurriedly and carelessly. The Bible is a mine of precious truth, but it is not surface digging that will reach the ore.

In the Church unconverted, and yet at ease! Beware! The man who had not on the wedding-garment presumed too far.

The old cry is repeated that if Christians would patronize the theater it could be reformed. Nonsense. Many professed Christians do go to the theater, and they and the theater are both getting worse instead of better.

You must not become discouraged because you do not at once realize the fulfillment of your ideal of the Christian life. Grow in grace, is the word. The tendency is ever toward perfection as long as you keep trying.

It is a good time for a man to be silent when personal disappointment is mingled with the defeat of his views on questions of public interest. He is likely to be misunderstood—and to misunderstand himself.

The heroism of the missionaries in the field must be equaled by the self-denial of the Church at home before the heathen shall be given as an inheritance to our Christ.

When a thought or suggestion from the word of God feeds your soul, hold it long enough to make it yours forever.

No critic in the Church is entitled to respectful hearing unless he is also a worker.

Be sure of this, that the man or the woman who is ready to give his Christian life a vacation while he is from home never was sincere in the matter of serving God. They who have religion take it along with them wherever they go.

The intimate connection between drunkenness and obscenity ought to make a man of gentlemanly instincts resolve never to risk getting drunk. This is for the man who will read it.

There is no time for family-prayer in the family where the spirit of prayer is lacking. There is plenty of time for it where the inclination is felt.

The brother who did not miss a prayer-meeting during the year was more helpful to his pastor than the one who made a good talk once a quarter.

The worst sort of a "ritualist" is the man who repeats interminably his own dull and stupid drivel.

Do not try to push every zealous young layman into the pulpit. Let God call men to preach.

When a Christian man thinks he can work better outside the Church than in it, he may be sincere, but he is in danger of taking a course that would, if adopted by all believers, destroy the visible Church altogether. You do not desire that.

The man who never sings, nor prays, nor speaks for Christ in the social meetings of the Church, may be a good listener and a good man, but things will be awkward to him at first when he gets to heaven. There he will open his lips.

Do not trouble yourself concerning your emotions, the subjective phenomena attending the exercise of faith in Christ. Be careful only of your purpose of heart—the frames and feelings will be regulated by their own blessed law.

Do you not at times feel a misgiving that your loss of spiritual serenity and power may be owing to some indulgence concerning which conscience has raised an interrogation-point in your mind?

In all organized bodies majorities must rule. A factious minority is as criminal as a tyrannical majority.

It is only twenty-five thousand miles round this earth. Soon there will be no "foreign" missions except in the sense that the mind that was in Christ Jesus is foreign to many who are called by his name.

You went once upon doubtful ground. You met there an unconverted friend whose look of surprise took away half the pleasure you expected to find. You have put that friend beyond your reach for good.

Of all the benefits you have received from your fellow-creatures, the most precious have come by timely words spoken by holy men and women. Think of this, silent disciple of Jesus.

Can an unconverted man or woman do the specific work aimed at in our Sunday-schools? This is the same as to ask whether a blind man can be a competent guide in a journey.

The meanest expression of a mean nature is to ascribe a bad motive for a good action. It is akin to the sin against the Holy Ghost, and is born of the same father, the devil.

The "liberality" that is not pained at error is not Christ's, but Satan's.



SORROW THE TEACHER.

IT is a dark day when the question is wrung from the soul: Does God know—does he care? The lightning-bolt leaps from a clear sky, and the joy of life is blasted. Death comes suddenly, and the light of the eyes is quenched. Calamity in other forms descends like sudden night, and all is dark. We try to rally to meet the shock. We take up the Bible, and turn to its blessed pages. The letter is there, but the spirit seems to have fled. Friends try to comfort us, but their words have no meaning for us. From the common-places of philosophy the agonized soul turns away with loathing.

The soul is in its crisis now. Its natural props and comforts have fallen away. The dark waves and billows have gone over it. The intellect is confounded. Still trying to cling to God, out of these depths the sufferer cries unto him; but he seems not to hear. He does not reveal himself at once to the struggling soul that listens to catch his assuring

voice, and feels in the dark to clasp his supporting hand. A great and sudden calamity of heavy sorrow produces a sort of moral paralysis. The stricken soul may still struggle, but is slow in rallying its forces.

David had this experience. When overwhelmed by disaster, in the agony of his soul he demands: "How long wilt thou forget me, O God?" When the Church lies low at the feet of her taunting foes, scorned and trampled upon, the Holy One of Israel seeming to have abandoned his own cause in the earth, he cries out: "O God, why hast thou cast us off forever?" And when, in the midst of deep trouble, the sense of loneliness and desolation falls upon him with crushing weight, the wail is extorted: "Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble."

The almost despairing cry of the psalmist has found an echo in unnumbered souls whose faith and hope have trembled in the bitter blast of adversity. It is no strange thing that happens to the servant of God when these things come upon him. He is walking in the path trodden by God's elect in all ages. "There is no sorrow like my sorrow," each one may say in a true sense, every heart knowing its own bitterness. There is in the griefs of every life some element that gives its peculiar sting; but

the scourge, the crown of thorns, and the cross await each and all who will be gathered with the blood-washed throng who shall go up to their rest and reward out of great tribulation.

Such experiences are tests and teachers. They determine whether the spiritual house be built upon the sand or upon the rock. They reveal the secrets of men's hearts. The flood and the tempest fulfill their office. The true disciple stands the storm. He may bend before the fury of the gale, but he does not break. He is chastened, not crushed. In such crises deep-rooted faith rallies and asserts its power, and henceforth the child of sorrow is more than ever the child of God. He lives on a higher plane. Having wrestled and prevailed, he is stronger forever.

The secret of the Lord is learned in this school of sorrow. The disciple, sorrowing, tempest-tossed, learns what it is to walk consciously in the light of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. That comfort has come to him when all other comforts failed. That light shines when all other lights have gone out. The Comforter comes direct to his heart, as Jesus promised. It was a flash of blessed spiritual insight that led a Christian woman to say, when she was reeling under a great sorrow: "I do not want time, or the sug-

gestions or the sympathy of even my dearest friends, to bring me comfort—I want the Holy Spirit to be my comforter.” Ah, yes! he only could comfort truly a grief like hers. This is the secret—God is the only helper in such times of need. His voice alone can still the tempest, his hand alone lift the sinking soul above the roaring waves. Learned in this school, the lesson of trust is mastered for time and for eternity.

Blessed is he that endures; he shall come forth as gold from the furnace of sorrow. His baptism of fire shall bring him into closer union with the Lord. It shall fit him for better service in a world of sin and pain. It shall prepare him for a more abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom, and for eternal and joyful companionship with the white-robed millions upon the mount of God.



A STAGNANT pond does not more certainly generate and diffuse malaria than does a vicious quarter in a city or town generate and diffuse moral corruption. The sight of it is suggestive of prurient thought in the young. The very names of such places become locally symbolic of vice, and tend to familiarize the minds of even little children with ideas that rob them of the bloom of innocence, and lower forever their conception of the purity, sweetness, and dignity of human life. If you could know all that is in the thought and speech of your own children, who live outside of these dark districts, but within sight and hearing of them, you would very quickly abandon the fallacy that one part of a social organism can be sound and strong, while another is rotten with disease. In the history of cities a new street is from time to time annexed to the devil's territory. In the history of families from time to time a son or daughter is sucked into the fatal stream to swell the census of ruined souls and broken hearts. It was a mistake for you to think you and yours were safe. Safe! Nobody is safe when there is death in the air. Nobody can be safe in the indulgence of the cowardice or selfishness that allows men and women within sight of them to perish in sin without lifting a voice to warn or a hand

to help. Nothing is safe when such elements are at work. It was no flash of idle rhetoric in the great historian who said that the enemies that would destroy our modern civilization will be bred in its midst.

Holiness is not a riddle. Dismiss forever the notion that when you would consider it you enter the realm of mystery and perplexity. It is the region of sunshine, not of fog and night. As it concerns the highest interest of the soul, so it shines in the clearest light. Here, where most is at stake, is greatest certainty.

As when the lower layer in a box of apples is rotten the whole box will be affected, so when the masses of society are ignorant and degraded, corruption will spread through its higher ranks. Selfishness is always self-punishing in the long run.

The country in which the tillers of the land have no permanent interest in its improvement will go to ruin. This will be true as long as there is human nature in human beings.

If, in following Jesus, you shrink back when you come to Gethsemane, thenceforth there is a gulf between your heart and his.

Your conversion away back in the dim distance, the vows assumed at the altar of the Church in joining it, the religious formula deposited in the memory when for a little season your mind was actively employed in the study of the things of God—are these what you call the new life of Christianity? Do you expect to satisfy your spiritual hunger and thirst by reverting to these things? As well try to warm your freezing body by the cold ashes of fires that burned out last year.

Many a man banishes the brandy-bottle from his side-board, for the sake of his growing boys, whose library is full of bad books, and whose daily paper is the one farthest removed from decency and moral healthfulness of tone. If this be not folly, what is?

Under the theocracy a tenth was required by the law. Under the gospel we are required to give weekly as God prospers us; that is, as prospers not only the purse, but the soul—not only ability, but willingness.

If every good impulse of your heart found expression in speech or act, your life would be doubled in its fruitfulness. By indolence or indecision half its possibility is lost.

The way a professed Christian behaves himself from home tests him and reveals him in his true character. He is then out of the ruts of conventionality and habit. He acts himself. If he is prayerless in spirit, he shows it by neglecting the forms that kept his conscience quiet at home. If his heart secretly longs for unhallowed pleasures, he goes after them. If he prefers the society of the gay and worldly to that of the quiet and spiritually-minded, he shows it in the choice of his associates.

One preacher makes himself popular, fills his church, and gets many a puff from the newspapers. Another, doing God's work in God's way, makes less noise, but leads men to love the Lord Jesus Christ. The one builds up himself; the other, his Master's cause. The one projects himself upon the community; the other, his Master. The work of the one will perish; that of the other will stand.

Woman's work in the Church began when the Church began. It will be going on when the music of its song of final triumph shall be ringing over all the earth.

When a newspaper prints the literature of the slums, let the slums support it.

Said a gray-haired man in the class-meeting: "I am surrounded with mysteries and live in the midst of infidels. But when a man has been to a good country, and seen it for himself, and breathed its air, and tasted its fruits, no one need tell him it is not a good country. So it is with my religion. I have tried it for myself. I have been there. All the infidels in the world cannot move me." And he sat down amid a volley of Amens.

So long as a man feels that he is not where he ought to be, his movement will be feeble and painful. And herein is a snare to many gifted and sensitive souls. They have such strong preferences that they thwart the very processes by which an invisible hand would lead them to the desired consummation. Delay means not defeat, but preparation.

The fact that his calling allows him to spend all his time in thinking of things and working for results of eternal value is a compensation to the true minister of the gospel for all that he gives up in assuming his high vocation.

The true soul-winner has a wonderful intuition as to the needs of his people. Love is quick-sighted and deep-sighted.

The best physical remedy for the blues and ill-temper is to go a-fishing. There is a magnetism in the angler's rod that is felt from the finger-tips to the sensorium. The nerves are quieted at the same time they are invigorated. The fevered blood catches the refreshing coolness of pellucid depths. The music of sparkling waters dancing down pebbly channels enters the soul, charming away evil spirits as did the harp of the young shepherd of Judea the evil spirit from the soul of the sad and gloomy son of Kish.

A young member of the Church said, "I do not read the Bible now, for I have already read it all through." As well say astronomy can teach him nothing because he has glanced at the shining heavens. Depths beyond depths of knowledge reward the study of the Book of God and the book of nature alike.

The complaint was made that the preacher had no magnetism. A grievous disability this, if the complaint was just. Love is always magnetic, and a preacher without love has not the mind of Christ.

Postponement is half abandonment of your best intentions.

There is as much demand for real moral heroism in the pastorate of a modern city Church as in the darkest places of heathenism; that is, if the pastor will stand up squarely for truth and righteousness. The frowns of money-loving and pleasure-loving friends are as hard to meet as the scowls of idolatrous heathen.

The true-hearted follower of Jesus kept hoping all through life that God would open to him a sphere of service, and at last awoke to see that he had all the time been doing the very work his Master wanted done; and his heart was filled with a great surprise and a great joy.

The modern humanitarianism which leaves God and immortality out of its creed, and the dogmatic orthodoxy which cares nothing for the bodily welfare of mankind, are about equally far removed from the religion of the New Testament.

When the current of conversation starts the wrong way, it is hard to turn it. Start with religion.

To expect perfect peace with imperfect consecration is to expect an impossible thing.

There was a pause in the prayer-meeting—not an awkward, painful pause, but a thoughtful pause. The leader had given those present something to think about, and they were thinking. That was better than speaking merely to “fill up the time.” Silence is better than idle words. After thinking, men speak to purpose. A little touch of Quakerism, in the best sense of the word, is good in its place.

How childish is this talk of punishment for wrong-doing according to, or by, a law of nature! As well say, when you punish a child, that it is the rod that punishes. There is a Law-maker behind the law, as there is an arm that wields the rod.

Your children adopt your politics, but they do not adopt your religion. Why? Because you are more earnest in your devotion to your party than to your Church.

If ministers of Christ would never belittle one another they would have better standing with their fellow-men and with their Master.

Hold fast the form of sound words. The terminology of the Holy Ghost is better than that of the modern lecture-room.



THE JEWEL-HEADED TOAD.

NO do any thing for yourself these times is to get in somebody else's way. There is no place for you that somebody else would not like to have. Whether you follow a profession or work at a trade; whether you sell dry goods or dig the earth; whether you run for office or teach school; whether you print newspapers or pasture cattle: whatever you do, you are in somebody else's way. Whatever you get, it is what somebody else wanted. If, disgusted and weary, you should seek retirement in a hermit's cave, most likely you would find that preempted by some cynic who got ahead of you! All generous souls chafe under this unceasing friction and conflict. They long for peace. In the intervals of their heated conflicts with their fellows, they turn with disgust from a life in which to win even the smallest prize it must be selfishly snatched from the hand of another. This feeling of disgust is intensified by the reflection that this seems to be the normal condition of human society—

that human life is to be forever like a scramble of dogs for bones, of swine for swill.

