

The Christian Life.

"NO TIME TO PRAY."

"No time to pray!"
Oh, who so fraught with earthly care,
As not to give to humble prayer
Some part of day?

"No time to pray!"
Mid each day's dangers, what retreat
More needful than the mercy-seat?
Who need not pray?

"No time to pray!"
Must care or business' urgent call
So press us as to take it all,
Each passing day?

What thought more drear
Than that our Lord his face should
hide,
And say, through all life's swelling tide,
"No time to hear!"

NOT HEARERS ONLY.

Many people make a distinction in their own minds between doctrinal and practical sermons. The former they deprecate as being too controversial and out of their usual range of thought, while the latter they regard as essential to forming right conduct and to give help in daily living. Yet every fair-minded person knows that no minister can do his entire duty to his parishioners unless his practical sermons are strongly based on sound doctrine. To insist on the practical and exclude the doctrinal is to send the congregation forth from the sanctuary unprepared for the battles of the week. Not so did the grand old preachers of other days—in those other days when every child was carefully taught its catechism at home and men and women were from infancy rooted and grounded in the faith. Christians without creeds are as impossible as harvests without plowing and sowing. The minister who preaches the doctrines of the church as they are formulated in the catechism will not lack opportunities to intersperse many practical suggestions. The main point indeed is that sermons of any sort should be interesting and direct, and fasten themselves as nails in a sure place.

A much more important obligation rests upon the pew than is always recognized. The pithy text, "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only," needs to be emphasized in every heart and exemplified in every home. It is too easy to "sit under good preaching," as the old phrase had it, and so easy to forget all about the matter so soon as the congregation emerges from the church doors. People cannot always tell in the afternoon what was the text of the morning's sermon, and very often they utterly fail to translate in their lives, in household, shop and office, the wise teachings to which they gave attention in the pew. Monday and Tuesday and Saturday should for all of us reap and yield the sacredness of the Sabbath; and when trials and temptations come, and we find ourselves sorely beset, we should turn for strength and encouragement to the words heard in the pulpit, putting them into use as those who have been armed wield their weapons.

Perhaps more than we think the profit we receive in church on Sunday depends on the frame of mind in which we go and the manner in which we spend the time immediately before and after the service. It is quite possible to fritter

away much of the good the sermon should do us by heedless talk and random thoughts on the way home and to come unprepared by prayer and reading, so that we lose the very thing our Lord wants to give us. The minister standing in the pulpit has to meet and face a waiting assembly with various perplexities and preoccupations pressing upon them, and restless foes in the shape of wandering thoughts on the part of his people assail him. The men are perturbed about business, women about their home affairs, girls are thinking about fashions and boys of sport. Could every one come to the house of God with a heart hushed and reverent a rich blessing would soon follow the pastor's words.

Too many of us are hearers for other people and are ready to be doers also for them, though our chief duty is not to our neighbor but to our own soul. It matters little what application the woman across the aisle may make or the man in the elders' pew, but it does matter a great deal whether the Lord's servant giving the Lord's message is received by ourselves. Privileges entail responsibilities; and because the Lord has given us a blessing and allowed us to hear his word weekly, our duty is to put that word into force in our daily life. Probably the more intelligently we accept doctrine the greater will be the success of our practical living.—*Chris. Intelligencer.*

KNOWN BY ITS FRUITS.

Fidelity to the truth naturally goes on to the second characteristic of faithfulness, namely: consecration in the life. It will be in vain for us to talk about our fidelity to truth, our loyalty to Christ if we do not put into daily practice the truths we profess to believe. The Master said: "A tree is known by its fruits." If the tree be good, the fruit will be good. An ungodly life is the evidence of an unrenewed heart, a consecrated life is the evidence of a renewed heart. An old farmer expressed it in homely fashion as follows:

"Why, I've got an apple tree on my hill-top, a good-lookin' growin' tree, thet blossoms out, come spring-time, with the biggest, beautifulest blossoms ever ye see; the' ain't another such on the hull farm; but come to bearin' time it hain't got nothin' to show but the sneakiest kind of native apples. Now that tree ain't a good un. How do I know? Why, by the use on't. Apple trees thet's all blow is like folks thet's all talk and perfeshun; you've got to see what it comes to, 'fore you know if its wurth havin'." Let us ever bear in mind that the great eternal principles of truth we have received are not dead principles, but living ones, and so they ought to be manifested in the life and they will be if we permit them to fully possess and control us.

