

"Only."

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—Matt. 25:40.

Only a word for the sinner,
Lovingly, quietly said;
Only a word!
Yet the Master heard;
And some fainting hearts were fed.

Only a look of remonstrance,
Sorrowful, gentle, and deep;
Only a look!
Yet the strong man shook;
And he went a one to weep!

Only one cry from the sinner,
Bitterly, earnest and wild—
"Help, Lord! I die!"
Rose in agony;
And the Saviour saved His child.

Only some act of devotion,
Willingly, joyfully done;
"Surely 'twas naught"
(So the proud world thought);
Yet souls for Christ were won!

Only an hour with the children,
Pleasantly, cheerfully given;
Still seed was sown
In that hour alone,
Which would bring forth fruit for heaven.

"Only"—but Jesus is looking
Constantly, tenderly down
To earth, and sees
Those who strive to please;
And their love He loves to crown
C. M. in Chris. Observer.

Purify the Home Altars.

The period of the Judges, in the history of Israel, was a time of political and religious weakness and confusion. In religious life there was much idolatry, in natural life there was no union which is strength, but disunion, and in consequence of disintegration among themselves, and disobedience to God, the Israelites were subject to various warring tribes on the North and East. The incursions of the Midianites from the East were very destructive and alarming. In the sixth chapter of the book of Judges, the historian tells us that Israel sinned, and that, in consequence, they were in the mountains and caves for seven years, while Midian revelled in their fruitful vales and cornfields.

God called Gideon to the work of deliverance. Gideon was threshing wheat by the wine-press to hide it from the Midianites. In those few words there is encouraging evidence of his skill, economy and industry on the one hand, but on the other, sad evidence of his nation's weakness and his family's fear. Look into God's method for a moment in his calling and election. There is a difference, not always recognized, between God's call to repentance and God's call to responsibility.

God calls all to repentance, but he does not call all to the great tasks of leadership. God sends his blessings on the multitudes, and makes all men his debtors, and calls all men to faith and love, but he entrusts the great tasks of his kingdom to the few. Where great responsibility is involved, quality is sought for, and not quantity. This is exemplified in the career of Gideon. We all remember the fascination of the Sunday-school lesson which told of the reduction of Gideon's army of 10,000 men to a band of 300 men. Those who were "fearful and afraid" went home first, and then those who were "lazy and ease-loving." The courageous, the hardy, and the persistent remained. Such a band of three hundred deserved a leader of sterling qualities, and they found such a leader in Gideon.

God tested him before he trusted him, as leader against Midian. A severe test of bravery, piety and devotion was put upon him, and a test that was radical in its nature, relative to the evil in the land, namely, the test of applying the remedy right to the very seat and source of the evil. It is easy to put a smarting ointment on a sound skin, but not so easy to put it right on the sore place, where it is needed. Israel had come into trouble through idolatry and Baal worship in the groves. Gideon's father had a grove and an altar of Baal. Here was the evil fire in the bosom of his own family. This is what weakens and scatters the people of God in all ages, namely, an unpurified, an unholy, a divided and irreligious home life.

What did God say to Gideon? Go home and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it, and build an altar to Jehovah on the top of the rock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove. Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord said. He spent one night in this radical reform. On the next morning there was a great stir in the community, and Gideon's life was threatened, but Gideon's fidelity and purity led to his father's taking the side of Jehovah against Baal. The lifting of the home life to the high planes of consistency, purity, reverence and strength; this is the great work that is needed. The religious

life, the spiritual fervor, the moral standards of the church and the community will not rise higher than their sources in the home. Therefore, we say: Purify the home altars.

We fear that neglect of the Word of God, and neglect of the claims of Christ, and neglect of the family altar of praise and prayer is increasing in Methodist homes. The sin of the times creeps almost imperceptibly into home life as a blight or mildew creeps on fair fruit. What a lesson there is here for those who keep liquor in their homes, for those who use tobacco freely in smoking-rooms at home; and for those who defend wine-drinking, card-playing, and dancing as social or domestic necessities.

Some one says, there is no parallel between the practice of idolatry and Baal worship in the home of Joash and Gideon and these practices we have mentioned in our modern homes. Who says there is no parallel? Let us look into the matter. The fact is, that Joash, the father of Gideon, had yielded to the prevalent sin of the times, and had adopted a quiet and social form of idolatry. He had domesticated the public wrong, no doubt thinking it a social necessity. He was not wholly at ease in the matter, or thoroughly convinced in favor of Baal, for, when the altar and the grove were destroyed, he made no complaint or defence, but readily yielded to the higher standards and purer life initiated by his son. We believe that there are parents in the Methodist homes of all our cities who would gladly follow the example of Joash, if their children would take the noble stand of Gideon. The prevalent sin of our day is not idolatry.