But hold! look deeper. It is best as it is. The benignant Power that rules this world, and all worlds, has not erred in placing us where perpetual warfare seems to be necessary to existence.

Progress is the law of our being—progress through antagonism. If every man were fitted without exertion into a niche prepared for him—if he could have what he wants without competition—mental stagnation and death would ensue. Activity is the law of health. In proportion as men are exempted from the necessity for exertion of their powers are those powers enfeebled. Disuse finally leads to extirpation. The intellectual progress of the race is the result of an unending struggle between man and his fellow, and between man and nature. However it may be in the world beyond, in this stage of our being here on earth we must accept the truth that this is the condition of intellectual progress.

This struggle is also the condition of moral progress. The collision of conflicting interests, the rivalries of ambition and avarice, furnish opportunity for the exercise of the noblest impulses of human nature. The refining and exalting discipline of man's soul is found in

resisting and overcoming, rather than in exemption from, temptation. In this arena, in which the prizes of this life are battled for, moral knight-hood is won. In our stores there are merchants who are Bayards in magnanimity toward rivals. Among capitalists there are men who use money as the beneficent instrument of public enterprise and private benefaction. In political life there are white-souled men who have chosen defeat rather than defame an opponent. In the humbler walks of life there are thousands who, hard as they must strive to wring from unfriendly conditions their daily bread, never stretch forth a dishonest hand to take what belongs to others.

So this conflict, these temptations, furnish the intellectual and moral discipline necessary to the progress of our race. The very conditions which, looked at superficially, excite disgust and a longing to flee away to find rest, give us the best schooling of our lives. This ugly toad wears a jewel in its head.



EARLY marriages give the greatest promise of happiness. This is the voice of nature, which is the same as saying it is the voice of God. There are good reasons why some may decline altogether to marry; there are reasons why others may defer marriage; but it is an inspired word that says, "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth." But the extravagant habits of many of our young people of both sexes are an insuperable bar to matrimony. They waste in dress and amusement what might build them homes, and so, drifting upon the tide of life homeless and aimless, our young men fall into vice and our young women into—what we find them to be. Love, health, and industry, are capital enough for any young couple to begin with. With the blessing of God, these will win. So let the young people marry—let them marry for love and for life.

The blessing promised to the peace-maker belongs not only to the man who reconciles the discords of others, but also to the man who, for the sake of peace, forbears either to parade or avenge his own wrongs.

The man who does any thing in business does not wait for openings—he makes them. It is just the same in religion.

The constitution that resists malaria during June, July, and August sometimes succumbs in September. Evil associations that do not blight the budding Christian life at once may prove fatal in the end. Do not take the risk.

A Christian man must sometimes execute orders that he feels sure were not the wisest when first given, or else there will be confusion all along the lines of the militant Church. The Church has also its Balaklavas.

You must give your love and service to particular individuals within your reach if you would keep your heart warm with love to the world at large. The man you see is the link that connects you with all men.

The preacher who yields in any degree to the modern demand for sensationalism in the pulpit takes a larger contract than he thinks. Morbid mental and spiritual appetites, like physical ones, are insatiable.

Coax or flatter a man into doing his duty, and you will have to go through the same process every time any thing is to be done. Reach him through his conscience, and the work is done for life.

The promise that in due time you shall reap if you faint not goes beyond the depth of the unthinking. The sowing of many years may be partially or wholly lost because in the critical reaping-time you gave up your efforts. Consider here. _____

While the Church, settled into a frozen super-gentility, shrinks from all excitement, and the world is wild with its own excitements, who can expect any thing but the backward movement of the former before the aggressive rush of the latter? _____

While theorizers are repeating the old cries about reaching the masses, earnest men are following the method of Jesus. He reached them simply by going to them in person. There is no other way. _____

Do not be discouraged because the men you work with prove weaker or meaner than you expected. Their weakness and meanness is a call to you for help, not for scorn or denunciation. _____

The merchant who tells "white lies" in trade because his neighbors do the same will have to change his practice before he can become the possessor of the pearl of great price.

We knew a sweet and saintly Christian lady of advanced age who read the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel every day. She knew it all by heart, but still she found a blessing in the reading of it. A child knows its mother loves it, but loves to be told of it again and again. The words of love are always sweet to the loving heart. _____

The cure for excessive sensitiveness is consciousness of the favor of God. The man who knows that he pleases God cannot be disturbed because he cannot please all of his fallible fellow-men. _____

The cold-blooded meanness that cheats the ignorant is worse than the brutality that bruises the weak. The bully is fined or jailed; the cheat builds a brick house and gets into "society." _____

The true function of the Church is to save the people, not to amuse them. When this is forgotten, it sinks below the worldly level, superadding false pretension to pernicious practice. _____

Your plan of life is to have an easy time. God's plan is to give you a character for a blessed eternity. Change your plan.

The elect are those who have been born of God, and know it; who are led by his Spirit, and know it; who possess an abiding peace, and know it; who have begotten within them by the resurrection-power of the risen Christ the living hope, and exult in it. Consciousness defies criticism. The man who knows is in no danger from the man who doubts or denies.

A thousand men will confess to themselves that they have been hasty and unjust toward others where one will make open acknowledgment and reparation. This shows that there are a thousand men who have consciences where there is one who has attained the highest nobility of character.

The preacher who waits for other excitements to subside before he makes special effort for the conversion of sinners will wait until newspapers cease to be printed and elections cease to be held. The gospel is always the previous question.

The courage that pushes forward under strong conviction of duty when timid souls hesitate or draw back is noble; the courage that refuses to push forward with the crowd when it is going wrong is nobler and rarer.

The glow of enthusiasm you put into the work that seemed to be needed carried you through the task, and now you find a reaction and some misgivings. That is all right—nature and grace qualifying you for self-criticism and saving you from silly self-elation.

The best revivals have sometimes been those that were not planned beforehand. Faithful preaching and earnest praying made a channel, and the river of God poured into the Church.

The kingdom of heaven must be within us. God's aim is not merely to bring us to glory by and by, but to put heaven into our souls now—heaven in its essential element of love.

The factious subaltern never made a true leader. Fidelity to fellow-workers is indispensable. The lack of it makes a factionist out of position and a tyrant in it.

If you wait until all your fellow-workers are congenial to you before you go to work for Christ, you will not begin at all in this world.

“They give and grow,” is the way a brother puts the matter. The words are but a paraphrase of the Master's own language.

Holiness is not a blessing for the future, but for the present. This is a crucial statement. By it shall the thoughts of many hearts be revealed. Holiness now! Does your heart shrink back with a sort of reluctance and hesitancy? Then you do not want it. You are not ready to sell all, that you may buy this goodly pearl—you keep back part of the price. You are yet carnal. Yours is a divided heart, and yours must be a joyless experience and a barren life. The blessing promised to such as hunger and thirst after righteousness—the righteousness of pardon and purity, of justification and sanctification—is not for you. You do not want it except in the vague, foolish, unworthy sense that when you can no longer cling to the world the security and the joys of religion may be within your reach. The language of your heart is, "Give me the world now, and let me have holiness when the world fails me." Is this your inward thought? If so, it bars your way to the blessing as effectually as did Esau's trade for the mess of pottage cut him off from his glorious birthright. You, too, are an Esau, selling your divine birthright to holiness for the carnality you will not part with now. Beware, brother! there is death in that pot. The neglect of so great salvation can only end in the loss of it.

A good man sometimes gets a foretaste of the reward that awaits fidelity in the life to come in the recognition given of his worth by his co-laborers in the field of Christian service. When this comes unsought, it brings a pleasure without alloy. It is worthless if it comes in any other way. _____

The brother who inclined his head in silent prayer when he took his seat in church was stared at as an innovator. The other brother who turned at once to his next neighbor and began to talk about the crops was not stared at at all—he was following the fashion of the times. _____

You stay out of the Church because you are as good as some Church-members, or better. The logic of this would keep you from eating your dinner because others sit down without appetites. _____

The man who has in him the elements of a worker for Christ will find a field or make one. Paul when a prisoner made converts in Cæsar's household. _____

The fact that you have no fixed opinions on religious subjects does not exempt you from moral responsibility. It is your own fault.

The call is not to begin a course of study, but to be holy. It is not to sit down and make maps of a road to be traveled, but to start at once. It is not to study a printed bill-of-fare, but to feast now on the royal bounty of the King, whose table is spread, and whose invitation is, "Come." _____

If tempted to think that your usefulness would be more increased by advance in position than by growth in grace, it is a suggestion of the enemy. _____

The preacher who quarrels with his own Church gets a backing from outside elements that hold aloof from him when he is fighting Satan. _____

When you begin to ask how close you may go to the edge of perdition without going over, you are very near where the devil wants you to be. _____

The dying send the message, "I forgive." Let the living send that message. It will bless the sender at least. _____

Make your best battle at home this year. A victory there will double your effectiveness everywhere else.



OUR FRAMES.

THESE is comfort to a true man in the thought that God knows him. He appeals from the false judgments of men to the Searcher of hearts with absolute confidence. "O Lord, thou knowest," has been the final adjuration and solace of many a hunted and harried soul. Men seldom do know each other. If unlike in temperament, they never can obtain more than a surface-view of one another. They meet, pass, and repass, but never touch. Each knows the features of the other's face, but the real man within is unknown. In the midst of the crowd there may be a chilling sense of isolation. The nearest and dearest earthly friend may be incapable of giving true sympathy, may even misjudge us. This is a bitter experience to many souls finely tuned and easily jarred. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and must bear its own burden. There is no help in man. There are chambers of the soul he cannot enter, troubles he can neither know nor soothe. The

burdened spirit must go to God. Its expectation is from him only. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Yes, he knows; there is comfort in that. In the body pent, we are limited by it. The ethereal spirit within is harnessed with its dull companion, and must creep slowly where it would fain fly on eagles' wings. The flesh is weak, and drags down the willing spirit. It is dust, and dust has its limitations from which it shall not be freed till this mortal puts on immortality. The soul has will, purpose, is fixed on God; the body has its frames, being matter, and subject to its laws. Herein is the necessity that we should deal justly with ourselves. "God has not made sad all that are sad." The weakened eye-sight carries the darkened landscape wherever it goes. The shrinking flesh complains even when the victory and the day-break are at hand. Mortal terror clouds immortal bliss at times, for we are but dust on one side of our nature. There are morbid moments when the soul is self-accusing and self-torturing, bound with the chains of the body. Purposes and frames are different things. God knows the difference. He does not condemn, but pities and helps. He pities now, and will send help in his own best way and in his own good time. "Who is

among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." The depressed frame of mind will pass away, but the word of the Lord abideth forever. There is a cloud between the soul and its Sun, but behind the cloud it is shining with unflinching splendor. We walk by faith, not by sight. We look to Jesus, not at ourselves; to his atoning blood and availing intercessions, not to our own frames or fears. We therefore endure as seeing him who is invisible, and are able to bear hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The morning cometh; we will wait through the weary watches of the night; we will wait upon God.

The divine and the human interblend marvelously now. Where the one ends and the other begins we cannot always tell. Earth and heaven mingle in our frames. The love and mercy of the all-pitying Father is in all. Only let us see to it that there is no willful distrust of him in our depression, and no sinful forgetfulness of him in our joyous moods, and all will be well with us.

SOME discount on apparent results of religious labor may always be expected. The treasure of heavenly truth and grace is in earthen vessels. This is the struggling militant Church. Absolute perfection is found only in the Church triumphant. Therefore, let no pastor be discouraged when he finds revival raptures succeeded by inconsistencies and short-comings. Let no pastor lose his patience. In dealing with the inexperienced, the ignorant, and the wayward, he will find occasion for the development of his own spiritual life, and will learn "that wisdom which is love."

It is a great misfortune to have religious terminology lose its significance—to have the hot metal turn into cold cinders. This has happened with all religionists whose forms of speech have outlived the history that gave them birth. The breath of God will make these dry bones live again. In a genuine revival of religion dead words are raised to life again.

The difference between the man who changes his associates because they are corrupt and the man who changes his because he is himself corrupted is so plain that popular opinion never fails to see it.

The citizen who sins a little against morality and whose conscience hurts him for so doing is found on the side of the right when a great crisis compels men to take sides. Lifted for the time being to a higher plane and into the companionship of the best, he is thenceforth a better man. A great moral crisis is a purifier of the national life.

It is strange that the cant about the opposition of theologians to science is still kept up. There is no such opposition; but when the man with the microscope tells the world there is no sun in the heavens, he is laughed at.

The man who is indifferent to the religious welfare of those who plow his fields and cook his meals can never persuade a righteous God that he is in earnest in his efforts to save the heathen in distant lands.

The point of danger to a man who wants to do right, but is not absolutely firm, is when he is opposed by sinister methods. The temptation to retaliate in kind will be strong.

Do not mistake a temptation for an opportunity. Sometimes the one looks very like the other. Apply the prayer-test.

The first question to ask in making choice of a school for your child is the moral quality of the man or woman who is at its head. The parent who puts any other question before this is unworthy of the sacred relation.

The Church of Christ does its proper work by its own agencies and methods. It cannot be hitched on as a tender to ephemeral human organizations of any kind whatsoever.

Barnabas did not locate because he could not agree with Paul. He changed his plan of personal operations, but kept to his work. This is always the better course.

The heaviest burden you carry is not anxiety for yourself, but for another. That means that you must do your part in making the heaven you hope to enter.

The contest for honors in the Church does not make any man mean or unjust; it only stirs up the sediment which was already at the bottom of his heart.

The great things have been done by men who were not thinking of doing great things: they only thought of daily duty.

The river of God should be pouring its waters through the Church all the time. Saving power should be looked for at every service, and its doors should swing wide continually.

When a bad man seeks to destroy a good man who has stood in the way of some selfish scheme, and fails, even sanctified human nature feels a peculiar satisfaction.

Soldiers sicken and die in crowded camps. In the field they grow strong and gain victories. Keep the militant Church on the march.

Do not let your Church-membership become a snare to you. If you are living wrong, there is danger inside as there would be outside.

“The revival began with a money sermon.” There is no better way for a genuine work of grace to begin. (See Malachi iii. 10.)

If you allow somebody else to bear your part of the burden, you will also allow him to take your part of the blessing.

If the preachers vacated their pulpits as lightly as many laymen vacate their pews, what would become of the Church?

