

For Common Mercies.

Dear Lord, are we ever so thankful, As thankful we should be to Thee, For Thine angels sent down to defend us From dangers our eyes never see;

Are we grateful as grateful we should be For commonplace days of delight, When safe we fare forth to our labor And safe we fare homeward at night;

Dear Lord, that the terror at midnight, The weird of the wind and the flame, Hath passed by our dwelling, we praise Thee

Forgive us who live by thy bounty That often our lives are so bare Of the garlands of praise that should render

All votive and fragrant each pray'r. Dear Lord, in the sharpness of trouble We cry from the depths to the throne!

O, common are sunshine and flowers, And common are raindrop and dew, And the gay little footsteps of children,

We are fain to uplift our misgivings— Take Lord the long debt we have owed.

Discouraged Churches.

We have them all over the land. The members have tried this and that, they have toiled and striven, they have struggled and strained, and yet have failed to grow as they hoped.

But there are some things worse in the land than a discouraged church; it is a church that is lacking in vitality and yet not discouraged!

As long as a sick man feels pain, the physician has hope of his recovery of health, but whenever he ceases to feel pain, the worst of fears arise that he is past recovery.

But to return to the church whose members feel well nigh ready to give up the strife. Their case is not hopeless. We have seen such churches arise and shine with the glory of God risen above them.

In every case of discouragement, there is one great cause—the personal imperfections of the people. In not a single church is the love of God as deep and full as it ought to be;

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Spirit of God loves to work with the weapon which He has chosen, the preaching of sin and of God's remedy for sin. If this weapon be thrown aside, or seldom used, no wonder the church becomes discouraged.

Discouragement sometimes arises from erroneous interpretations of the promises of God and the subsequent false anticipations as to the fruit of our labors. In the days of Christ the Jews had interpreted the Messianic promises to mean the temporal triumph of the Jewish nation;

So at the present day, Christ promises rewards to His faithful people; but these rewards are not to be temporal, but eternal. "I will give thee a crown of life. I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God."

There may be a discouraging season sent upon a church, not for any fault of its own, but because God has a lesson to present before principalities and powers in heavenly places. Great afflictions were sent upon Job, not because he was a sinner above other men,

So sometimes with the church of God. Her Maker may allow the church to be put to the greatest straits, may take away all her prosperity and lay her in the dust in order to present before men and angels the constancy of His people, and their faithfulness to their Redeemer.

1. If the cause of the discouragement is spiritual coldness, try the power of prayer. Wait not for thy fellows to pray, pray thyself.

2. If the trouble arises from the toleration of worldliness, show thyself unworldly. Not in a boastful way which would make thy light shine, but in an unobtrusive way, let thy light shine, so that men may see the beauty of unworldliness and be disciplined thereby.

3. If the difficulty lie in the lack of Gospel preaching, seek for opportunities in which modestly thou mayest emphasize the truth.

4. If the encouragement comes from misapprehension of God's promises, study the word of God—carefully discriminating between our conception of the promises and their actual significance.

5. If it be simply that God is using thee to teach some precious lesson unto generations yet to come, be content to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. He suffered disappointments that we might learn; we also must be willing to bear that others may learn.—Christian Observer.

Preach Christ.

In the erection of a building, the foundation is of chief importance, for upon it depends the security of the superstructure. In the construction of an arch, the keystone holds the whole in safety. Most systems of philosophy or religion have their main principles, their cardinal truths. In preaching, Christ is all this to the excellence and value of the sermon. The discourse is deficient, if Christ be not the foundation, the keystone, the essential truth.

The Apostle Paul was a preacher who worthily ranked as a model in respect to the subject, mode and design of his preaching. He frequently affirmed, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord." He was conscious of but one ambition, which enlisted the best energies of his being, and that was to preach Christ unto a dying world. A more worthy ambition never gave impulse to a human soul. You may sit in judgment on the character of the Apostle's ministry, you may summon before you ten thousand witnesses to his fidelity and constancy, and you can arrive at but one conclusion, that Paul never once preached Paul and him glorified, but always and everywhere, it was "Christ and Him crucified."