Protestant people, at least, are far enough removed from idols and images. The form of evil that is spreading its blight over the brightest life of our times is worldliness. John, the apostle of love, speaks to this age when he says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

A national source of crime and poverty is the liquor traffic; a national source of waste is in the use of tobacco; an acknowledged source of extravagance, dishonesty and despair is found in gambling. The adoption of any of these in quiet and social ways in our homes is the domestication of prevalent and public evil. Listen to the Lord's words to Gideon: "Take thy father's young bullock and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down." The very accessories of idolatry were to come into the service of God. What would be the result if this principle were applied now? Think of what would happen if the tobacco money of our modern smoking-rooms went for the world's evangelization. Think of what would happen if the liquor money, which now makes slums, crime, poverty, and disease, went for public parks, free concerts, and popular lectures, elevating the taste and intelligence of the people. Some things that are considered social necessities now would be necessary no longer, for the taste, desire and enjoyment of the people would have changed. The putting away of the strange fire from the altars of our homes is the only sure foundation of great changes in the public life.—Chris. Guardian.

Helping the Pastor.

When people help their pastor, they help their church, and when they help their church they help themselves. The pastor does not ask for favors, for petting, for sympathy, or for anything in any way that any other man in the community does not, but he does ask, and he must have, the help of his people in his church work, or he cannot succeed.

The church with a faithful membership is the church that succeeds. The pastor may fill the pulpit, but it takes people to fill the pews. Strangers may come in, a few at a time, but if they find the church empty, they are repelled, and stay away. It matters not how well a preacher preaches. If his own does not come out faithfully to hear him, others will feel drawn. It has been often observed that it takes numbers to attract numbers, or that it takes a crowd to draw a crowd. No man can preach to empty benches. If a minister is uneasy as to having a congregation, he will never make a great preacher. If he is always sure of his hearers, he will make careful preparation, and if the same people are always out, he will be careful not to repeat himself, but to always have something fresh and new for them.

While the pastor does not ask favors, he does need to be treated with justice, to have his salary paid promptly. Ordinarily his salary barely pays his living expenses, and he must have all, and at the time it is due, or he is distressed. He must pay for food and clothing and other necessary expenses. If he is harassed by debt, he is shorn of his strength. He loses his self-respect, and his power over men. He gets a bad name in the community, or, what is even worse, the church gets a bad name, and outsiders hold back from affiliating with an organization that does not meet its financial obligations. The church that would prosper must pay its way, and pay as it goes.

If the pastor is to do his best work, he must be surrounded by people who pray for him. It is possible for crowds to attend on his preaching and for his salary to come to him with exact regularity, and yet for a very essential element in church prosperity to be lacking. The people must pray. There is no power in a church that is not a church of the Holy Ghost. Sinners will not be converted. There will not be much over which saints can shout aloud for joy. Every church has its element sometimes known as "the prayer-meeting people." They are the spiritual life of the congregation. They constitute the spiritual heart of church. They are in a constant state of revival. If a general revival comes to the church, it comes in answer to prayers that have been making all along God's blessing. These people help the pastor, for they work with him, right along, in the direction of his most earnest and consecrated efforts.

The pastor is the principal officer in the church, and in all his planning, organizing, and urging forward of the people, he has in view the success of the church and the honor of the Master. Let him be loyal and joyfully supported in his efforts, and the church will receive the benefit of the co-operation.—Herald and Presbyterian.

"Come Unto Me."

Christ speaks to the whole world. He knows no class or social distinction. To him there is neither rich nor poor, learned nor unlearned. He sees the "multitude" and has compassion on them. He looks upon men in their need. He sympathizes with the suffering. He speaks words of kindly invitation, "Come unto me." His hands are outstretched to all alike, "Whoever will, let him come."

He invites to close personal relations. He speaks from his heart, and asks every one to come within the sphere of his love. We seek, we must have, personal sympathy. Faith takes hold of a person. It believes truth, but it terminates on the person who speaks it. It finds no answer to its cry, no help for its need in a doctrine or truth; it rests not until it lays hold of God himself. "Abraham believed God." Christ answers the soul's need, and meets all the demands of faith by offering himself in the fulness of his love to every one who will come to him. Long before his day David voiced the longing of the heart for one in whom all soul-desires could be satisfied: "O God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee." Jesus answers this longing, "Come unto me," "Come and drink."

He invites us to the safety of his almighty power. The winds and the waves were obedient to him, evil spirits and death were subject to his word. He speaks to us now from the throne, with the scepter of all power in his hand. Angels are his servants, his trusted ministering spirits. Whoever comes to him comes within the protection of his almighty power; comes within the love of him for whom the whole universe gives forth its resources and uses its agencies; comes within the secret chamber of the Most High. This again is what we need and seek for. Whatever of sympathy and love men may give, there is a limit to their power. We look around us, but there is nothing great enough to give us the sense of absolute safety. We bring the forces of nature to our aid, but they may become destructive. We sound the depths of other hearts, and find them like our own. Life has no guarantee; it can command no assurance. But in Jesus there is all the fulness of God, and we hide ourselves under his love and power. If he be for us, who can be against us?