Some of the most fruitful lives that have blessed this world looked like failures to their contemporaries. Some of the greatest apparent successes have dwindled to naught in a single generation. Do your work and sing your song of joy. _____

Your child possessing the largest possibilities for good is the one exposed to the greatest peril. For that child you must watch and pray accordingly. _____

That last fifteen minutes of labored and irrelevant rhetoric spoiled the effect of the sermon. The preacher made his point and then flattened it out. _____

There are many men and women who are quick to pity and help physical weakness or lameness who treat mental imbecility as if it were a crime. _____

Keen-scented natures may be needed in the Church, but a body all nose would be a monstrosity. Criticism and charity should go together. _____

Young preachers discourse on family government oftener than old ones. Here is food for reflection for both classes.

It is a misfortune to a preacher or other Christian to have his knowledge of human nature increase more rapidly than his love for the souls of men.

The unconverted soul in the Church listening to "big sermons" on abstract questions is just where Satan will be willing to have him remain.

It is a mistake for an eloquent man to think that his country has no claim upon his eloquence save when he is himself a candidate for office.

Denominational exclusiveness is a Chinese wall inside of which its self-doomed victims starve to death.

When the magistrate is not a terror to evil-doers, you may be sure that he is a terror to tax-payers.

A drunkard clothed with law-making power is an incendiary in the temple of liberty, torch in hand.

Sociability after a sort is common. Christian sociability is rare. Study out the difference.

There are Christian men who possess every qualification for usefulness but one, namely, moral courage. They have knowledge, they have healthy moral instincts, they have sound opinions concerning moral questions; but they are as timid as hares. They tremble when they hear the sound of battle. When the conflict waxes hot they turn and flee. Timidity is constitutional with some people, but grace can overcome it. Grace does overcome it in all who obtain the perfect victory of faith.

The best reply to the cavils and quibbles of infidelity is an exhibition of the energy and the fruits of a living Christianity. A genuine revival of religion is better than the ablest course of lectures on "the evidences." Conversions are demonstrations.

When you see a tree with trunk, branches, and good fruit, you may be sure it has roots. Such a tree is Christianity. It is not necessary to go to digging for the roots every time an infidel assaults it.

Skeptics will believe that Christians are sincere when they display a zeal and make sacrifices commensurate with the grandeur of their professed beliefs and hopes, and not before.

Would any parent walking along the highway with his child pause to give it an opportunity to witness a crime that was being perpetrated? Would he wish his girl or boy to hear from the lips of some foul-mouthed creature in human shape a detailed narration of some shameful or fiendish act? How is it, then, that a class of crimes that are not allowed even to be mentioned in the family circle may be detailed without reserve in the family newspaper? Wherein is the difference? Is foulness less foul when received through the eye than through the ear?

They keep forming new societies all over the country—societies political, social, reformatory, literary, benevolent, speculative. It is a mania. The waste of time and money is enormous. The confusion is distracting. We fear many forget that they hold membership with the human race at large. Too much machinery, too little healthy life.

The man who makes a resolution to quit drinking, swearing, or any other bad habit for a given time only, is trifling. There is no reformatory purpose in his heart. If you feel that you ought to do better, play the man—put away puerilities and shams.

The arrogance of materialists on the one hand, and the imbecility of many ignorant volunteer defenders of the truth on the other, may retard the coming of the bridal-day, but religion and science will be wedded in a lawful and eternal union. Pending this happy consummation, let speculators be prudent, and let believers be patient. —

It is impossible for you to enjoy the fruits of religion without working for them if you are able to work. You should not wish it. You need not hope for it. Think of this, and perhaps you may discover the secret of a barren and joyless religious life. Only the laborers in the Master's vineyard will receive his wages. —

Now and then we read of some simpleton being blown to atoms by a shell plowed up or picked up on an old battle-field. So it is with us when we dig up an old quarrel—there is death in it still. Let dead controversies stay dead. —

Your encouragement to pray in faith for the salvation of the soul near and dear to you is that intercessory prayer stands on the same basis as prayer for yourself, namely, the promise of God.



THE LOST JEWEL FOUND.

WITH the access of self-consciousness, a child loses somewhat of grace and sweetness. Then comes the "gawky age," the transition period. The self-poise that follows contact with the world has not yet come, but the child has passed the boundary of that world in which there is only unquestioning trust and simple innocence. This is a season of torture to many of the finest natures of both sexes. When they have passed beyond it, if they have gained by eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they have lost a jewel of priceless value; a charm has vanished, and a power is lost, when this child-nature is gone. Whoso hath passed this line is earth-born in a double sense. Thenceforth above him arches a duller sky; upon his ear there fall jarring notes in the song of the universe. Dim memories of that earlier time may float through the soul, and echoes of those morning songs may still be caught in quiet moments when the truer, diviner voices can be heard; but the

heaven that lay about the soul recedes farther and farther until the initiated worldling sinks into the self-conscious, self-seeking crowd who are all of the earth, earthy.

This lost jewel is recovered in the new birth of the soul. The converted become as little children. They are translated out of self and into Christ. They live a new life in a new world. Old things are passed away, and all things are become new. Self is swallowed up in an absorbing devotion to Him who hath loved them and given himself for them. In the blessedness of conscious fellowship with God, the soul is lifted above the plane of anxious self-consciousness. Hid with Christ in God, it is exalted above the storms that sweep the lower air, and the sunshine of Immanuel's face beams on it evermore. The vision is filled by the one glorious Object of faith, and all inferior objects and aims are lost sight of.

The preacher thus inspired by an indwelling Christ has no fear of human criticism, and with tongue of fire declares the whole counsel of God. Hid behind the cross, he is mindful only of his solemn message from God, and cares as little for the cavils of men as for the idle wind. Knowing nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, there is no shadow of self between his soul and the Sun of righteousness.

The truth as it is in Jesus is delivered with its full force, and is the power of God unto salvation. Emptied of self, the fullness of God pours into the soul. Then there is power in the pulpit, and responsive movement in the pews. And having thus the mind that was in Christ Jesus, there is awakened a pity for the lost so intense that all selfish subjectivity is consumed in the burning fires of a zeal like that of the Master. Armed with this weapon from the heavenly armory, the little Davids of the pulpit have slain the Goliaths of error—the weak things of the world confounding the mighty. The Christ is incarnated in every such consecrated soul, and works through it as the wisdom of God and the power of God. There is no measuring the power of a ministry that knows nothing but Christ. The least touch of selfishness withers this flower of paradise. In the pulpit it makes the words of life but as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. The live coal from the altar dies into a dead cinder at its chilling touch. The inspired apostle of Jesus Christ becomes a mere attitudinizer for the gaze of fools whose selfish blindness is his only protection from dying of self-contempt. Of all sad spectacles this side of hell, there is none sadder than that of a minister of God who has put himself in the

place of his Master. On the other hand, there is no diviner joy this side of heaven than that felt by the preacher who loses himself in his mighty theme, and, glorying only in the cross, is lifted by it to the heights where he enters into full fellowship with his risen Lord.

This transformation gives new blessedness and beauty to the lives of all who are truly born into the new life. It gives the finishing touch and crowning grace to motherhood. It invests the toils and cares of the Christian husband and father with a new meaning and power. It adds to friendship an element that makes it holy. When in full development, it makes the Church of God the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth.



YOUR consecration is imperfect. This makes imperfection in all your religious life. It cuts you from the best that is possible for you. You keep back part of the price, and so rob yourself of part of the blessing. You would be glad to have the fullness of present joy and future glory, but you do not meet the condition, which is entire consecration to God. This entire consecration is possible for you this year. What is it? It is to follow Christ without reserve. In these seven words you have both the description of what it is and the means by which it is to be attained.

When you have looked into a man's eyes, and spoken the faithful word that touched his conscience, thenceforth there is a sacred bond between you and him; you have broken down the barrier that prevented approach to his soul. By God's help you may save that man.

The brother who spends all his summers traveling or visiting "the Springs," and is too busy for Church-work in winter, expects to do more for his Lord at some future time. When?

The ideal Christian man eludes your search, but do not give up the ideal. It is the goal of your own onward movement.

Peril is proportioned to advantage. We must be educated and disciplined in the midst of danger and difficulty. The golden age of earth and the eternity of heaven are to be the inheritance not of weaklings and "innocents," but of souls that have run the gantlet of probationary perils and fought their way to the skies.

Many of the noblest men on earth are those who have had a fall in their temporal fortunes, and are sailing stormy seas like dismasted ships still battling with wind and wave. We feel like lifting our hat when we meet one of these noble men whose manhood survives the loss of money.

When your boy begins to think out for himself the great problems of religion, do not be alarmed at the questions he asks. Be patient and sympathetic. If his life be pure, he will make that his by conquest which he had already by inheritance.

The men who find themselves drifting into antagonism of feeling toward each other, just as soon as there seems to be a probability of antagonism of interest or aspiration, should seek with penitent hearts the place of secret prayer.

We were present when a pastor of another denomination announced his resignation to his people. When the poor people and the women in mourning apparel began to weep, we knew that preacher was in the true apostolic succession.

A man who, for any purpose, tries to make a mock martyr of himself will end in being a martyr in every thing but the crowning. It is a pitiful role.

If all systems of government, both civil and ecclesiastical, that are at times maladministered, were to be destroyed, universal anarchy would result.

Christianity is the cure for all Communistic ideas and agitations. It makes the rich just and merciful; it makes the poor patient and hopeful.

A little prosperity is so harmful to some men who have much good in them that a kind but invisible hand pulls them down to safer footing.

Your neighbor would stare at you in surprise were you to bring to his notice the subject of personal religion. Ask yourself why.

The question of the efficacy of prayer in epidemics is too solemn to be treated hastily, and too vast to be disposed of in one of these paragraphs; but we want to say: Every link in the chain of causation touches the throne of God. This makes room for prayer. A great and blessed truth answers to the universal instinct which prompts men and women to prayer in the hour of danger or of sorrow.

The man who persists in sinning, because he hopes punishment for sin is not eternal, is cherishing the disposition which will harden him into permanent separation from God.

To suppose that much-needed moral reforms can be effected without friction is foolish. Virtue and vice when they touch must coalesce or fight. Peace comes by victory.

When the "Acts of the Apostates" shall be written, the name of the man who struck a secret blow at a brother who might get in his way will be in the book.

If you wait for the poor to hunt you up and force their necessities upon your attention, you are not "remembering" them in the true spirit of the Bible command.

“Support of the preacher” means that you shall be ready on proper occasion to defend him against captious criticism and unjust complaint. In every congregation there are these captious critics and chronic complainers. The most absolute ministerial fidelity gives no exemption from their buffets and stings. To listen to these cavils in silence, or to yield a politic half-way sort of assent to them, is not supporting your preacher. The relation you hold to your pastor makes you a guardian and defender of his good name as a minister of Jesus Christ. He is set for the defense of the truth, and it is your duty to defend him.

Preachers and others are sometimes tempted to think that they could be more useful in a wider sphere of service. If the history of the Church proves any one thing clearly, it is this: That the true man ennobles a mean place, and that no advantage of position can raise an inferior man above the level of his own character. It is the man, not the place, that counts.

The descriptions of heaven represent realities. What a change of moral atmosphere it would be to many who are professed Christians! Be not deceived; there can be no heaven for any but the heavenly-minded.

The man who studies how he may "skimp" in his contributions to Christianity should make a special study of the Bible with reference to Christian beneficence. That would open to him a world of new ideas, and, if he would walk in the light thus discovered, a world of new joys. _____

The believer who employs now the phraseology used by the apostles, in describing the Christian life, is looked upon by some as a weakling or a fanatic. But that is no reason why you should lower the standard either in your Christian nomenclature or your experience. _____

At the very last, you purpose to let go your besetting sin—it is too dear to be given up sooner. This means that you will carry its guilt with you into eternity. You must choose while a choice is free. _____

When we reach heaven, we will be astonished to find how much mere mannerism prevented us from fully appreciating many excellent people. _____

The peace of God is always accompanied by the power of God. The peace without the power is a false peace.

When, in a controversy, you are more anxious to make a point against somebody than to get at the truth, it is time to quit disputing and go to praying. _____

Teach your children to love nature. That is the next best book to the Bible. Such a passion will help to keep the soul always fresh, sweet, and true. _____

When a man finds himself falling behind, let him quicken his own movement rather than try to check a brother who may be a little ahead of him. _____

If the preacher's own spirit falls below the letter of his teaching with regard to self-sacrifice, he will educate his people downward, not upward. _____

If you draw back from holiness now, you would do the same in heaven if you could stay there without it. _____

While he was here in the flesh, some went to Jesus to be healed, and others to dispute. It is so now. _____

Do not be discouraged because you have lost time and made blunders. Eternity is yours.

In order that advice or reproof may be effectual for good, the recipient must be assured of three things, namely: First, that the advisor or censor is kindly disposed; second, that he is well informed concerning the matters in question; and third, that there is no beam in the eye that is so keen in its search for motes.

A man who has nothing to lose by bad government or anarchy is a dangerous member of the body politic. Therefore so frame the laws and so administer them that all men, even the weakest and poorest, may find protection and *stimulus* to hopeful exertion.

When, in regard to any controverted question, a man's opinions coincide with his personal interests, it is well for that man to review such opinions carefully and prayerfully.

One boy will want to take a watch to pieces to see how it runs; another will be content to know that it keeps good time. These boys are types of two classes in the Church.

Until you can contemplate the holiness of God with awful yet real satisfaction, you have cause to fear that you have in your nature that which antagonizes it.



REPUTATION.

MOST good things are attended with danger proportioned to their value. Strength, beauty, genius, all come under this law. The law is equitable; much is required, and much is imperiled, where much is given.

