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WHOLE SERIES.  
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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Home Beyond.

Beyond this life,  
Where joy and sorrow blend,  
And toil and strife  
The pilgrim's path attend,  
There is a land where all is bright and fair,  
And skies are darkened not by clouds of care.

That land unseen,  
With peerless beauties bright,  
Whose glorious sheen  
Dispels the darkness night,  
Provides a home for pilgrim's faint and worn,  
And rest from burdens grievous to be borne.

The scalding tears  
Which now oft dim our eyes,  
The dreadful fears  
Which fill our hearts with sighs,  
Shall ne'er be known on that celestial shore,  
But heavenly bliss be ours forevermore.

Sorrow shall cease,  
All tears be wiped away;  
And holy peace,  
With beatitudes, endless day,  
Shall fill the souls which dwell in realms above,  
With wonder great, and sweetest praise,  
and love.

No sin can harm  
The blest immortals there;  
No guilt alarm  
Those beings pure and fair;  
No broken law to hurl its murky threats,  
And fill the soul with terrible regrets,

But calmest joy,  
Unstirred by pallid fear,  
With no alloy  
To cause a bitter tear,  
Shall fill the souls of all to whom 'tis given,  
By Jesus blood, to reach a home in heaven.

And there may we,  
When life's dark days are o'er,  
Eternally  
The Father's love adore;  
And praise the name of Him who died to save  
His people from the victory of the grave.

O wonderful Lord!  
O Prince divinely fair!  
Thy gracious word,  
Dispels my doubt and fear.  
To open me, by thy rich grace, is given  
A hope of bliss immortal in thy heaven,  
SYMONDS.  
Worcester Academy, Mass. Sept. 21, 1877.

## Religious.

### Ministerial Discouragements and Encouragements.

BY REV. JOHN CLARK.

An address read before the Annapolis County Ministerial Conference at Bridgetown, on Wednesday the 5th of September.

Christian ministers are formed of exactly the same material as other men. The apostle Paul, when speaking to the people of Lystra in reference to himself and Barnabas, said: "We also are men of like passions with you." It is just the same with preachers still. Although not of the flesh, they nevertheless, are in the flesh, and consequently, they have their pleasant and painful experiences as well as private Christians. Now, this is absolutely necessary, else how could they "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep?"

"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each to-morrow  
Find us farther than today."

But, whilst Christian ministers have their joys and sorrows in common with other believers, they have some which are peculiar to themselves, arising from the solemn and important work in which they are engaged. And here, it may be remarked, there are differences again. Though all are engaged in the same work, their personal characteristics may vary, and their outward cir-

cumstances may differ, and hence their individual experiences may not exactly correspond. And besides, there may be changes in our own feelings at different periods. To preach on one occasion may be comparatively easy, but to preach on another occasion may be comparatively difficult. Being surrounded by subtle and powerful influences, we are more or less affected in various ways. And probably no two cases are altogether alike. Hence the writer of this paper can only dwell upon general facts and principles, and must leave matters of detail for any discussion that may follow.

### DISCOURAGEMENTS.

Some of these are connected with ourselves. It is well for us to know this. We are far from perfect, either as men or as ministers. It takes us a long time to know ourselves. Indeed, it may be questioned whether we ever knew ourselves in the fullest sense of the word. When some one asked Socrates how it was that he was reputed to be so much wiser than other men, he replied, that others were unconscious of their ignorance, but he was sensible of his. Our knowledge is limited, both of ourselves and others. Perhaps if we knew ourselves better we should blame ourselves more and others less. We are "compassed with infirmity," and are liable to err. Our mistakes should teach us wisdom; and our weakness and imperfections should make us humble, patient, and watchful. We are driven to earnest prayer, to agonizing prayer. Indeed, this is essential to our success; for prevalent prayer is needed as well as powerful preaching. "Our work is great and large." It demands our heart, our soul, our strength. We are stewards of the mysteries of God. Souls are entrusted to our care. The glorious gospel of the blessed God is committed to our trust. We stand between the living and the dead. Our responsibility is exceedingly great: "We are a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death; and 'who is sufficient for these things?'" Well may the magnitude of the work overwhelm us, and a sense of unworthiness appal us!

"'Tis not a cause of small import  
The pastor's care demands,  
But what might fill an angel's heart,  
And filled a Saviour's hands."  
Yea, verily, the work of the ministry filled not only the Saviour's hands, it filled His heart as well. How can we accomplish it? Our hearts are often cold, our abilities are small, and our strength is perfect weakness. Doubts and fears repeatedly assail us. No wonder that we at times despond, it is a mercy we do not despair. Ardent longings for the conversion of souls, inward conflicts with sin and Satan, deep anxiety and continued study, have a natural tendency to depress the mind. And besides all this, personal feelings and failings, personal imperfections and infirmities have much to do with our discouragements.