In other churches there has been an omission to keep the Gospel truths prominent in the preaching. Either false teachings have been tolerated, or pleasant themes have been selected by the minister to the partial exclusion of the pure Gospel. Musical delights have been introduced, it may be, until the sermon is obscured in comparison with the side attractions. But the

The preacher's theme is not the glory or a system, but a person. This is the peculiarity of Christianity. You cannot take its message and put aside its Christ. His person is inextricably interwoven with His teachings, a very large part of which is exclusively concerned with, and all of which center in, Himself. He is not only true; He is the truth. Our Christianity takes its whole color from what we think of Christ, its founder. If we think of Him as less than the Scriptures depict Him, we shall scarcely feel that He should be the preacher's theme. But if He is to us what He was to the Apostle—the sole Revealer of God, the Fountain of Life, the Reconciler of man with God by the blood of His cross, than the one message which a man may be thankful to spend his life in proclaiming will be, "Behold the lamb!" Let who will preach abstractions, the true Christian minister must preach the Person and the Office—Jesus, the Christ.

To preach Christ is to present the facts of His life and death and resurrection and to transmute the biography into a Gospel. "Jesus Christ died." That is biography. To say that and stop there is not to preach Christ; but add, "for our sins,"—preach that fact and its meaning in relation to sinful and lost men, and you preach Christ. A ministry of which the Christ who lived and died for sinners is the center to which all converges, and from which all is viewed, may sweep a wide circumference and include many themes, but every theme should point to Christ and lead up to Him.

It is essential that Christ be preached in His entirety. The church should never be turned into a dissecting room, where Christ may be divided up and dispensed piecemeal, the people accepting so much of His person, and teachings and work as they may see fit. No authority is given to the preacher to preach Christ, or to the people to receive Christ in this fragmentary way. The commission is to preach, not a divided Christ but a whole Christ—Christ in His entirety; Christ in His divinity and in His humanity; Christ in the glory of His mediatorial office and work, and in His illustrious triumphs.

The promise of blessing is to such preaching; and the great need today is God's blessing upon the churches. Preaching Christ—all Christ, Christ to all, and always—is the prime essential; Christ the essence of all doctrine the substance of all blessing, the model of all virtue, the sum of all happiness.—Chris. Intelligencer.

Making the Most of Life.

They who live longest do not necessarily make the most of life. Long life is desirable provided the years are all filled with that which is good. But an empty life cannot be redeemed from vanity by length of days. A life filled with good fruit is better than a long life. Jesus, who made more of life than any other, did not live long. His life was cut short by violence while He was yet a young man. A life poured out in blood for the sake of righteousness is far better spent than one which has been carefully guarded and preserved even down to old age at the expense of righteousness and truth. In order to make the most of life it may be necessary to lay it down as a sacrifice.

One who finds most pleasure does not necessarily make the most of life. Some think there is nothing better in the world than to have what they call a good time. They count that day lost which does not bring them some special delight or worldly gratification. But all wise men agree that mere pleasure should be sacrificed to some higher good. They who live in pleasure are dead while they live. Jesus, whose life was a perfect model, never ran after pleasure. We do not know that He ever sought it for a moment. It was His meat and drink to do His Father's will and finish the work which was given Him to do. The joy of a good conscience and the approval of the heavenly Father are infinitely superior to all worldly pleasure.

The man who makes the most of life does not always make the most of money. Money is not to be despised nor thrown away. Money is a means of great good when properly used. But "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." A millionaire may live a narrow and unsatisfactory life. His millions will be a millstone about his neck unless they are used for some good purpose in the world. It is better far to be rich in good works, rich in faith, rich towards God, rich in character, than to be rich in gold and silver.

It is thought by some that learning is the thing that makes life rich and grand. But one may be learned without making much of life. Learning is a good thing. The study of science

affords wonderful satisfaction. Few things contribute more to the enrichment of life than a well-stored and well-disciplined mind. But knowledge and learning are not the principal things. Some men are wiser and stronger without learning than others are with it. Jesus was not a learned man according to the standards of this world; yet when He opened His mouth and spoke such streams of truth and wisdom proceeded from His enlightened mind that His learned enemies said, "Whence hath this man these things, never having learned?" Peter and John were unlearned fishermen, yet they made the world richer by their wisdom. John Bunyan was not a learned man according to the standard of this world, yet what scientist or philosopher ever did so much as he to enlighten the world? The wisdom that cometh from above is superior to the wisdom of this world. It is not the scientist, but the saint, that lives that life which is life indeed. It is not the philosopher, but the Christian, that is the light of the world. It is not the scholar, but the good man, that makes the most of life. Chris. Advocate.