Reputation is a good thing. It is the dearest jewel of noble souls. It is rather to be chosen than great riches. It is a good man's capital for usefulness; it is the precious heritage of his children, abiding as an incentive to virtue and high endeavor when power is lost and property scattered to the winds. But there is danger in it. It has burdened and crippled many a minister of the gospel—it has ruined some. It has happened that a strong man has given himself up to the nursing of a reputation, and the earnest, whole-hearted preacher has become as hollow and dry as last year's gourds hanging in the sunshine. From one of our grandest of pulpit orators, who was also one of the manliest of men, was wrung

the sad confession that he had fallen a victim to the exactions of a splendid reputation. Many more have met the disaster who have never made the confession. It is a hard bondage to which a man sells himself when he falls into this category. He is always on the stretch. His self-consciousness is painful as it is cramping. His attitude toward the public is that of a performer hungry for applause, his attitude toward himself is that of a critic whose anxiety is mingled with self-love involving the torture of apprehended failure or the ridiculousness of self-conceit. It is astonishing how this weakness will grow on a good man who once yields to it. It insinuates itself stealthily into the heart, and intrenches itself there by the sophisms that human nature is so ready to accept. "I must do my best to-day, for the honor of my Church and the cause of my Master are at stake." That is the subtle suggestion of the tempter, and so a great effort must be made lest the famous preacher fall below himself and the occasion. It is obvious enough that all spontaneity of impulse, all unconscious grace, all high enthusiasm must freeze and die in the presence of such thoughts as these. The wise teacher and inspired preacher becomes a mere mechanical declaimer, a retailer of stage-fire rhetoric.

The glowing evangelist sinks into the nurse of a reputation.

This danger attends the possession of all special gifts. The possessor is conscious that the public gaze is fixed upon him. A single false step will precipitate him from the ladder of petty distinction. He must be careful to sustain himself. The man who has made a reputation for profundity must never lose the gravity of the owl or the weightiness of an oracle. The man who has the gift of humor must be funny whether he feels like it or not, in season and out of season. He who is reputed to have a head for finance must be ready to demonstrate Christianity by the Rule of Three. All these, to meet popular expectation, and to maintain their reputations, must be held in this hard bondage under a false conception of duty; they must be one-sided, and shorn of half their power for good.

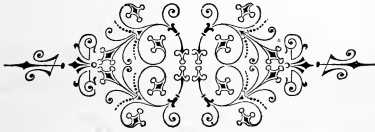
The one way of escape is to seek at the mercy-seat the mind that was in Christ Jesus in the full baptism of the Holy Spirit that puts self aside and exalts only the cross.

There is an increasing number of princely givers to religion and philanthropy in these latter days. These men and women are the product of the Christianity that is leavening all governments, institutions, literature, and

life on the earth with its heavenly influence. They pioneer the way to a larger development of the true Christian idea of beneficence. The very magnitude of their gifts makes it impossible that they shall enjoy the luxury of anonymous giving. This is the age of daily newspapers, reporters, interviewers, and the electric telegraph. The whole civilized world is a sort of huge audiphone where everybody hears what everybody else is saying; a vast spectro-scope, showing what is being done everywhere. There are no longer any secrets in this world. The gas is turned on, and the evil and the good are alike revealed to the sight of all. So it is that if a good man out of love to his Lord and his fellow-men rises above the dead level of his contemporaries in his contributions in aid of religion and philanthropy, he will soon find that his name is in the newspapers and in all men's mouths. He will be subjected to the criticisms of the motley mob called the public. The generous, the manly, the grateful, the refined; and the narrow, the suspicious, the ungrateful, and the coarse, will all alike pass upon his work in judgment. When they all have spoken he will be made to feel that his willing offering to God has somehow lost somewhat of the bloom and sweetness it had when it sprung fresh and pure from his thankful

heart. The praises of men make heavy the air that was filled with the odors of heaven. The breath of the world has destroyed the delicate bloom of the flower of paradise. He sought to glorify his Saviour and to bless his kind, and he has—made a reputation.

There is danger here, but the best men will escape. When a piston, wheel, or lever breaks under a strain, it is because there was a flaw in the metal. But let each steward of the gifts and grace of God watch lest he enter into temptation.



THE early Christians adopted no assessment limitation in their gifts for the spread of the gospel. They gave as the Lord prospered them—all they could. An assessment is only the indication of a minimum, but many take it as the measure of obligation—and then often fall below it. Look into your New Testament, beloved.

Often that which looks like cowardice is only the hesitation caused by confusion of ideas. The bravery that helps good causes is conjoined with clear-headedness.

The failure of your plan is a call to review the situation, and to ask with all humility and docility of spirit, Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do?

Some men whom you dislike are useful. Perhaps the Lord of the harvest sees in them something good that escapes your notice.

The truth that has stirred your own soul with holy aspiration is the truth you owe to others.

The true way to “turn over a new leaf” with the new year is to turn to Christ.

Not every man who cheers you on in attacking somebody he does not like will stand by you when you are hard pressed in the fight. Do not mistake identity of prejudice for reliable support.

The pastoral charge that has a revival every year, and yet never makes any progress in the measure of its contributions to the cause of Christ, needs reviving on a new and better basis.

When a young man for the first time omits the prayer he promised his mother to make before going to sleep at night, a downward step is taken by him.

That "bad cold" that kept you from Church on Sunday, but did not keep you from business on Saturday and Monday, is dangerous. Watch it.

The tone given to the first year of a new convert's life in a great measure determines his whole career. Pastors will make the deduction.

The way to spoil a good work done for the Lord is to sit down and praise yourself mentally for doing it.

As long as human nature remains what it is, there will be frequently recurring temptation to noble spirits to break away in disgust from coöperative Christian service with men who are narrow, mean, and selfish. But in doing so they sink toward the level of these ignoble ones. It is easy to be a hero among heroes.

The man whose own heart is full of the love of God will not be likely to take despondent views of the progress of the gospel in the earth. Under the baptism of the Pentecost, the apostles set out to convert the world at once, believing that they could do it.

It is one of the surest, as it is one of the rarest, signs of high Christian culture when a finely toned, refined soul can be patient and loving toward a coarser, ruder nature that has only the one redeeming quality of sincerity.

The expository sermon to be successful must not be an exposure of the preacher's lack of knowledge. A false exposition is worse than a rambling exhortation.

The apostolic injunction to believers is to comfort one another when they meet; their practice is to gossip with one another.

The man who has grown to maturity without having learned to submit to proper human authority will find it doubly difficult to submit to God. In such a soul there is but a flimsy basis for a true religious life. The foundation-stone has never been laid, and the work which ought to have been done in the nursery must be begun after the moral nature has hardened into enduring form from the habits of a life-time. God's method is to make earthly parenthood the basis of the divine.

The bigotry is sometimes in the man, and sometimes in the system to which he is committed. The trouble is, you cannot meet the good man more than half-way without a sort of tacit indorsement of the bad system. Moral: Let him adopt a better system.

The functions of the physician and the minister of the gospel have much in common. The highest men in each of these callings have something of the best elements that are requisite to success in both. The alliance between them should be closer than it is.

The preaching that leaves out human guilt and divine redemption leaves out the gospel, and had as well be omitted altogether.

The Christian who can make a good stump-speech or law argument, and yet is too bashful to conduct family-prayer, has something the matter with him. Perhaps it is an abnormal nervous organization.

Every earnest man is at some time or other laughed at or denounced as an enthusiast. Our Lord himself did not escape. Nor did Paul. Nor will you if you do any thing out of the perfunctory routine.

If your religion consists only of occasional pecuniary contributions and occasional visits to the house of God, what enjoyment will you get from it in heaven—supposing you go thither?

The first thing Andrew did after he had met the Christ was to go after his brother. All true converts feel the same gracious instinct to go home and tell the glad news.

A gloomy Christian shadows his own landscape. The sunshine on the hills of Beulah he never sees. By and by he will persuade himself that it is not there.

The sin which pleases your imagination has already damaged your soul.

The Church of Christ makes frequent calls for money. When it ceases to do so, the fountain of beneficence will be dried up, and the flowers of love will no longer blossom on earth.

Many preachers have found the richest blessings and greatest fruitfulness where they did not want to go. Self-sacrifice is a magnet that attracts to it every good thing.

Do you find yourself becoming more suspicious as you grow older? It may be a sign rather of growing hardness of nature than of increasing acumen.

The brother who has, and expresses, a high opinion of what he intends to do is not always the one who shows the largest actual results.

The educator who instills into his pupil ambition for distinction solely for its own sake does a work that Satan approves.

If walking in the way of duty requires you to walk alone for a season, keep on; the angels of God will meet you.

To the true man the success of a cherished idea is dearer than the paternity of it.

The friend or relative who resisted your arguments so stoutly and successfully will not resist your example. Even Satan cannot suggest a plausible answer to simple, straightforward goodness. —

After Paul and Barnabas had parted, finding they could not work together satisfactorily, there is no evidence that either ever spoke an unkind word of the other. It is not always so now. —

Is it holiness you want, or only its reward? Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness—not they who merely want to be filled with joy. —

The Church that lives by proselyting cannot grow fast. You cannot transplant trees as rapidly as you can propagate them in a nursery. —

The backsliding of which you are conscious is not always the worst. Deadness is more dreadful than painful sensibility. —

In dealing with an unfair man, two dangers are to be guarded against—losing your temper, or losing your own fairness.



THE ONE CONDITION.

FIDELITY is the condition of fruitfulness in the Christian life. It is the only condition. Read the first eight verses of the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." This is the explicit statement of a most comforting truth for every man and woman who is striving to live a true Christian life. The desire for fruitfulness follows the satisfied yearning for pardon and purity. The unfruitful branch is always a dead branch. Hear it, ye that are standing idle all day long! Hear it, ye that are at ease in Zion! If ye are fruitless, ye are lifeless. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away," because it is a withered branch, and fit for nothing but destruction.

"He that abideth in me." That is, whosoever abides in Christ by faith. Faith is the bond of union between the believing soul and its Saviour. This faith is the choice of the

will, the trust of the heart. It is unreserved devotion to Christ. It is bringing thought, feeling, and action in willing obedience to him. It is a continual act, the living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, of the soul born from above and walking in newness of life.

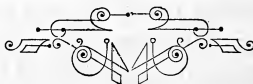
“And I in him.” That is, in whomsoever I abide by my Spirit. The indwelling Spirit gives power and fruitfulness to the believer’s life. It gives the seal of pardon, the witness of adoption, the comfort of conscious communion with God, and the earnest of the inheritance. It takes and shows to him the things of Jesus Christ. Thus his life is hid with Christ in God, and he goes in the strength of his Lord, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness in all the devotions and activities of practical godliness.

In all cases in which this relation is maintained the life is not only fruitful, but abundantly fruitful. He that is faithful “the same” bringeth forth much fruit. There is no exception to the statement. Unalloyed fidelity insures abundant fruitfulness. It is a wonderful saying, opening the door of enlarged opportunity and blessing to all the true disciples of our Lord. The measure of fidelity is the measure of fruitfulness. This opens the gate to all, and inspires a holy emulation in every heart

that wishes for an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only those who work, but those who pray; not only those who do, but those who suffer; not only those who lead the hosts of Israel, but those who fill the ranks, shall receive the "Well done" and the fullness of reward from the Master in the day of reckoning.

There is a mystery here that shall be fully disclosed only in the light of eternity. How it is that the obscure, the Lord's little ones, are correlated in their influence with all the forces of his kingdom, their prayers, their zeal, their testimony, their labor of love, going into and swelling the mighty current of spiritual power that flows through the ages, is hidden from our eyes now, but the day shall declare it. Then it will be seen that there was a place and a work for every one. Then it will be seen that the apparent limitations of many lives were only the tests of their fidelity, and that the fruits of their faith and love extended far beyond their own vision. While they thought they were only enduring pain and waiting for their change, they were laying up treasure in heaven and getting ready for an abundant entrance into its everlasting joys. The isolated Christian, fighting the good fight of faith alone; the bedridden invalid, shut out from the world,

but still able to trust and to pray; the weary laborer in the foreign field, sowing in tears and seeing no visible fruit; the family drudge in the tread-mill of petty cares and toils; the disabled minister of the gospel, crippled and compelled to leave the field; the aged disciple who has outlived the power to serve; the man who has been defeated, as men count defeat—all these may gather comfort from this saying of Jesus. It was spoken for them. It was spoken to enlarge the horizon of their hope, and to convey to their minds the inspiration of the truth that fruitfulness, blessedness, and glory are measured not by the fortuitous conditions of their lives, but by the fidelity of their hearts. God is no respecter of persons. His ways are equal. The key that unlocks the treasures of his grace is placed in the hand of every true-hearted disciple. He that is faithful over a few things shall be made ruler over many. It matters not how few—the measure of reward is not in the quantity, but in the quality of the service. Brethren, comfort yourselves with these words.



A LACK of hearty sympathy between the Christian laborers in any given field often destroys half their power for good. The providence that throws them together is a call to them to overcome prejudices, heal all wounds, and let Christian love work its wonders in willing hearts.

Pastor, that straying member of your Church might resent a plain talk from you now. Nevertheless, go to him and speak the truth in love. His resentment now will be easier for you to bear than his reproaches at the day of judgment.

“Call on the old man to pray—all these people know him and believe in him,” said the pastor to a visiting preacher. That plain, simple-hearted old disciple had a precious gift for usefulness among his neighbors—undoubted sincerity.

When a preacher’s personal habits discount the gospel he preaches in the estimation of young people, it is time for a friend to give him a hint.

Inspiration is a dead thing only to him who is dead to aspiration. The measure of receptivity is the measure of bestowment.

The holiness enjoined upon us in the Scriptures is attainable. There was no mental reservation in our Lord's command, and there should be none in our interpretation of it. The time spent in explaining away his gracious meaning, if spent in prayer for the blessing, would fill many a heart and many a Church with a diviner and fuller Christian life.

The nearer you get to Christ the more likely you will be to draw your unconverted friend to him. It is a sad blunder to go half-way into the world with your friends that you may keep your hold on their affection and confidence. Your compromise of principle breaks the heavenly charm of true religious attraction.

It is a happy circumstance when the young people of the Church can make a religious atmosphere of their own warm with the generous enthusiasm of young blood and with the love of Christ. The wise pastor will seek to develop such a sentiment and organize it.

Jonah was very angry because Nineveh was not destroyed, he having predicted it. The preacher who lost half his interest in the revival after another brother took the lead in it had some Jonah in his heart.

The prevalent sentimentalism that ignores all the more awful attributes of the Almighty and Eternal God is filling the Churches with religious namby-pambyism, and the outside world with flippancy and irreverence.

The man you have prayed for with earnestness of true Christian feeling draws you to him like a magnet ever afterward. The prayer of faith and the labor of love go together.