Some of our discouragements are connected with professing Christians. We naturally look for sympathy and co-operation on the part of those who belong to the Church of Christ. We want them to pray for us and work with us. To their credit be it said, they not unfrequently cheer our hearts and "strengthen our hands in God." They often help us greatly. But it is not always so. Nothing is more pleasing than to find a whole church alive to its duties and responsibilities; and nothing is more painful than to see a whole church, or a large proportion of its members, backward and indifferent to the work and worship of God. And yet, there are always a few who appear to be unmoved and unconcerned even in times of spiritual quickening. This is indeed discouraging. But after all, perhaps it is not more than we might expect. It shows us our utter weakness, and makes us feel entirely dependent upon the Holy Spirit of God. We should be thankful for those who are steadfast, faithful, and persevering; we should deal tenderly with those who are discouraged by the way; and we should earnestly pray for those who like "Ephraim, being armed, turn back

in the day of battle." Perhaps we expect too much from our fellow-Christians. They are but mortals, and are surrounded by temptation and sin; and yet we are grieved and disappointed because they do not come up to our ideal as to what they should be as followers of Christ. Would it not be well for us to remember that we do not come up to our own ideal in reference to ourselves? The best of men are but imperfectly sanctified. Sin remains in them, and were it not for the grace of God, sin would reign over them. The noblest spirits among the sons of men have often had to work on alone. "The philosopher tells us," says Robertson, of Brighton, "that no atom in creation touches another atom—they only approach within a certain distance; then the attraction ceases, and an invisible something repels—they only seem to touch. No soul touches another soul except at one or two points; and those chiefly external—a fearful and a lonely thought, but one of the truest of life. In the central deeps of our being we are alone." Human sympathies often fail, for man is changeable. Hence we must not trust an arm of flesh, nor expect too much from any earthly source. The Master Himself once looked for fruit and found nothing but leaves. Even in Gethsemane the "man of sorrows" agonized alone, "and of the people there was none with Him." Even Peter, James and John on that memorable occasion slept. Nevertheless the Master said: "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." Doubtless the same is true of many disciples now. Still it cannot be otherwise than discouraging to a Christian minister whenever he finds that the people of his charge, through lack of spiritual-mindedness and zeal, "come not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

We meet with discouragements in connection with the unconverted. When we cast our eyes over the congregations that attend upon our ministry and we realize the solemn fact that "they have not all obeyed the gospel," our hearts are pained within us. Many sit with the people of God, but they do not share their blessings, nor experience their emotions. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." "We pray them, in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God." We look for speedy and visible results. But alas! We often look in vain. "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Sometimes we fully anticipate that such and such individuals will surely come out on the Lord's side. And yet we are sadly and bitterly disappointed. Tears are wiped away. Convictions are stifled. Christ is rejected. The heart is hardened against God and truth. It may be difficult to move our hearers to tears by the thunders of the law or the attractions of the gospel, but it is far more difficult to make the impressions permanent. "I have seen something wonderful, to-day," said one who had listened to a faithful and earnest preacher, "I have seen a whole congregation in tears." "Alas!" said the preacher "there is something more wonderful still, for the most of them will go their way to forget that they ever shed a tear." Amid such discouragements as these, we fear that we are laboring in vain, and spending our strength for nought; and we have to look at our credentials afresh, to learn whether we were ever called to the work of the ministry. Man's natural depravity, hardness of heart, and slowness to believe the gospel sadly discourage us.

### ENCOURAGEMENTS.

The nature of the work we are engaged in is encouraging. "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." No profession on earth is comparable to the Christian ministry. It is a work of mercy—a ministry of love. To enlighten the ignorant, strengthen the feeble, comfort the sorrowing, and rescue the perishing, is the noblest, grandest work in which man or angel can be engaged. Even He who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" was

anointed "to preach glad tidings to the poor." The man is highly honored who is permitted to preach the gospel. Who would not rather win a soul to Christ than gain an imperial crown? "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall shade a multitude of sins." Can any work be equal to this? If it is a mercy to be saved ourselves, it must be doubly a mercy to be the means of saving others. Well might Philip Henry write in his diary on the day of his ordination: "I did this day receive as much honor and work, as ever I shall know what to do with; Lord Jesus, proportion supplies accordingly." And surely we can subscribe to the testimony of Thomas Scott: "With all my discouragements and sinful despondency, in my better moments, I can think of no work to be compared to this. Had I a thousand lives I would willingly spend them in it: and had I as many sons, I should gladly devote them to it." God "hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." The Saviour says that, "he that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me." Who are we, that we should be thus honored? What are we, in ourselves, that we should be thus used?

