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Poetry.

IF I SHOULD DIE TO-NIGHT.

If I should die to-night,
My friends would look upon my quiet face
Before they laid it in its resting place,
And deem that death had left it almost fair
And, laying snow-white flowers against my
hair,
Would smooth it down with tearful tenderness,
And fold my hands with lingering caress;
Poor hands, so empty and so cold to-night!

If I should die to-night,
My friends would call to mind, with loving
thought,
Some kindly deed the icy hand had wrought;
Some gentle word the frozen lips had said;
Errands on which the willing feet had sped;
The memory of my selfishness and pride,
My hasty words would all be put aside,
And so I should be loved and mourned to-
night.

If I should die to-night,
Even hearts estranged would turn once more
to me,
Recalling other days remorsefully.
The eyes that chill me with averted glance
Would look upon me as of yore, perchance,
And soften in the old familiar way.
For who could war with dumb, unconscious
clay?

So I might rest, forgiven of all, to-night.
Oh, friends, I pray to-night,
Keep not your kisses for my dead, cold brow;
The way is lonely, let me feel them now.
Think gently of me; I am travel-worn;
My faltering feet are pierced with many a
thorn.
Forgive, oh, hearts estranged, forgive, I plead!
When dreamless rest is mine I shall not need
The tenderness for which I long to-night.
—Christian Union.

HE SUPS WITH ME.

Speechless Sorrow sat with me;
I was sighing wearily!
Lamp and fire were out; the rain
Wildly beat the window-pane;
In the dark we heard a knock,
And a hand was on the lock;
One in waiting speaks to me:
Saying sweetly,
"I am come to sup with thee."

All my room was dark and damp;
"Sorrow," said I, "trim the lamp,
Light the fire and cheer thy face,
Set the guest-chair in its place."
And again I heard the knock;
In the dark I found the lock;
"Enter, I have turned the key—
Enter, stranger,
Who art come to sup with me!"

Opening wide the door, He came,
But I could not speak his name;
In the guest chair took his place,
But I could not see his face.
When my cheerful fire was beaming,
When my little lamp was gleaming,
And the feast was spread for thee,
Lo! my Master
Was the Guest that supped with me.
—Christus Consolator.

Religious.

ONE BODY.

When the early Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper, there was placed upon the table a single loaf. Of this loaf the members all partook. And when they had all been nourished by the one loaf, they became, in a certain sense, one body. This idea is lost in the Common Version; but is clearly exhibited in the Bible Union Revision; "The loaf which we break, is it not a partaking of the body of Christ? Because we, the many, are one loaf, one body; for we all share in that one loaf."

The truth that believers are one body, Paul makes very prominent, and from it he draws many lessons. There is one body; and of this body each disciple is a limb, or member. In the natural body, there is but a common interest; if an eye, or a foot, is injured, the whole body throbs with a common pain; as, on the other hand, the whole body rejoices when the tongue is gratified, when the brow is cooled, when the tired arm rests. So, in the spiritual body, says Paul: "That there may be no division in the body; but that

the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." We have become accustomed to use the word "member" in a technical sense, till we have lost the significance which it once had; but if the reader will substitute *limb* for *member* in the passage first quoted, he will see the full force of the illustration.

Each single church is a body whereof each Christian attached to it, is a limb, a member. If any single member declines in spirituality, the whole body suffers. On the other hand, if any one member grows more pious, then the entire church is refreshed and edified by his elevated example, by the fervor, and spirituality of his prayers.

And what is true of the single local church, is true, no less, of the entire church, including all of Christ's disciples on earth. The church universal is one body. Here, also, it is true that the interest of one is the interest of all. Every member is a loser, when any other member suffers; and rejoices when any other member becomes more spiritual, more prayerful, more like to Christ, the Master. If the level of the water is raised at any single point in the Atlantic, the elevation affects the surface of the entire body.

And in the great economy of God, if a single disciple, anywhere in the world, begins to live nearer to God, not only does a blessing come to those who see him and who are consciously affected by him, but, when he prays, "Thy kingdom come," the disciples in remote lands, who will not know of his existence till they meet him on the brighter shores, receive blessings from God, in answer to his supplications. And if a disciple fall away from the fervor of love and the purity of life, then there is at least the loss negatively of all the blessing that might have been conferred.—National Baptist.

MR. BEECHER'S CONVERSION.