We plan to suit ourselves, and fail. Again we go right on in the path that opens of itself before our advancing steps, and the flowers of paradise fill the air with their odors.

You think it is time you were taken out of the crucible; you have had your share of trial, and you have learned its lesson. Your impatience is proof to the contrary.

The problem of the universe is to be solved by degrees—one world at a time. The problem for this world is deliverance from sin. Solve it because you can.

The man who cannot "do his best" except in the presence of an admiring crowd has a false notion of what the best is.

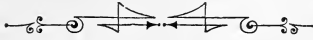
It only takes a little time ordinarily to distinguish between the sensationalist who makes an erratic dash that he may put people to talking about him, and the man who takes a step in advance of his fellows in obedience to his convictions. The one falls like a kite when the wind lulls; the other shines on like a star in the sky.

It is not every man who has abundant subjectivity who is a self-seeker. But it looks so much like it in the eyes of common people that a wise man will repress its exhibition as far as he can.

“She was a cheerful giver, and did not wait to be solicited.” This remark was made in the obituary of a Christian woman. It goes to the heart of the matter. The cheerful giver is a volunteer.

When a portion of the working forces of the Church hibernates in winter, and another regularly vacates in summer, the devil, who never hibernates nor vacates, is likely to get the upper-hand.

The battle for truth is never a lost battle. The truth is rooted in God, and when you overthrow him you can overthrow it.



SORROW UPON SORROW.

THE experience of the author of the forty-second Psalm is not an uncommon one.

He had enjoyed the blessedness of communion with God, and the joy of participation with his people in the glad festivals of the Church. His soul had glowed in the light of God's countenance. The memory of those days was still sweet. Ah, those old days!—they were so bright, so fleeting. We thought they would last forever. The world without and that within were set to the same music. The air was full of sunshine and fragrance. The days were joyous, and the nights were restful. We could not believe that we ever should sin or suffer again. To a majority of Christian men and women there comes this season of uninterrupted peace and joy. To some it comes suddenly in a mighty flood that sweeps the rejoicing soul out on a sea of love that seems to be fathomless and shoreless. To others it comes as the gentle yet perceptible rising of a tide that bears them on to that river of God

which is full of water. .Sickness, pain, poverty, grief, and death are but words without felt meanings; and the bold figures by which the inspired writers describe the joys of heaven seem almost equally applicable to the happiness of his children on the earth. The grateful soul soars and sings in the light of the Lord.

But there comes a change, and with it a shock. Trouble comes. We rally our moral forces to meet it. Before we have had time to recover from the blow, another falls, and then another, and yet another. Loss succeeds loss, sorrow follows sorrow, until, stunned and almost despairing, the soul in its agony makes its bitter cry to God: "All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me!" The tempest is let loose upon us, and there is no lull in its fury. Is there to be no respite? Is God's mercy clean gone forever? Hath he forgotten to be gracious?

This is the same God who flooded our lives with light and joy. Yes, the same, and working to the same gracious ends in our behalf. Those long days of warmth and sunshine were not more the expression of his goodness and love than these dark days that have followed. The sorrow upon sorrow, rightly viewed, is mercy upon mercy. They are the manifestation of a persistent purpose to bless us. They

are not accidental or unfriendly blows aimed only to hurt us, but parts of a gracious process intended to bring us large and lasting blessedness. The continuous blows reveal the loving design. God is teaching truth and shaping character for eternity. He would have us wrestle with sorrow and pain that we may be strong forever. He would have us walk by faith in the darkness that we may nevermore doubt. He would subordinate present comfort and joy to future safety and blessedness, the things that are temporal to those that are eternal. It is a process, and there is solid comfort in the thought that our Father in heaven proposes thorough work. When we are tried we shall come forth as gold. When we have run with patience we shall receive our crowns.

The waves and billows may go over us, but they are not unchained; they are under the control of the Mighty One whom the winds and the waves obey. We are but following Jesus in the path of suffering. The Captain of our salvation is perfecting us by the same process by which he was himself perfected. In these depths we learn his secret, and get closer to his loving heart. In a new and peculiar sense we suffer with him, and grasp with a new meaning and mighty joy the promise that we shall reign with him.

THE early apostolic Church was a witnessing Church. The saints sang, prayed, and exhorted one another. The absence of the apostles did not silence the voice of testimony nor cause the work of the Lord to cease. Every converted man was a witness to the power of the gospel. Every converted woman was also a witness and a helper in Christ Jesus. Those were days of power and progress. The gospel had free course and was glorified, kindling wherever it touched.

The man against whom you were prejudiced by another you like after you have met him face to face. Give him the benefit of your own favorable impression. Your own antipathies will be enough for you to account for.

There are some finely-toned natures whose subtle instinct, like the diviner's rod, enables them to detect the hidden veins of latent good in the sinful. This is a gift to be coveted by every one who would win souls.

To condone for the neglect of some plain duty that is distasteful to you by putting extra labor on something that suits you, is to bargain for an uneasy conscience and a crippled spiritual life.

If the evils that exist in the Church as well as in the world are as deep-seated as many suppose, they will not be destroyed without much conflict. The pastor who has in his soul no element of possible martyrdom does not suit a world and an age like this.

The croaker who puts a weight upon the limbs of the workers, and the prudent counselor who pointed out errors to be avoided, are sometimes confounded the one with the other. But the difference will be seen when you ask each what *he* is willing to do.

The opinion of a dull but honest man is a real factor in the formation of judgments of men and plans of action, but the taint of insincerity strikes even the utterance of genius with the blight of worthlessness.

Working for the Church in the truest sense is helping individual men and women to live holy lives. It is not, as some seem to think, running a Vanity Fair under its flag.

It was very natural for you to leave your Bible at home when you started on your vacation. There is no use in cumbering yourself with a book you do not read.

The man who abuses his body by the violation of the laws of health, and then spends his money for quack nostrums to repair the damage, is brother to the man who sins against the laws of God, and seeks to escape from the fear of punishment by taking up with the diluted theology of spiritual charlatans.

The theology that gives a presumptuous sinner an indefinite number of probations after death, and the judicial or executive weakness that gives rascals the chance of indefinite acquittals or pardons in this life, are about equally absurd and injurious.

The theoretical atheism of the men who make a trade of blasphemy is not half so damaging to the cause of religion as the practical atheism that while professing godliness leaves God out of the life.

When a Christian who has been born of the Spirit testifies for his Lord, he does not simply give an opinion. He is a witness to a great fact of personal experience.

The most quarrelsome men on earth are the agnostics, or know-nothings, who say there is nothing known worth quarreling about.

The small-bore scientist who thinks the Bible is overthrown every time somebody discovers, or pretends to discover, a new kind of monkey's skull is becoming so ridiculous that he will soon learn to be silent.

The Bible tells us what is not in heaven. That will do for the present. The positive side will come by and by—and then we shall be satisfied. Satisfied! how large is that word!

The reserve force in Christianity has never failed to show itself in any crisis of its history, and it never will—because God is the preserver and defender of his own cause.

Perfect—in what? In knowledge? in dialectics? No—perfect in love. That simplifies the matter. That makes it attainable by all, even the Lord's little ones.

The view of holiness that you cannot accept is very precious and sacred to a brother who is as sincere as yourself in his love for the Lord. Deal gently with him.

If you have the witness within you that you have been saved from sin, how can you doubt that every sinner can be saved?

Confectionary as an exclusive diet is not compatible with good health. The secret of the feebleness of many Christian lives is to be found in their excessive indulgence in mental confectionery—novels, light reading, etc. You are one of these. _____

The man who thinks Christianity is dying out of the world because he hears it sneered at and denounced in whisky-saloons and beer-gardens, would have a change of opinion if he would make a change for the better in his associations. _____

A Christian must work in faith, pray in faith, and give in faith. Labors, prayers, gifts, all fall under the same law. But many seem to think God must bless their gifts before they are made. _____

The introduction of family prayer in a household in which it has long been neglected will be attended with some awkwardness. But it will be worth more than it will cost to you and yours. _____

The man who, in consequence of the drought, resolved to plow deeper next year, was wiser than his neighbor who took it out in grumbling against the Almighty.



CHRISTIANITY THE BASIS OF PHILANTHROPY.

“**T**HE poor always ye have with you.” Poverty is, and is to be, a permanent element in human society. It cannot be legislated out of existence. The most that has been or can be done in this way is to protect it from oppression, and mitigate its harsher features. The many trades-unions and co-operative organizations of our day have not been able to abolish poverty from their ranks. The socialistic theories of our times have always broken down in practice. The noisy political demagogues who promise a reign of universal affluence as the result of the adoption of their views and their own elevation to office have usually been the worst enemies of the class of whose rights and interests they have claimed to be the special champions. The true political reformer and friend of the poor seeks not to flatter and excite, but to instruct and ennoble. These times have been prolific of vile demagogues whose teachings would de-

stroy society altogether under the pretense of reforming its constitution and curing its evils. The historian of these days in which we live will also record the names of many men whose teachings and deeds entitle them to be ranked among the true reformers and friends of humanity. The popular mind may be misled for a time, but its instincts may be trusted to assign every man his true place in the end. The modern Theudases who lead the multitude into the wilderness of purposeless excitement and fruitless agitation, and leave them to perish, shall not be confounded with the real philanthropists who make the cause of the poor and oppressed their own.

There is one broad distinction between the false and the true philanthropy. The false seeks to array one class against another. It organizes its so-called reforms on this basis, breaking up society into innumerable and hostile segments, class against class, interest against interest. Modern society is honey-combed with these organizations, secret and open, the object of which is to propagate certain exclusive ideas, and to subserve certain exclusive interests. There seems to be no end to these organizations. The organization of a guild to promote one class-interest seems to necessitate a counter-organization in self-de-

fense. Capital and labor, employer and *employé*, producer and tradesman, manufacturer and consumer, landlord and tenant, are arrayed against each other, and the different elements of society are grinding and clashing fearfully in many places. Statesmanship has not grasped the true principles of political economy, and philanthropy is not resting on its true foundation.

We must go back to the gospel. Jesus Christ defined the true relation of man to his fellow. He teaches human brotherhood as the basis of action in all men's dealings one with another. It is not because a man is rich or poor, of this family or that, of one occupation or another, that he has a claim upon our sympathy and help. It is because he is a man. He is of the same race, the child of one Father. No question of nationality, of social position, or of opinion, is to stand between a man and the need of his brother man. Every man's neighbor is the man that he can reach with his help.

The gospel presents the only religion of humanity. The Church is its exponent, and the proper dispenser of its benefactions. The teaching and influence of Jesus Christ lie at the foundation of all the benevolent institutions that are the glory of this age, including

even those that are held up in rivalry to his Church, and by many substituted for it as agencies for doing good. This function of the Church has been too much lost sight of. She has permitted others to do her work and take her crown. Her own children have sought other channels through which to pour the streams of their charities into the desert-places of this sorrowing world. The Church has been left to become a mere expounder of the obligations of human brotherhood, while other hands have ministered and taken the credit of the benefactions which had their root in the teachings of her Founder, and which her own hands should dispense. The glory of Christ has been given to another.

The New Testament Church, with its voice of tender pity and its hand of help and healing, drew the hearts of mankind to it in gratitude and love. Abdicating its function as an agency for doing good to men's bodies as well as their souls, the Church of to-day will, unless it sees and repairs its error, lose this attraction. Jesus Christ must have his own. Christians must do good in his name. Want, relieved by his bounty, must give him its gratitude. Sorrow, consoled by his sympathy expressed through his followers, must know that its tears were wiped away by his

hand. Jesus Christ, the poor man's friend, must have his own. His Church represents him before the world, speaks his words, must do his work, and so give him the glory due unto his name.



THE work of bringing the world to Christ can be done only as rapidly as the willing hearts and active hands of Christian men and women will do it. All the resources of the gospel are placed at their command. The atoning blood; the quickening, witnessing, and sanctifying Spirit; the organized Church with its ordinances, its fellowship, and all its means of grace; the written word, and the preached gospel, with the attending power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost—all these are the expressions and proofs of God's love and mercy to man. That love and that mercy are infinite. They are incapable of increase or diminution. The fountain of God's grace is free and full forever. That sun always shines. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Therefore, when we pray for a revival in the Church, we do not expect that our prayer will make God more willing to bless his creatures on the earth. When we make special effort to save souls, it is with no thought that God is in any degree to be changed in his disposition toward the intended beneficiaries of the movement. That would be in direct contradiction to his word and his nature. What, then, is aimed at in such concentration of prayer and labor? Simply to make a channel for the inflowing grace of God.

The worthless matter sinks to the bottom of the sea of reading, and is lost to sight, having served the good purpose of giving a vent to vanity, or of allowing a bore to exercise his baleful gift in the most merciful way. When a bore talks, you must listen; when he prints, you need not read unless you choose to do so.

To go into a community in which there are many sinners unsaved, and spend a week or a fortnight in trying to unsettle the opinions of Christians concerning non-essential matters, is what some call evangelization. But it is a sort of evangelization that the devil does not dread.

When a Christian stops praying vaguely and coldly for the salvation of all men, and goes to work for the salvation of one man within his reach, you may be sure that he is in earnest.

A local preacher who does not preach is in danger of drying up. Dead leaves, rotten wood, and mud will spoil the sweetest, coolest spring whose channel is not kept open.

When the parents never meet their own children in the Sunday-school, and the children never meet their parents in the Church, there is something wrong.

The habit of half-jocular irony and badinage among ministers and other Christians often destroys the sweetness and profit of their association with each other to an extent not thought of by them. Its evils are both objective and subjective. _____

The man who makes a living by selling dry goods does it openly. The man who makes his living by retailing whisky puts a screen before his door. There is a reason for this peculiar modesty. _____

That one inconsistency of yours made it harder for a score of your brethren to buffet the tide of temptation. Woe to him by whom the offense cometh! _____

The brother who slips off to another Church because his own pastor does not fill the pulpit violates good manners and the principles of Christian ethics. _____

The pastor who is too timid to expect a revival under his own efforts must have obeyed the call to the ministry with mental reservations. _____

These times are the worst to those who lack faith, and the best to those who have it.



EASTER.