He invites us to the joy of his victory. He was the man of sorrows, but there were depths in his soul which the storms of life never disturbed, and he said, "My peace I give unto you." He said, "I have overcome the world." He has entered into the joy that was set before him, the joy of victory over death and him that has the power of death. As we come to him, he says, "My joy shall remain in you, and your joy shall be

full." Nothing less than the fulness of joy is promised. Two things are needful that our joy may be full—the possession of that which ministers to the highest well-being, and the certainty that it will never fail or be taken away. Christ gives to us out of the fulness of his divine nature, grace for grace, and he gives us the guarantee of his divine nature that his love will never fail, and his grace will never diminish. For, receiving those who come to him, he gives his own spirit to them; gives them power to become the sons of God, and makes them heirs with himself to all he receives from the Father.

"Come unto me." Hear his voice of love, O my soul, and hasten to be folded in his arms, and there find rest, sweet, blessed rest forever.—United Presbyterian.

Things That Mar Home Happiness.

The intercourse of many homes is marred and spoiled by exhibitions of a thoughtless spirit. Family life should be a blending of all the tastes, dispositions, talents, gifts and resources of all the members of the household. In each one there should be self-restraint. No member may live in a home circle as if he were dwelling alone in a great house with only himself to consider. He must repress much in himself for the sake of the other members. He must do many things which he might not do if he were alone, because he is a member of a little community whose happiness and good he is to seek at every point. No household life can ever be made truly ideal by all having their own way. But many persons who are tied up in family life forget this. They expect to live as regardless of others as if they were living alone. They consider not one's comfort, peace or pleasure but their own. They let their own impulses have full and free expression. They make no effort to repress any elements of dispositions in themselves which tend to give pain to others. They demand all their rights, not remembering that the other members of the family have rights, too, and that home happiness can be secured only by mutual surrender of rights, each in honor preferring the others, each seeking not to be ministered unto but to minister.—Christian Work.

Pastoral Calling.

We would be the last to underrate the importance of pastoral calling, especially since most ministers, we presume, are more in danger of neglecting that than their pulpit work. But there is a so-called "pastoral calling" which is more social than pastoral, and although sociality is in many ways contributory to spiritual influence, and as Dr. Amory H. Bradford recently pointed out to a number of his brother ministers, has the great advantage of "keeping the channels open between the pastor and the people," yet the thing may be overdone. The minister cannot be simply a door-trotter, pulling door-bells for a living. Some ministers cheapen themselves as pastors by their great frequency. They would do better if their dignified forms were like faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The condescending attendance at church once in a couple of months, perhaps, of some "offish" individual, who really needs to be ignored more than coddled, is dearly purchased at the expense of two or three nervous pastoral calls. There is no estimating the value of one soul, because it is so great, but it is equally true that there is no estimating the value of some people's conceit, because it is of absolutely no consequence to consider. Blessed is the man who does not need to be much called on to coax him to church.—Exchange.

Are You an Embezzler?

BY C. H. PARKHURST, D. D.
Suppose you are in church and are approached by the contribution plate. Now every dollar in your pocket belongs to God; not only the nickels, but the dollars. You are God's property, and therefore everything you hold is His property. Now I am not saying that you ought to give more than a nickel, or that you ought to give anything; I am only saying that when the question of giving, and how much, or whether you shall give anything, comes before you, the fundamental fact upon which as a Christian you will have to let the whole process of decision proceed is that every penny in your purse is the Lord's, and the question you have to settle is how much, if any, of the Lord's money that happens just now to be in your pocket you shall as a trustee appropriate to the particular cause presented. If you determine your action upon any other principle than that, it is because you have some things that you treat as though you owned more

than the Lord does; and if we send people to jail for a personal use of trust funds, I know of nothing between the lids of the Bible that warrants our supposing that God has any less feeling about embezzlement than we have.—C. E. World.

The Finger of God.

During a season of revival, a friend was praying one evening for a certain unconverted neighbor. After this manner he prayed: "O Lord, touch that man with thy finger, touch him. The petition was repeated with great earnestness, when something said to him: "Thou art the finger of God! Hast thou ever touched thy neighbor? Hast thou ever spoken to him on the question of salvation? Go thou, and touch that man, and thy prayer shall be answered." It was a voice from the throne. God's servant arose from his knees self-condemned. He had known the man as an impenitent for a quarter of a century, yet had uttered not a word of warning. Hundreds of opportunities had come and gone, but the supreme question of life had been set aside for such topics as "the weather," "the latest news," "politics," and "trade." His first duty as a Christian had been left undone.—The Evangelist.

CARLYLE ON THE CATECHISM.—"The older that I grow—and I now stand upon the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the sentence in the Catechism which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes: 'What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.'"

Do not draw a line of separation between the house of God and the house of business. The counting-house and the shop may be as much the house of God as the holiest shrine where generations have knelt in prayer.—Rev. F. B. Meyer.

When the hour of death comes—that comes to high and low alike—then it's na what we hae dune for ourselves, but what we hae dune for others that we think on maist pleasantly.—Sir Walter Scott.

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