As a little child, I was so susceptible of moral impressions that I do not remember a year of my life, after I was seven years of age, that I was not under conviction of sin; that I did not go about with a feeling of sadness; that I did not feel in danger of exile from God, and I didn't want to be. I wandered for years through my youth and academic course, trying to submit to a theological God, yet all the time inwardly unbelieving. In the theological school, I took a Bible class, and I thought to teach of Christ as did the German writers with whom I was acquainted—that is, no more believing in him than in Homer or Herodotus. At length—the brightest day that ever dawned for me—the idea presented itself to me of Christ as the friend of sinners—not alone after his conversion but while yet in his sins. Not till then did the true idea of Christ dawn upon me. I had squandered years in the fruitless search for God to do something for me, and here he was helping poor sinful man to himself. Study the typical form of manhood presented to you in the New Testament. Preach this Christ to men, and they will come thronging to you, and saying, "My Lord and my God."

ADVICE FOR YOUNG MEN.—President White, of Cornell University, said recently in an address to the students: "If there is any man whom from the bottom of my heart I pity, it is the man who believes that all mankind are cheats and swindlers, and who considers life merely a game of grasping and gripping. If there is any young man for whom I feel deep regret, as for a man sure to fail, sure to live and die wretchedly, it is the young man who goes forth into the world believing that the only motives in this world are selfish motives. Depend upon it that selfishness is not the only motive in this world—nay, it is not even the strongest motive."

For the Christian Messenger.

THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES.

No. 5.

THE CHURCH AT WORK.

There are several kinds of churches among evangelical Christians.

In some, the pastor is everything, and the people nothing. And in these cases the people commonly love to have it so. Is not the minister their hired man? Do they not pay him for doing the religious work? Is it not reasonable that he who lives upon them should labour for them? What have they to do with labour? It is enough for them to attend the meetings, at any rate on the Lords' day; and thus encourage the minister by their presence. As for him, he must keep everything straight, by going everywhere, and doing whatever requires to be done. It is better that he should spend half his time in his wagon than sit moping over the book in his study (if he has one), manufacturing dry and cold sermons, when he ought to trust God for direct help, and give them the truth hot from the heart. Such churches are selfish, exacting, and slothful. They have not the elements of growth. The utmost that can be said of them is that they remain *in statu quo*. It would be a benefit to the cause at large if they were to dwindle and die.

Churches of this stamp are in danger of becoming ritualistic, to a certain extent. When they expect the pastor to perform all kinds of labour, they are apt to fall into the notion that he is the only one by whom the work can be done—that his acts have official power and authority—that he is in some sense a priest. The universal priesthood of believers is neither understood nor believed, nor regarded as a desirable thing.

In other churches, the work is divided between the minister, and the elders, who in the Scottish churches constitute the Session, and that Session is the ruling body. The elders, it is to be observed, are laymen. But the "elders" of the New Testament are ministers—bishops—overseers. See Acts xiv. 23; xx. 17, 28; Titus i. 5, 7. They formed the joint pastorate of the church to which they belonged, and possessed equal rights and powers, apportioning the various duties of the pastorate among themselves; according to difference in qualifications, attainments, etc. The modern Presbyterian Session has no example, in my opinion, in the New Testament. It is an ecclesiastical arrangement. The people may be very properly employed, as indeed they generally are, in works of utility, but government and discipline are left in the hands of the ministers and elders; there is not so much of the democratic in the system as appears to have prevailed in apostolic times.

In many churches there is an aristocracy. What I mean is this, that the deacons and acting men are always chosen from the respectable class, that is, the wealthy. They only are allowed to take any prominent part in the management of the affairs of the churches. The poorer members are in a manner shut out. If they cannot render pecuniary service, it is supposed that they can do nothing in any way. But Christianity knows no such distinction. All believers are bound to regard themselves as consecrated to Christ. The man who has but one talent is as responsible for the use of it as he who has ten is responsible for the greater number entrusted to him. It is great injustice to deprive the former of the opportunity of employing himself, though on a limited scale, for advancement of the cause, nor will the Lord Jesus hold him guiltless who offends "one of these little ones."

How great a variety of the methods of doing good! No Christian, no member of a church, needs be at a loss for occasions of beneficence. The gifts of the Holy Spirit in the apostolic age were diverse, but all "to profit" to one was granted "the word of wisdom"—to another "the word of knowledge"

—to another, "faith" to another,—"gifts of healing"—to another, "working of miracles"—to another, "prophecy"; and "all then", these apostle Paul says, "worketh that one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Cor. xii. 9-11). So it is still, although the miraculous element soon ceased to exist.

A few have the gift of utterance, and can speak to edification. There are diversities and degrees even in this department. Some can expound with clearness;—some can reason, logically and forcibly;—some can declaim, or exhort. One man's is the gift of terseness—he will not use a word or even a syllable too many;—another man places the truths he delivers in all possible lights—turns them round and round, so that every phase may be examined—and now and then drowns the sense in a flood of sayings, not always intelligible or coherent. This one barely states his facts or his arguments—and is not that enough? What more would you have? He has stated them, but here is another who, so far from being contented with statements, repeats and illustrates—seeks for resemblances—uses similitudes—and captivates his hearers by the brilliancy and beauty of his rhetoric. Here there is danger of excess; Butler's sarcasm may be just—

"For rhetoric, he scarce could open
His lips, but out there flew a trope"—

yet it is certain that the unillustrated style of speaking is reckoned dull or hard, and there was reasonableness in the objection once urged against a preacher—"there are no *likes* in his sermons." The Saviour used them freely: "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed"—"leaven"—"a merchantman seeking goodly pearls," &c.