THE resurrection is the foundation-fact of the gospel. The apostles were witnesses. They testified that which they did know. They had seen and handled the Word of Life. They could not keep the mighty secret that filled their own hearts with wonder and joy. They went forth everywhere telling the glad news, kindling a new hope and a new joy in the earth.

Its newness was an element of power to those who first heard of the resurrection from the living lips of the apostles. Immortality hitherto had been only a guess, or, at most, the speculative dogma of a sect. Now it became a demonstration. It was as if encircling mists had been suddenly swept aside, and a sunburst of glory flashed upon the world. The subtleties of Pharisaic logic gave way to the grateful and rapturous attestation of men whose hearts were still throbbing with the joy of personal contact with their risen Lord, and in whose ears were still echoing his parting

words. We can scarcely form any adequate conception of the effect of such a revelation upon the minds of the heathen. It was all new to them, and the whole aspect of life and destiny was changed at once. No wonder it is said that there was great joy in the cities where Jesus and the resurrection were preached by men who had been eye-witnesses of the wonders they declared, and who felt in their rejoicing hearts the resurrection power of the Son of God. To us the old, old story is sweet, but to them it was like a strain of heavenly music, taking the place of the discords of error and the wailings of despair. That which to us is the calm satisfaction resulting from the gradual unfolding of a fact, through a lifetime, was to them the sudden and overpowering perception of a great event that filled their souls with a new joy and their future with an absolutely new hope.

Now and then it comes to us with the freshness and power of a new revelation as we stand by the bed of the dying, or look down into an open grave. The old dogma becomes a living fact in our consciousness, and thenceforth the resurrection of our Lord is inseparably blended with the hope of the resurrection of our own beloved and unforgotten dead. The annual resurrection-festival, which comes with the res-

urrection of nature, brings back their images to the mind with fresh vividness, and points us to the great day when those that sleep in Jesus will rise to reign with him forever, and when we shall live together with him. There is a subtle influence in the season that turns our thought to these sacred subjects, and memory and hope speak to our souls in tones of unusual tenderness and sweetness. There is a process of resurrection within us. We feel the touch of mysterious power, and lo! we are borne into a world where a new peace rests upon the shining hills, and a new glory brightens the skies.

There is a risen Christ only in the renewed heart. The significance of the rising is in the death. "It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The atonement, the resurrection, the ascension, and the intercession of our Lord, are all correlated facts. Around the resurrection-festival of Easter-week shines the blended glory of all. Into the believing heart the meditations of the season will open a channel into which the Holy Ghost may pour full tides of religious joy.

LET the doubter pray. The praying attitude is the receptive. Whatever stands in the way of prayer is an impassable barrier between the soul and God. Pride is oftenest in the way. It is a subtle spirit, and often escapes recognition. It keeps in the dark and at a distance from God many who imagine it is something else. Before any man can enter in at the strait gate he must be willing to bow low before the mercy-seat in prayer. Take your doubts to God. The very act of the will in making that movement will strengthen your faith. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth liberally." There is the promise which has never yet failed of fulfillment to any who have tested God by a sincere approach in prayer. Draw near to God.

As Christian men learn the power of money as an agency for doing good, and use it faithfully, they will have more of it committed to their trust. The conversion of the money-boxes of Christendom must precede the conversion of the world to Christ.

"He would rather fight hornets than flies," is the way a brave old man put the fact that he preferred open, outspoken opposition to half-whispered, vague, pointless, caviling.

Do not allow yourself to be troubled by the controversial aspects of the question of Christian holiness. Go on in the way of duty, and the light of Immanuel's face will shine on your soul as you advance.

To put half of your heart into your work and expect a full measure of fruit is such an absurdity that it is a wonder Satan himself could persuade anybody to accept it.

It is a blessed thing that the tastes of hearers are as various as the gifts of preachers. Be slow in disparaging a sermon simply because it did not suit you.

The plea is that the whisky traffic is one of the "industries" of the country. All the devil's work may be placed under the same head. He is very industrious.

When the Christian people of a community continue for generations narrow, illiberal, and unenterprising, what have their pastors been doing all the time? _____

Bunyan might have put another character in his great allegory—Mr. Ready-to-see-your-Neighbor-Halt. You have met him.

In looking for "disorderly" Church-members, do not look too far away. The tendency with many pastors is to say as the settlers do about the mosquitoes in a new country: "There are not many here, but just beyond they are dreadful!"

There are characters that would charm and win all beholders if they possessed the one lacking grace—humility. Without it, genius itself is repellant.

The Christian citizen must keep his own conscience. If he commits it to a party, it will not be long until he will not have any worth keeping.

If the man who is conscious of undeveloped spiritual power is not dissatisfied with himself, it is because spiritual aspiration is dead within him.

The man who reads an inferior book when he might be reading a good one is gathering coppers when he might be gathering gold-pieces.

When you quote second-hand profanity with gusto, it shows that you would use it at first-hand but for the look of the thing.

If all our grumbings about the weather really meant an impeachment of the divine providence, the account against us would be a long one. But they are in most cases only idle words. Only! We must give account for them, too.

When you take a young person into the Church unconverted, and only superficially convicted, do not be surprised when he seeks his pleasures on the world's ground instead of Christ's.

Conscious communion with God is the one supreme difference between a real and a nominal Christianity. How do you stand related to this matter?

While the theorists of both sexes are disputing about woman's vocation, she has found it in the Church, and it is to help bring the world to Christ.

The man who says he can find nothing to do for his Master wants not work, but promotion or an easy place.

The young man who wants to enjoy all the good things of this life without earning them is half a rascal.

The preacher who felt the glow dying out of his heart because there were only a few out to hear him did not have the right sort of a glow at the start. ———

If you believe in "gradual sanctification," do not make it so very gradual that years elapse without perceptible progress. That sort is dangerous. ———

No one man's opinion on a question of mere expediency is worth more than the peace of the Church—no, not even if it is *your* opinion, brother. ———

Your unanswered prayer—unanswered as yet visibly—is a deposit bearing interest. Impor-
tunity is the condition of sure and large suc-
cess. ———

A single conscious touch of God's grace is the pledge of all that he can bestow or you receive. ———

That which keeps you from following Christ would make it impossible for you to live in heaven. ———

The great end of true prayer is to get strength to do God's will, not merely to get happy.



THE THANKLESS.

WE are needy and imperfect creatures; we are continually dependent on the divine bounty; and therefore we can never abandon the attitude of petitioners as long as we live in this world of trial and temptation. But shall we never go to God except when we want to get something from him? In reading the apostolic Epistles we are struck with the frequent outbursts of joyful thanksgiving for the present benefits of the gospel as well as the fuller blessedness to be enjoyed hereafter. In the midst of their perils and sufferings the apostles made frequent approaches to the throne of grace, praying for guidance and support; but so full was their comfort and joy that the songs of thanksgiving mingled with their supplications for grace to help in time of need.

Is there not a lesson here for you? Does not your thanklessness lessen your receptivity of the good things of the kingdom of heaven? Give thanks unto God—for what? If you are

indeed a Christian you need not be told, except in the way of affectionate reminder. Think it over for yourself. Make a mental inventory of your possessions as a child of God and heir of heaven. Pardoned sin; a renewed nature; soul-rest; a living and joyful hope; enjoyment of the means of grace; union with Christ and delight in him—all these are yours as a present possession. Each single item in the catalogue of mercies, dwelt upon thoughtfully, is enough to tune the heart to grateful thanksgiving. Why, then, do you not oftener go to God with an offering of gratitude?

Is it because in some dark season of your life the grateful song died out of your back-slidden heart, and thanklessness has since become a habit with you? Wait not a single day before you begin a better habit.

Is it because you have felt so hard pressed in the battle of life that you have not had time to count up the mercies of your Lord and lift the song of praise? That is a folly like that of a traveler over the desert sands, thirsty and faint, grudging the time it would take to drink from a cool fountain that gushed at his feet.

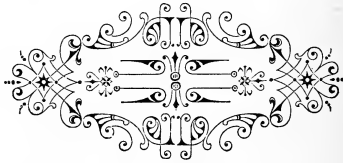
Is it because your lot is cast among those who have congealed into the frigid formalism, so genteel and so chilling, that has taken the place of the warmth and spontaneity of other

days? Is reticence and impassiveness fashionable in your circle? Then it is time that you had broken through these icy barriers and entered into that warmer zone where the sun shines and the air is full of life and joy.

Is it because you have had losses and griefs, and though you would not dare to formulate the complaint in words, yet deep down in your heart you feel that the Lord has dealt hardly with you? Have you allowed yourself to look only at what seems to you the dark side of things until all seems dark? There are many, it is to be feared, who do not impeach the divine goodness directly, but whose sullen and sunless spirit is a perpetual reproach to their Father in heaven and a standing discredit to their Christian profession. The remedy in such a case as this is to be found in turning the thought to the other and brighter side of life. You have lost much, it may be, but God and heaven may still be yours. You have suffered much, but you may have present and eternal compensations. These momentary afflictions work out everlasting blessedness for such as endure to the end.

Is it because worldliness has so mastered your life that there is no longer in your heart that hungering and thirsting for heavenly things which is the condition of being filled

with the fullness of peace and joy? Then there is but one thing for you to do: do again your first works; lie low before the mercy-seat with a broken heart until Jesus makes you whole. Your thanklessness is the result of spiritual dearth, and is a symptom of spiritual death. Delay not in your return to Him who alone can give you the heart of flesh for the heart of stone.



PERFECTION! The word startles some and troubles others. But it is in the Book. It is in the experiences of all who follow the Lord with undivided hearts. Not the perfection of the glorified in heaven, but of the sanctified on earth—the perfection of promise fulfilled; the perfection of a hope realized; the perfection of a prize grasped; the perfection of a victory won. This is the Holy Spirit's work in a soul where his presence is invited and his leadings followed. "Quench not the Spirit." Obedience to this injunction insures this steady development of the spiritual life and the attainment of this goal. Commit no sin, omit no duty. Respond to every divine touch, heed every whisper of the Spirit. By the very law of your nature, your spiritual sensibility will be indefinitely quickened until the slightest touch will be felt; and the heart, thus kept in tune, will make unceasing melody unto the Lord. The spiritual ear, attent to the voice it loves to hear, will recognize it even amid the din and discords of the world. The life will be hid with Christ in God; the conversation will be in heaven; the life now lived will be by the faith of the Son of God; the believer will have attained the perfection to which his gracious Lord invites. Perfection! Dwell on the meaning of this largest word.

The real test of faith is when heavy trouble comes to us while we are in the path of duty. "I have not deserved this, for God knows I was trying my best to do right," says the honest but bewildered believer. Ah, brother, you mistake trouble for wrath, when it is only the angel that God sends to lead you up higher.

The pastor sometimes defers his visit to the sick and sorrowing because, feeling depressed in body or mind himself, he is afraid that he will be a "Job's comforter." This is a wrong view—that is the very time for him to go. His visit then will bless himself as well as another.

The old preacher who took you into the Church—do you ever think of him? He is worn out and "laid on the shelf," but he is not beyond the reach of gratitude and kindness. Try it and see.

A true Christian life is progressive. You admit that. But do you see the inevitable deduction, namely, that if you are not making progress your life cannot be wholly true?

To see whether a preacher is a good manager of money, let him have a little money now and then to manage.

The professed Christian who habitually excludes religion from his conversation need not be surprised when he finds the stream of his spiritual life flowing in a feeble current. If it were not so, the fact would involve a contradiction of the laws of the kingdom of God.

The man who rides some dogmatic religious hobby furiously, and at the same time neglects family worship, and exhibits habitual ill-temper toward his wife and children, is an offense unto God and man. The most sacred truth is defiled by his touch.

You decline to invest in a public enterprise, religious or educational, because you think of moving away. That is to say, you refuse to plant a seed because you may not eat of the fruit of the tree. Be ashamed of yourself!

The point in the special service at which the strength of the leader flagged was that at which the saving power of God was manifest. Nothing obscured the awful attraction of the cross.

Do not criticise too harshly the man who goes from one extreme in his opinions to another. That is his nature. He is an ultraist in temperament, not a hypocrite.

The pride that refuses to walk in the light because there is a limit to knowledge ruins many and weakens others. When a Christian finds himself fretting at the limitations of human thought, let him go to prayer; he is on dangerous ground. _____

The impulsive man whom you love for his warm heart and generous actions must not be discarded because now and then he yields to an impulse which is not a wise one. A single broken facet does not make a diamond valueless. _____

If you experience joyful fervors in devotional exercises, and yet lack serenity and sweetness of spirit amid the cares and collisions of actual life, you must take another degree in Christian living. _____

If religious teachers stop to refute all the nonsense afloat, they will have time for nothing else. Preoccupy the ground with the truth, and there will be no room for error. Preach the gospel. _____

The man who expects to kindle a fire with ice instead of flame is not more foolish than the preacher who expects to rouse sinners when his own heart is cold.



THE NON-APPRECIATED.

WEAK natures wither under the effects of non-appreciation; strong ones grow stronger. Christian character is affected by it variously, according to the varying degrees of spiritual sweetness and nobility in different persons.

Many have sunk under the weight of this burden; many are sinking. Gifted men in the ministry have seen others, believed by them to be their inferiors, promoted over their heads to positions of prominence and extensive influence. Preachers, conscious of real power and possessing solid learning, are eclipsed by men whose capital consists only of vigorous lungs, brazen-faced self-assertion, and the little arts that captivate the crowd. The man of real ability in an obscure place is not heard of outside the narrow limits of his immediate activity, while another, known by the judicious to be weak and shallow, plays the role of assumed greatness in a conspicuous place into which he seems to have been thrown by accident or folly.

Nor is this sense of non-appreciation confined to the ministry. It pervades all ranks in the Church. Here is a man whose whole nature is acidulated because, being poor, he sees, or thinks he sees, that he is unappreciated by his richer brethren. There is another who prizes some gift or quality in himself more highly than others do, and feels that his whole life is narrowed and robbed of its possible outcome by the non-appreciation that compels him to be silent when he should be speaking, or inactive when he should be working in the special sphere for which he believes himself specially endowed. Thus cut off from the path he prefers to follow, he sulks, weakens, sinks into inaction, and darkens and withers into chronic spiritual gloom and barrenness.