A Brahmin said to a Christian: "I have found you out. You are not as good as your Book? If you Christians were as good as your Book you would in five years conquer India for Christ." Why are we not as good as our Book? Is it because the ideal is too high? No; God would not set this ideal before us and call us to it if he did not intend us to attain it. No; the trouble is not that the ideal is too high, but that we do not make the effort necessary to reach the ideal; we are not fully consecrated; we

are not single-hearted in love and service; we are not as earnest and faithful as we might be. "This one thing I do," was the motto of the Apostle Paul. May it be ours! And as we press forward in the Christian life, may we daily become more Christlike in character, and at all times give to the Lord's service our best thought and energy. In serving the Lord no new talents are needed, but a special consecration of what talents we have; the giving of ourselves wholly to the Lord and his work.—*F. Hutchinson.*

THE MINISTRY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Nothing is worth more while in this world than encouragement. No mission is more divine than the encourager's. There is no other way we can do more good than by going about, speaking words of cheer. In Westmeal, near Antwerp, there is a convent of Trappist monks who represent a strangely perverted conception of Christianity. There are thirty-six monks who live there together, under the vow of perpetual silence. They dress in rough sackcloth, with ropes about their waists, their heads shaven and their beards undressed. They live on bread, sour milk and vegetables, sleep on hard boards and spend their days in frigid and solemn silence. If a visitor speaks to one of these monks, the monk draws his cowl closer about his head and moves away. Each day he walks in the garden and looks into a grave opened and ready for the one of the company who is first to die.

This, it is claimed, is a high ideal of Christian living. This order of monks suppose that they are illustrating in a lofty way the holiness and beauty of Christianity. But it is not such living that the New Testament teaches; Jesus Christ did not live such a life. He did not walk about in silence. He was the sunniest of men. He was ready to give cheer to all he met. He taught his followers to let their light shine on the world's darkness. He would have us hide within our hearts our cares and sufferings, and give out only blessing and gladness.

Yet there always have been those who pervert the teachings of Christ in this matter of cheerful living and make their religious life dreary and disheartening. Instead of being helpers of the faith and joy of others, they are hinderers. Instead of making others stronger for struggle, for burden-bearing and for duty, they make it harder for them to do their part.—*Dr. J. R. Miller.*

REVIVALS NEEDED.

The Holy Spirit is always in the church of God. He came to abide forever. He is in the church when its members are cold and lukewarm and worldly just as truly, though his presence is not so manifest, as on the day of Pentecost.

Although he is always in the church his work sometimes languishes. There is need of special manifestations of his power and grace. There is need of copious showers of rain occasionally, notwithstanding the atmosphere is charged with moisture all the year round. The spring season is necessary, notwithstanding the sun shines all the year round. No special seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord are necessary that grace and truth may burst forth like flowers in the spring-time.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PEACE.

He finds a peace that the world cannot give and that it cannot take away. His peace is not like the bird that sings in the tree by the side of the river, but lifts its wings and flies away when the storm comes. His peace is like the river fed by the streams which it pours out in majesty. So his soul is filled with peace like a river pouring itself out toward the God who gives it, only to find that God returns it in more abundant measure. That person has a secret of the Lord. That person finds a rest of soul amid all the labors and sorrows and weariness and troubles and disappointments and heartaches of life. That person does not depend upon the things outside of the soul in the temporal affairs of life.

Whether in possession of much or little of this world's goods, that person finds the rest that remains to the people of God. That person has the secret of the Lord. Our religion should bring us peace even though we have trouble, and it should bring us joy even though we have sorrow and joy while we have sorrow; it should bring us rest, even though we have labor, and rest while we have travail of soul; otherwise our religion is a form rather than a life; an imposition rather than an inspiration.—*Rev. L. R. Doytt.*

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And let us, in studying the Divine art of doing good, yield ourselves as obedient learners to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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Let our life be one of self-sacrifice, always studying the welfare of others, finding our highest joy in blessing others.

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