"Every man hath his proper gift of God." And every one should aim to find out what that gift is, and then to use it with all naturalness. It is mean to strut about in borrowed plumes; and of all imitators the pulpit-imitators are the meanest. What though a popular orator sometimes exhibits ungainly attitudes or speaks with a twang? The blockhead who imitates his attitudes or his tones only makes himself ridiculous, and never succeeds in persuading the people that he, too, is an orator of the same grade.

The gift of speaking in public is only one of the gifts. The Sunday School Teacher exercises the gift in a quieter manner. Many Christians are peculiarly qualified for sympathetic intercourse with the sick and afflicted, and know how to speak "a word to him that is weary." Every Christian is a witness for God, and should be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. iii. 15)—by the road-side—in the workshop—at the table—whenever and wherever a fair opportunity is offered for bearing testimony. This obligation embraces all the members of the church—male and female—educated or not—rich and poor—old and young. All are bound to speak for Christ.

Other modes of usefulness need not be enumerated. They are continually presenting themselves to the thoughtful and pious. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. iv. 10).

The pastor of a church will study the characters and talents of all the members, and endeavour to procure a fair assignment of Christian work to every one, himself exercising a watchful superintendency over the labourers, among and with whom he is a fellow-labourer. And it would be a fruitful occupation of part of the time, at least, spent in our monthly conferences, if, instead of a wearisome repetition of confessions and complaints, the brethren were to confer and consult respecting the work of the Lord—invent new methods of holy activity—apportion the labour among themselves—and keep the spiritual machi-

ery in good order by the appliances of faith, and prayer, and heavenly love. When the exciseman goes his rounds in England among malt-houses and other manufactories, and no change has occurred since his last visit, he writes "*nil*"—nothing. When that word must be written in a church record the interpretation is "Ichabod—the glory is departed."

The number of sleepy, idle, sickly churches is, it may be hoped diminishing. Christians generally have clear views of their relationship to the Saviour, and a just sense of obligation. Still here and there an individual is to be found, occupying an obscure position in society, who persists in maintaining that he can do nothing for God's cause. His talents are so small his opportunities so few (and he has no money) that he claims exemption. Whatever you may say, he replies, "I can do nothing."

Say not so, brother. You can pray, and "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James v. 16) observe—it does not say, "the prayer of a rich, or highly gifted man," but "the prayer of a righteous man." He may be at the bottom of society's scale, living in a tumble-down cottage—ill clothed and half-starved; but if he is "a righteous man"—"rich in faith"—he is one of Jacob's race, and has "power with God." The history of prayer is the most wonderful of all histories, and it will be yet more wonderful in the good times that are coming.

And then there is influence, a Christian's life bears witness for God—rebukes the sinner—stimulates the slothful—encourages the doubting and the distressed. "There is a certain skill," says Robert Robinson, "which our fore-fathers used to call a knack, an art of doing things, and it is remarkably seen in many poor women's laying out the earnings of their husbands. Call it what you will, it is one of the highest qualifications of a poor man's wife, and nothing contributes more to the ease of his living than this female accomplishment. How she reckons I cannot tell; but she keeps out of debt, lives in cleanliness and plenty, and can always spare half a dozen turves to warm a cold sick neighbour's cordial. She says, 'My husband's harvest wages clothe himself and the children; my gleanings pays the shoemaker; the orchard pays my rent; the garden does this, the flax procures that, the children's spinning wheels yield so and so'; and good heart! she crowns all by saying, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.'"

That poor woman is a power in the church. There is influence in her honest, industrious, godly life. Her name does not appear in the list of subscriptions; she can give only a penny when others give their pounds, but by her steady walk and consistency of character she is one of the most useful members of the church of God to which she belongs.

To one is given one pound; to another, five; to another, ten. To each, to all, the Lord says, "Occupy till I come."

Aug. 4, 1873

SENEC.

For the Christian Messenger.

A BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE AT HUBBARD'S COVE.

Five years ago the proposition to erect such an edifice in the above named place would have been deemed almost impracticable. Previous to that period as some of our young ministers can testify, the doors of every public building were persistently closed against us. But the light of genuine truth is destined to spread; and as in foreign lands the clouds of bigotry and superstition are being dispersed, so in our own christian province the sword of denominational jealousy is being sheathed. Among the good acts of a wise providence was the directing of two Baptist brothers to take advantage