In family circles may be found many sad-hearted, fainting ones who are withering in this freezing atmosphere of non-appreciation. The mother who is giving all her strength, and would gladly give her life, for her children, asking no return in kind, hungers for a little appreciation. A word of grateful acknowledgment now and then would be to her a cooling draught to thirsty lips. But no such word is spoken. Her toils, her vigils, her self-denials, are taken as a matter of course, and the more

she does for these unloving or unthinking children, the more exacting they become. Mother-love itself faints under such a strain, and its streams of tenderness are turned back in icy coldness upon the breaking heart. The husband and father, fighting a hard battle against accumulating difficulty and misfortune, finds only selfish complaints and cruel reproaches in the household for which he is giving his strength and his life, and he hardens into recklessness or breaks down under the weight of his troubles.

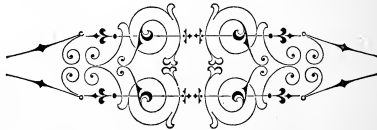
From the company of the non-appreciated are excluded the few who get what they feel to be their deserts, and the ultra-egotistic whose self-appreciation is sufficient to cover all lack in others.

There is blessing, not evil, in this trial to all who will receive the blessing. It is just what is needed to teach the highest lesson of heavenly truth. It throws the soul directly upon God, whose smile alone is heaven to the believing heart. It discovers to us whether or not God is indeed to us a satisfying portion. It enables us to know whether our happiness is in his keeping or the world's. It holds up to us the mirror in which we discern whether we bear the image of our gracious Lord, who made himself of no reputation, taking upon

him the form not of a master, but of a servant, emptying himself of the glory which he had before the world was, that he might be the world's Saviour.

The gold is refined, the dross is discovered in this fiery trial. The soul fully centered in God does not lose its peace and its sweetness because human hearts are cold. The life that blooms in spiritual beauty under the smile of the Lord does not wither under the frown, neglect, or scorn of men. The faith that is rooted in a consciousness of the faithfulness of God is beyond the reach of antagonistic or repressive human influence.

Into almost every one's cup some drop of this bitterness falls at one time or another. There is no place so high, there is none so low, as to be beyond its reach. It is a corroding poison to some natures, a tonic to others.



A CHURCH which, during long, dry, decent, lifeless years, has had no revival, does stagnate, and in its dead and stifling atmosphere is generated the moral miasm that poisons its life and makes it an easy prey to the foe. Such a Church is a training-school for perfunctory preaching in the pulpit and formalists in the pews. Such a Church, like the petrified forest of California, has the form of organic life, but no living principle or power of growth or reproduction. It is simply a spiritual petrification.

To be suspected of a lack of good common sense weakens a minister's influence; to be suspected of a lack of courageous earnestness destroys it utterly. A fanatic may be feared or hated; a coward is despised.

The way in which the average partisan can condone an act of rascality that benefits his own side is a striking proof that the noble science of politics in its present state is well called a "filthy pool."

When a man's theories of moral reform are in advance of his practice, he will not be able to put more than half of his strength into his blows for the right side.

In the Church, as well as out of it, there are apparent misadjustments. But true men come out of these grindings brighter and keener. In some cases a final test is thus made of men who, if they fail not, are destined to stand in the thick of the fight where it is hottest. If they fail, it is because there was a flaw in the metal.

To point the people to the mountain of holiness and tell them how blessed a thing it is to stand on its sunlit summit, is not enough. When the pastor, with shining face and heart of love, beckons to them from the heights, they will follow.

The preacher whose overearnestness offends a sinner to-day will be the one that sinner will want to see when he wrestles at the mercy-seat with a burdened heart or grapples with the last enemy, Death.

When you allow "company" to break up the devotional habits of your household, it shows that your devotions are more a habit than a principle.

When there are twenty ready to dispute where there is one ready to testify to an indwelling Christ, it is time to think and pray.

There is nothing that so surely stirs the heart of saint or sinner as the relation of genuine Christian experience, whether it come from a preacher or a lay member of the Church. The true fire of religion kindles wherever it touches.

Can a man know that he is a Christian before he dies? If so, how long before he dies? Do you know that you are one? To you every other question is insignificant in comparison with this.

Every boy, be he rich or poor, should have some regular labor woven into the warp of his life. The time to form habits is when the whole boy is forming.

You are a professed Christian, but if you habitually prefer worldly to religious enjoyments, wherein do you differ from a worldling?

Christianity deals principally with the conscience and the affections. Forgetfulness of this makes much waste and many blunders.

If earnest desire for a revival burns in one believing heart in your Church, the revival is already begun.

How far may I go with the world? Does a young convert ever ask this question when glowing in the warmth of his first love after genuine conversion? You ask it now. There can be but one inference—that love is gone.

Super-sensitiveness is a constitutional infirmity with many good people, but grace will eradicate it in some cases, and modify it in all.

The lamp that does not shine is not lighted. A true Christian discovers his relationship to Christ everywhere—even at a watering-place.

When the true pastor has to wound a friend that he may save him, he shares the soul-travail of Jesus.

The reading you do on Sunday afternoon will give you a pretty fair test of what is your real taste.

The elect are whosoever will; the non-elect are whosoever won't. Every man classifies himself.

Spiritual power and attraction in the Church of God are inseparable.



CHRIST IN YOU.

CHRI^ST in you is the mystery of godliness. The words must have had a novel sound to the Christians at Colosse, who had just come out of the darkness of heathenism. They go to the very bottom of the great question of a consciousness of divine things. They declare the fullness of the evidence that satisfies the believing soul. It is, as the apostle says, the revelation of a mystery. It is what the psalmist calls the secret of the Lord.

Christ in you is Christ in your consciousness—a personal knowledge of him as your Saviour. It is that direct testimony of consciousness to which appeal is so constantly and so confidently made in the New Testament. The indwelling Christ made that new world in which his followers dwelt apart. Apostolic lips seemed touched with sacred fire whenever they spoke of this sublime and gracious mystery of the faith. They took it for granted they would be understood. They made no argument to prove such blessedness possible, but appealed

to it as a common experience, the one supreme demonstration of redemption by Jesus Christ, and the bond of cohesion among his followers. Their exulting, undoubting affirmation is, "We know whom we have believed." They declare that they have the witness in themselves, and that is the end of controversy. Sophistries could not confuse or confound them, torture could not conquer their endurance, death could not terrify them. Christ in them was the antidote to doubt, despondency, and fear.

Christ in you means to you no less than it did to them as regards these subjective results. It means to you righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It means certainty with regard to the most vital questions concerning which others doubt, the rest of the soul in the realization of a present Saviour, and a conscious salvation. If the heathen of Colosse, born of the Spirit, knew the mighty meaning of the words, shame on us upon whom the ends of the earth have come if we comprehend them not in the fullness of their gracious significance!

Christ in you is Christ in your character as well as in your consciousness. Christ-likeness is recognizable in ourselves as it is in others. The words of Christ reveal his mind. Our words reveal ours. By our words we shall be

judged, and by our words we may judge ourselves. The spirit of Christ governs the speech of his true followers. There is nothing in a Christian's life that so continually expresses his character as his words. Speech is the pulse of the inner nature. If any man offend not in word, he is perfect. The indwelling Christ may be discerned in the topics and the temper of our conversation. Un-Christ-like speech is a demonstration that Christ is not known as a felt and sanctifying presence and power in the soul. Christ in you in the fullness of his grace means that you have put away all evil-speaking, with its concomitants, bitterness, wrath, envy, jealousy, and such like. Ye that would feel the joy of this blessed experience, look well to this. Christ in you means that there is a manifestation of him in all the life of a believer. The life he now lives is by the faith of the Son of God. Christ liveth in him. The deep truth contained in this declaration is that the aggregate body of believers continue to manifest Christ to the world, and that every individual follower is a medium through whom the living Christ is translated to the minds and consciences of mankind. The Christ in them is the only Christ that men will see. They are the living epistles seen and read of all men. Christ in

your character is unmistakable. Men will take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus when you exhibit his spirit. The true life expressing the true character of a Christian is a demonstration that will be accepted by the restless, yearning heart of the world.

Christ in you is the hope of glory. The logic of it is simple, but conclusive. If Christ in you gives conscious peace and joy, and produces now the character and the fruits of holiness, you may be sure that the promise of future glory will not fail. Grace now is the pledge of glory hereafter. Christ in you now is the guarantee that you shall reign with him in his eternal kingdom. The author of your faith will be its finisher. Now are we the sons of God; what we shall be is not fully revealed, but we know we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. Christ in you is the certainty of present acceptance, and future glorification. You feel that your union with him is so close and so sacred that he will not live in glory and leave you behind.

This present consciousness of the indwelling Christ and its corollary, the exulting hope of the glory that is to be revealed at his coming, is the present privilege of every one of his humble followers. If all would claim the fullness of this offered blessing, what a transfor-

mation of the Church, what a brightening of the outlook for humanity, would take place! Why reject this offer of the fullness of blessing? Why delay to lay hold upon this glorious hope?



THE English language is the language of evangelical Christianity. It is a significant fact, not unnoticed by thoughtful and prayerful men, that it is becoming more and more the language of commerce for the whole world. If we are to have a universal language, it will be the English. This, it seems to us, without arrogance or vanity, is assured by the wonderful adaptation of the language itself, and the aggressive and assimilative power of the English-speaking peoples. These facts are not fortuitous. Considered in connection with the tendency in our modern mission-work, patent to every thoughtful observer, they are calculated to arrest attention and to excite a profound interest in the minds of all devout and thoughtful Christians. Commerce has prepared the way for Christ. Even the profane Jack-tar in the ports of Shanghai, Yokohama, or Calcutta, is unconsciously preparing the way of the Lord.

The conversion which seems at last to be sudden is the culmination of influences that have been working upon the soul for years. Do not lose heart or hope if the fruit of your prayers and efforts do not immediately appear. The spiritual harvest may be left to the Lord of the harvest when you have done your part.

The sneer that would chill the sympathy felt for a dying malefactor, or crush out the hope that God's mercy may enkindle in the wretch's despairing soul, is fashionable just now. And yet lost men will continue to look to the cross, and tender Christian hearts will be ready to pray with them and for them.

The brother who is cultured, pious, and can make respectable verses, but is not a poet, is the one who embarrasses his friends, and makes the kind-hearted editor wish to flee away and be at rest.

A total lapse in spiritual life is likely to be followed by the total loss of even abstract belief in the divine reality. "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

The preacher who finds that he cannot put forth his best efforts because his hearers are unappreciative and unresponsive needs more of the faith that makes the judgment-day a reality.

A free press and free speech in the Church are the conservators of its peace as well as its progress. Revolution is not needed where reform is always in order.

Some pastors have a wonderful gift in the line of getting their people to work. Some make the mistake of trying to do every thing themselves. They spread themselves out so that they are scarcely felt at any point. They educate their charges into efficiency. This is a fault into which the ill-judging zeal of young preachers often leads them.

The man who keeps moving to avoid droughts here and floods there usually moves just fast enough to let misfortune overtake him. The man who stays where he is, plows deep, works steadily, and trusts God, usually prospers.

The prophet who has honor in his own country will not escape jealousy and envy. As poor human nature is constituted without special grace, these are correlatives.

In both Church and State affairs the innocent never shrink from investigation. This axiom is an Ithuriel's spear, and will reveal every rascal it touches.

Your good deed was not properly understood or appreciated by the beneficiary. Never mind. It will come back to you at last perfumed with the odors of heaven.



A MEDITATION.

SOME things we do not know, and cannot know in this life. The mystery of evil is insoluble to us. We can argue and we can speculate, but there are depths here we cannot fathom. The tares have been sown in the fair field of God's creation; an enemy hath done it; this is all that is revealed to us, and this is the limit of our knowledge. We cannot see why the innocent should suffer; back of all the explanations made in the Bible, and all the compensations it promises, lies a difficulty that confounds our human reason. The facts of human life that meet us every day are, as the psalmist put it, too painful for us. The young and the happy die, and the old live on in pain, though longing for release. Good men and women are stricken down in the midst of their usefulness, and the vilest are left to add to their guilt and degradation, and to curse the world. Death enters the family circle, and takes the one that can least be spared. The most painful forms of bodily disease seize upon

the sensitive frames of the noblest and most refined, and beauty and strength are marred, broken, crushed out. More painful still, mental disease attacks the brightest intellects, and blights the most beautiful and fruitful lives. These calamities come upon the truest and the best while engaged in the holiest, most self-denying ministries of their lives. Ah, this is the bitterest drop in the cup given them to drink! The lightning that laid low their joys and hopes leaped forth from a sky in which no cloud was visible. The plans that were thwarted were unselfish; the labors that were cut short were for others who had sacred claims and urgent needs: The sufferer thought all was going as God would have it, when there came a sudden crash, and nothing is left but what seems to be the wreck of a broken life. It is a bruised and broken humanity; a great company of smitten ones walk amid these shadows, baffled by the mystery of life, and fainting under the weight of a burden they feel to be too heavy for them. They cry to God out of these depths, still clinging, though it may be with feeble grasp, to the Eternal Rock, or sinking into the black waves of despair. Our heart goes out to these in tender sympathy, for have we not walked amid these shadows and wrestled with these problems? We stand with them silent in the

presence of these facts of life and providence, constrained to confess that they are beyond our comprehension.

Let it be so. Accepting the limitations of our knowledge, we bow in submission to the inevitable. But we do know some things, the consideration of which will be helpful to us while watching through the night of earthly trial, waiting for the morning.

We know that what God does is right. What he does directly is done in wisdom, in righteousness. What he does by the operation of his laws is equally wise and right. Where we can trace him clearly, his goodness is manifest; where we cannot trace we may safely trust him. The Judge of all the earth will do right. He is righteousness itself.

We know that what God permits must be best. We know this, whether we can explain it or not. He permits temporary evil to the good, and temporary success to the wicked. He sees it best to let cause follow effect on the natural plane, even when the result brings calamity upon the guiltless. This does not preclude him from "making bare his arm" whenever there is occasion; he is the living God, behind all his laws, and above them. We would make the exception the rule if we had our way; but his ways are not our ways, nor

his thoughts our thoughts. We see a single point; his vision sweeps the universe. We know that what he permits is best, and here we may rest.

How do we know these things? Because God himself hath said it. He knew the trials we must meet, and the questions that would rise in our burdened souls. "All things work together for good to them that love God"—he hath said it, and it stands fast. His almightiness and his infinite love are at the back of that promise, and it will not fail.