Baptism a Pledge of Faith.

The passage from which Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian treasurer was a prophecy of our Lord's death. Starting from this point, what could there have been in the exposition of Philip that led the Ethiopian to ask that he might be baptized? The connection between the dominant thought of their conversation and the request is made perfectly clear by a reference to the thought of the early church as found expressed in a sentence of Paul. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4.)

Under the guidance of Philip the mind of this intelligent man had been opened to see that the death of Christ was the ransom for the sins of the world. He believed that that divine sacrifice availed for him. And beautifully and naturally the desire found expression on his lips that he himself might perform the symbolic act that testified to his fellowship and personal identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He saw that in this act he witnessed to his faith in what the Scriptures prophesied, and in what Philip had told him had been fulfilled in Jesus.

From this point of view we look at baptism in the light of the New Testament teaching. It is the divinely ordained mode of confessing Christ. In the early church it took the place of modern supra-Scriptural modes of confession. The late Dr. A. J. Gordon once said to the present writer that he believed that we were in danger of making "rising for prayers" or "speaking in meeting" infringe upon the place that the New Testament reserved for baptism. It is the divinely ordered method for expressing before men and God our faith in Jesus Christ. Nothing else can take the place of it. Christ has ordained that his followers shall pledge him their faith, not by the use of words, but in the universal language or a formal act—the baptism of their bodies in water.

If baptism is a declaration of belief, it is evident at once that infant baptism is a violent perversion of the intent of the act. No one can believe in Christ for another. Belief and love are intensely personal. They are exercises of the personal soul which cannot be performed by proxy. It is easy enough to see how the doctrine of baptismal regeneration gave rise to the practice of infant baptism. But there are few perversions of New Testament teaching that have done more to obscure the conditions of salvation, and to make religion formal instead of vital, than the misconceptions and false doctrines that have grown up about theories of proxy religion.—Watchman.

In the early days of Illinois some men were traveling through the country with saddlebags of specie, which was required for settlement of land claims. Stopping one night at the only available place, a log house, they felt it needful to keep up alternate watches during the night. But before going to bed the rough man, whose cabin they were in, took down his well-worn Bible and read and prayed; and one whispered to the other: "We can both go to bed; there will be no need of either of us watching tonight." The fact that the rough man, who was their host, was a praying man, inspired a confidence that nothing else could.—Dr. H. G. Weston.

A conscience void of offense before God and man is an inheritance for eternity.—Daniel Webster.

Hard, Racking Cough.

Barring accidents, the person who gets a cough with the least amount of cough will live the longest. Of course, the right time to attack a cough is at the commencement, when it is a simple thing for the right treatment to drive the cough quickly away. As a general thing, however, people spend so much time experimenting with various remedies that the cough is well under way before they know it. Then comes the long siege. You feel the hard racking all through your system, and get relief from nothing. You fill your stomach with nauseating mixtures to no purpose. Then you use compounds containing narcotic, which deceive temporarily, as: leave you slightly worse. Some coughs of this kind hang on for weeks or even months, and of course, they frequently develop into serious lung troubles. A true specific for all coughs is Adamson's Botanic Cough Balm, and it should be kept in the house against any emergency. With a cough that has become chronic the first effect of this remedy is a lessening of the dull sensation of pain which usually is felt with such a cough. Then you are conscious that the soreness is leaving you, and presently the desire to cough grows less frequent. All this process is brought about by the healing properties of the Balm. It is a compound of barks and gums. You can test it. 25 cents at any druggist's. Get the genuine, with "F. W. Kinsman & Co." blown in the bottle.

There is no human life so poor and small as not to hold may a divine possibility.—James Martineau. God is the spring of our best activity and fullest energy; God is the haven of deep and untroubled rest.—McLaren.

He that knows not when to be silent, knows not when to speak.—Friedrick I.

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