"O honor higher, truer far,  
Than earthly fame could bring,  
Thus to be used, in work like this,  
So long, by such a King!

A blunted sword, a rusted spear,  
Which only He could wield:  
A broken sickle in His hand,  
To reap His harvest field.

"But our sufficiency is of God."  
"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

The presence of Christ is encouraging. Obedience is easy in fellowship with Christ. We do not work alone. When Moses went forth to lead the children of Israel to the Land of Promise, he sought the presence of his God and guide; and the Lord said: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." When Moses died, God said to Joshua: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." The Lord thy God is with thee whosoever thou goest. When the Captain of our salvation commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, He said: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." When the early Christians went everywhere preaching the word, the "hand of the Lord was with them." After Saul of Tarsus became a disciple of Christ and a preacher of the Gospel, he exclaimed: "I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily." The ablest preacher can accomplish nothing alone, but the weakest can accomplish much through the presence of his Lord. Christ is ever with us. We have His help, His grace, His sympathy. His cheering presence makes us bold and strong. There can be no cause for fear or faintness with Jesus at our side. It is stated that the Duke of Wellington once ordered an officer to undertake some duty which involved great personal peril. The officer did not shrink from the danger, but said to the duke, "Let me, before I go, have one grasp of your all-conquering hand and I can do it." Grasping the hand

of Jesus, we can bear the heaviest burden, tread the roughest pathway, and perform the hardest duties which His wisdom may appoint. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," is the language of others besides the Apostle Paul. How sweet are the Master's words: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed: for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." The presence of Christ, our all-victorious Lord, inspires our courage, overcomes our difficulties, and insures our ultimate success. There is nothing too hard for God. Our very weakness and weariness but bring us near to Him.

"I need as much the cross I bear,  
As air I breathe, as light I see;  
It brings me to Thy side in prayer,  
It binds me to my strength, in Thee."

"I thank thee, O God," said a preacher a year ago, dying at the age of 80 years, "I thank thee, O God, that Thou hast been with me to the very last. Yes, God is with His servants to the very last; blessed be His holy name. There is a well-spring of comfort in this precious truth. Like Luther, we may be encouraged, both in duties and dangers, both in service and in suffering, as we remember the Psalmist's words: 'The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.' The best remedy for despondency and doubt is fellowship with Christ. Let us then go forward, brethren, undaunted, undismayed, for God Himself is with us."

The contemplation of the results of our labors is encouraging. What joy we experience when we learn that souls are saved through our instrumentality! Are sinners awakened? Are penitents brought to the feet of Jesus? Are mourners comforted? Then let us thank God and take courage. And yet we are exceedingly weak. Yes, but "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." Our weapons are words—simply words. Can anything be weaker? But then they are words of truth, words of life, words of love. They are used and applied by the Holy Spirit to the human heart; and, lo! that heart is changed, and a soul is won to God. Oh, the power of a divinely inspired thought! Oh, the influence of a word "rightly spoken!" What says the poet of the work accomplished by a Christian thought, by a Christian word?

"Only a thought, but the work it wrought  
Could never by tongue or pen be taught;  
For it ran through a life, like a thread of gold;  
And the life bore fruit a hundred-fold.

Only a word, but 'twas spoken in love,  
With a whispered prayer to the Lord above,  
And the angels in heaven rejoiced once more  
For a new-born soul entered in by the Door."

Some one rudely said to a minister of Christ, "You have been preaching hereabouts for twenty years, and I have never heard of your converting but one man." "And who was that?" said the humble preacher. A man of fine Christian character was named to him. He modestly said, "I have not heard of that before. Blessed be God for so great a mercy. And now, by divine help, here is it for twenty years more, and if God shall save another soul, that will be two, and either of them will be worth more than all this world." Our work will be rewarded. "A faithful witness delivereth souls." We do not see all that is being accomplished now. The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. A local preacher, unknown by name, occupied a pulpit in a certain town one Sabbath morning. The day was stormy and the congregation small. A stranger entered that assembly—a youth just sixteen years of age. As he listened to the preacher's words light broke in upon his soul; he found "joy and peace in believing." That youthful hearer was Charles