How do we know? We have the witness within us. Not always in the same full measure, and not alike to all at all times. There are divers manifestations. Temperamental and other conditions modify experience on this line. But on the fleshly tablet of every believing heart the Holy Spirit writes, "God is good." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," is the cry not of fanatic blindness, but of a subjective assurance of the divine love as deep as consciousness and strong as life itself. "I know," is the language of assurance. "I know," said Stephen dying for the truth; "I know," said Paul in prison waiting for the headsman; "I know," said a great company who have gone up out of great tribulations; and every one of the sore-hearted,

bruised, broken, bewildered, fainting ones traveling the same paths of pain and sorrow, may say, "I know." The night is dark, and the storm is raging; but there is a hand you can clasp, and it will lead you to the light.



THE Holy Spirit's control over the body is cumulative. As his instrument, the body becomes more obedient to his commands. The laws of our being work for, not against, the soul. The new habits of the new life strengthen daily, and the body itself becomes an instrument so perfectly tuned that under the Spirit's touch it is a perfect vehicle of expression for the trusting, obedient, happy soul of the believer who is filling the measure of duty, and enjoying the fullness of blessing.

Many persons regard the formation of their character as a process scarcely begun, and to be completed at a far distant day, when lo! they have already crystallized into their permanent moral type. Every day brings its tests, and makes its impress. Each twenty-four hours is a part of eternity, one link in an endless chain.

The man who knows that he pleases God cannot be disturbed because he cannot please all of his fallible fellow-men.

To the true man the success of a cherished idea is dearer than the paternity of it.

The true remedy for barren farms and barren Churches—deep plowing.

The educated man who sees most clearly the universal reign of law, and believes most firmly in the eternal Law-maker, is the man whose mind is serenest amid the throes of this transition time. To prove the reign of law is to prove the rulership of God.

Beware of the spiritual pride which so often assails men and women who have conquered the grosser and more patent forms of sin. It is the worm that has blighted many a life that had begun to blossom in spiritual beauty.

Some very good people are not thrifty. But do not confound thriftlessness with unworldliness. Lack of reasonable forethought and industry is not spirituality. Call folly and laziness by their right names.

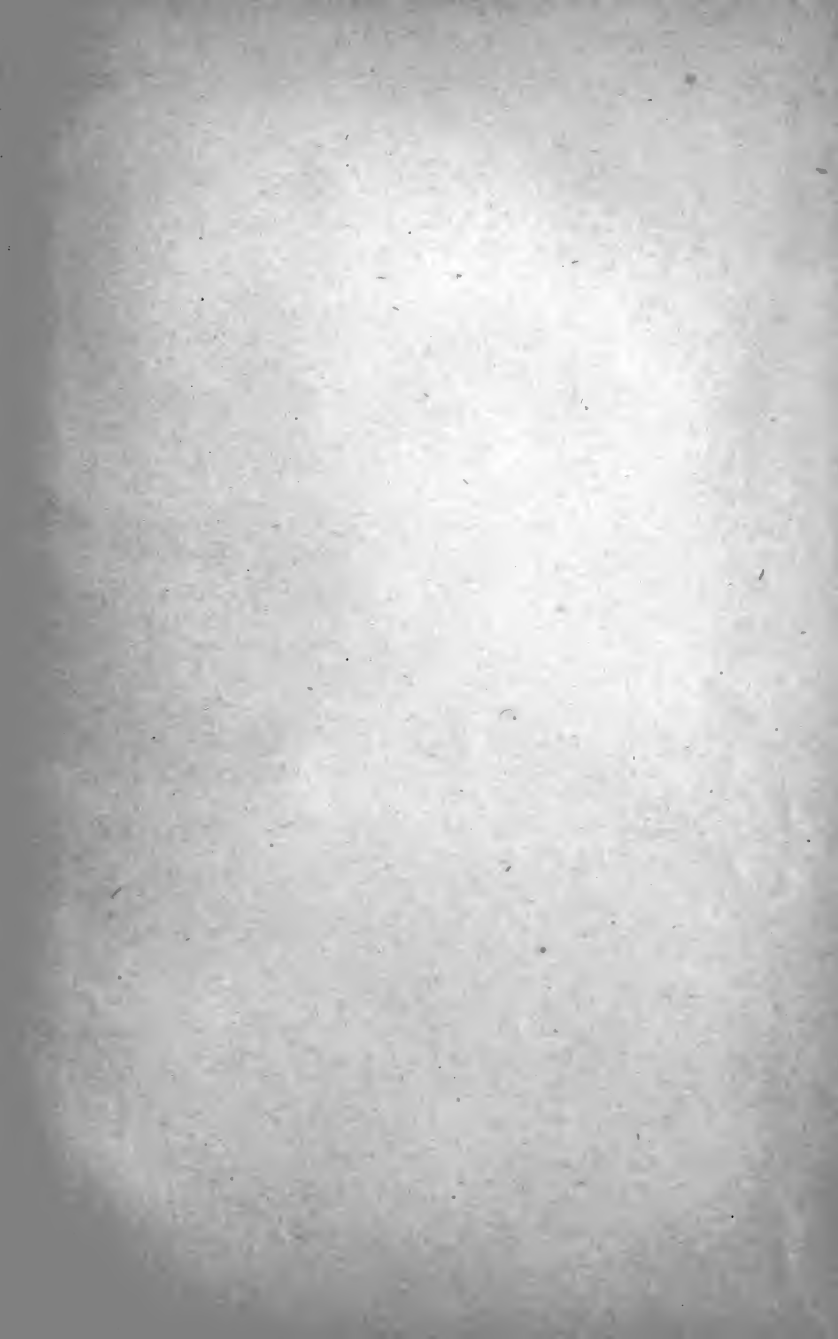
The victory of faith is not a vague and faint persuasion that somehow all will come right at the end; it is actual triumph over present difficulties, and consciousness of an indwelling, victorious Christ.

You nurse a secret discontent at the core of your restless heart when the best for time and eternity is within your reach. The best! think of it, and take heart.

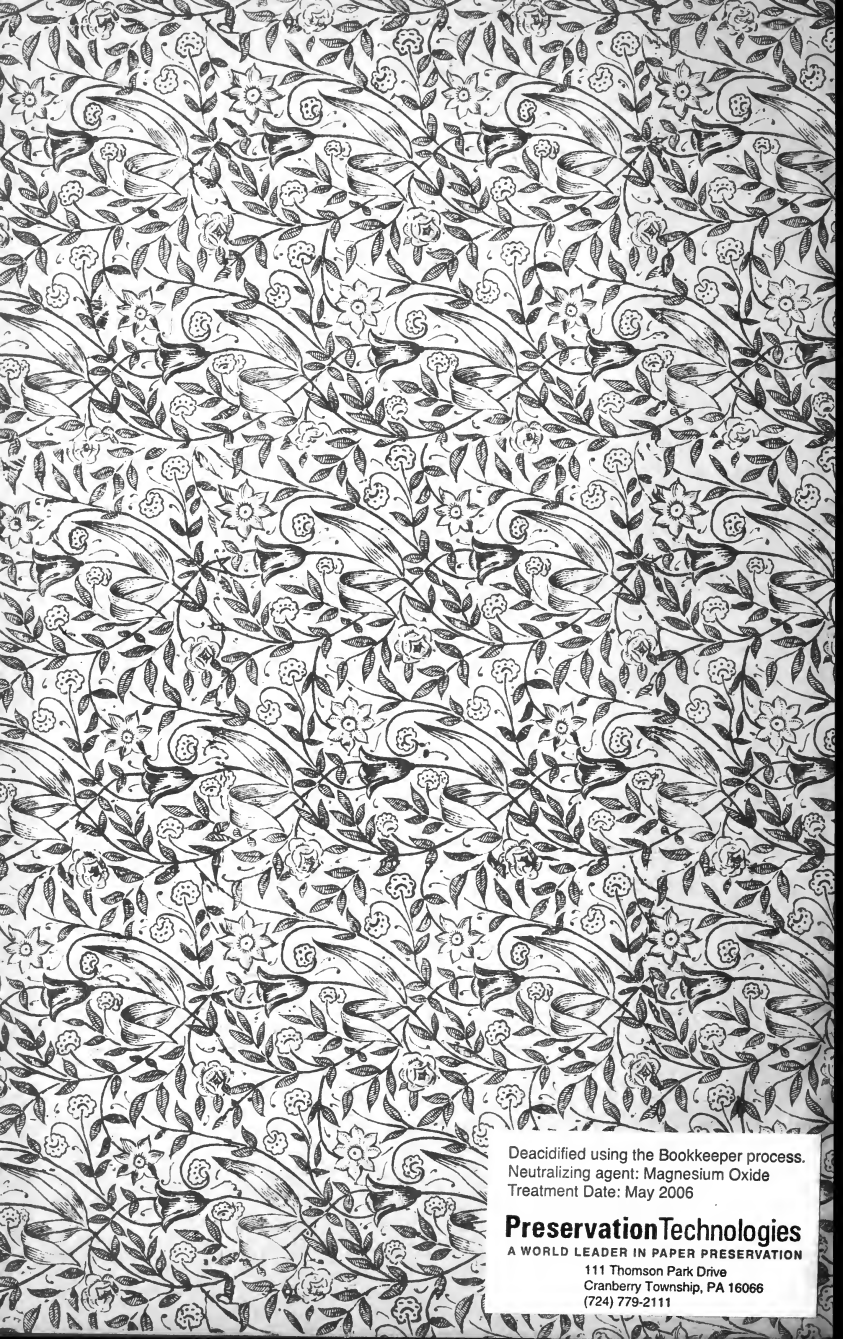
The solemn and momentous truths that fall upon heedless ears and unresponsive hearts may at length lose their significance to the speaker. As nothing follows their proclamation, it is but too natural to drift unconsciously into the feeling that there is nothing in them. Insensibly the preacher thus tempted and tried begins to rotate on the axis of perfunctory preaching. He warns the sinner of his awful peril in scriptural language, but with no thrill of sympathetic alarm; he invites his hearers to the gospel-feast, but in a tone that shows he does not expect them to come; he speaks of the joys of heaven and the pains of hell in the same lifeless way, showing that he has reached the point when these things have ceased to move him as they have ceased to move his hearers. There has been a fatal reaction from the pew to the pulpit. And now it is mutual—a dying pulpit going on repeating unfelt truths to deaf ears.

A gloomy Christian shadows his own landscape. The sunshine on the hills of Beulah he never sees. By and by he will persuade himself that it is not there.

The best expression of faith in Christ is to follow him. You cannot go beyond this.



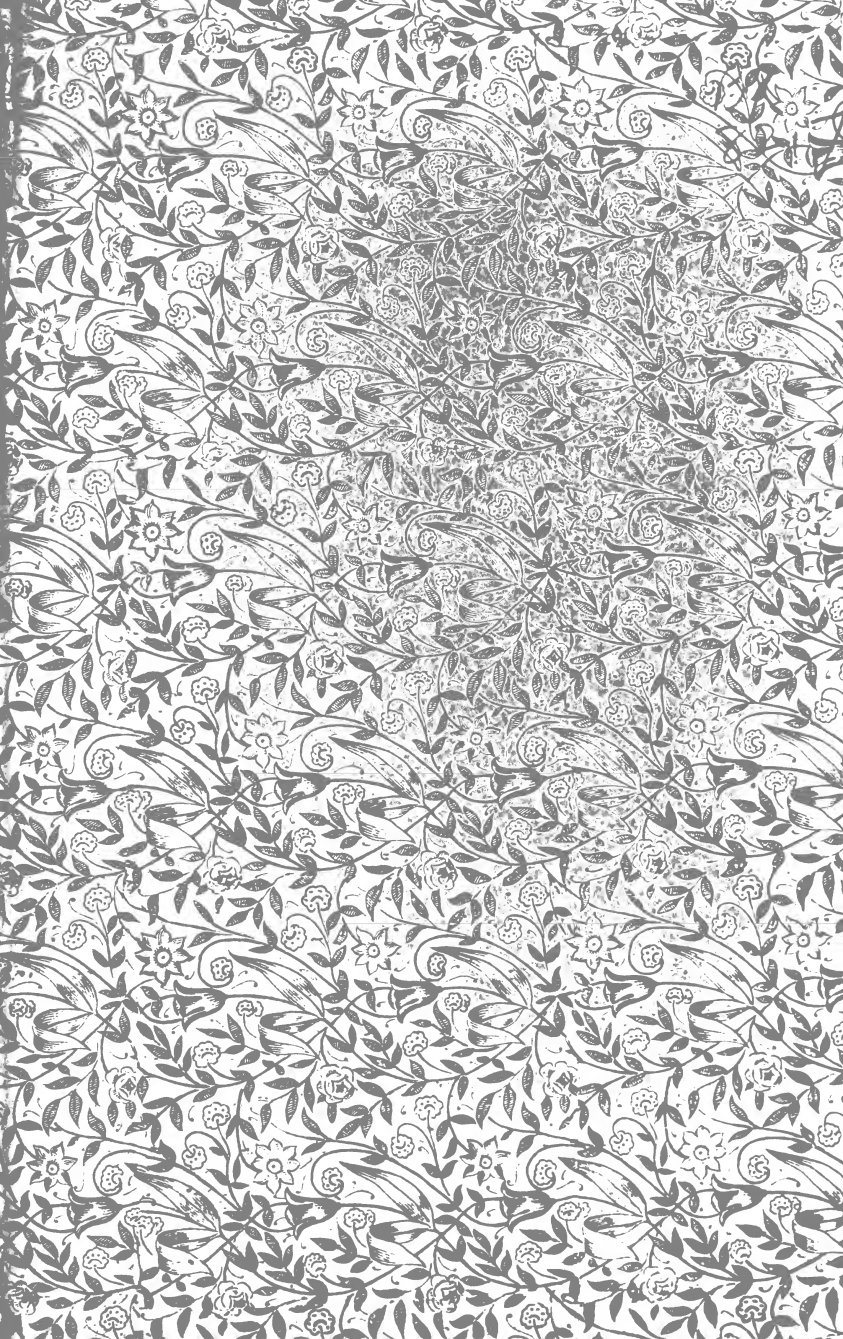




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