



MORNING THOUGHTS.

Some Fragments of Thought Compiled by
Rev. Geo. Bruce of St. David's Church.

(From Morning Thoughts For Busy Days.)

"When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."—Acts xxiv. 25.

So Felix said, as he rose from his seat, trembling and alarmed, and dismissed the Apostle. Not now. "Not this time" is the prescription which Satan thrusts into the hand of a convicted soul. This is the card of dismissal to the messenger of the cross, and a new life. Not now. And with this simple device he leads men past every awakening into the eternity of lost souls. It seems so simple. It is so easy and harmless and winsome, and in this lies its power and its affinity with eternity. It simply puts off indefinitely until indefinitely becomes infinity. A friend of mine, who held chief control of a system of railroads, once sent me a "pass" over the road. When I opened the envelope, and read the accompanying note, I looked at the little card which had so much meaning, and I found upon it, in the blank space left for the name of the destination, these words instead: "From station to station." That was all. "Conductors will please pass the bearer from station to station." Very simple it seemed, but it meant more than it had been filled up with ten thousand or a hundred thousand miles. Simply to the next station: that was all. An insignificant thing it seemed—a mere matter of five or ten miles or so. But it meant indefinite postponement of action, and secured my continuance on the road. "From station to station" is the inscription on the card which Satan uses in answer to the voice of conscience. "Merely to the next station." "You will make a change presently." "By-and-by you will get off this track of folly and sin." It is only to the next station. "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

"Measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves." 2 Cor. x. 12. A very common occupation and very profitable. It is the ministry of indolence and spiritual pride. It is so easy to look for a smaller man and congratulate myself and say, "Well done." It is, perhaps, not hard, to my mind, to discover a meaner man than I am, and therefore I clap myself upon the shoulder as I go about some of my untruthful ways and exclaim, "What a fine fellow! It would not be quite so bad if I would only look up some of the best men, or if I would keep my eye upon the strong features of the characters of those with whom I measure and compare myself, but I am sure to select the weak things, the blemishes and imperfections. I am blind to the excellencies of my neighbor when I am comparing myself with him, and quick to see his defects. And even at the best this process is a poor affair—a number of men taking hold on one another to raise themselves higher by each getting on the shoulders of the other while all are in the mire clay. It is, of course, open for one to get up higher, but he wants a mountain to climb on. A number of people cast from a sinking ship on the water cannot be helped by trying to struggle with one another. They need the life boat.

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."—Ps. lx. 4. When soldiers are going away on some dangerous campaign, or when they return from a victory in which their valour has been signally displayed, it is a beautiful and significant practice frequently to present them with a banner. Some one held in esteem and of elevated position, usually a lady, presents the commanding officer, in the presence of the men, with a set of colours. This is in token of their bravery, or of assurance and encouragement to them. It would signify how grace and beauty, and purity—all that is dearest in life—places its trust in those to whom this emblem is presented; and the banner is to be displayed in the presence of the enemy because of the sacred trust committed to the keeping of these honored and march-stained men. So God, so Jesus, so the Spirit has given to us a banner in the name of and in defence of the Truth. All that is holy and noble and pure and true is committed to our keeping. Shall we be true, or shall we fail? Shall we march, or shall we cower, or wound, or hunger, or death cause us to forsake or disgrace this sacred banner?

As It Is In Heaven.

Someone, who believed it to be an imperative duty, recently undertook to tell a widow that her only son, who was absent from home, had become wild and dissipated, that he was in fact going down hill very fast and would soon be at the bottom. The widow, who was also an invalid, sent for her son to come home and make her a visit. He braced up and came. The mother looked anxiously into her boy's face and saw there the furrows that neither time nor care had made. "Jack," she said, tenderly holding his hand in both of hers, "we used to be damned!" "Yes, mother." "Are you chums yet?" "I—I—guess so, mother—only when a fellow goes big." "Don't ever get too big to chum with your mother, Jack. We used to tell each

view of them had been cut off by the heads and shoulders of other persons. The preacher appeared to me in another light, and it seemed as though his sermon, coming as it did along a new angle, came with new power. Indeed, it was almost like visiting a new church. The fact is that we are all such creatures of habit that we are apt to be surprised if we depart even a little way from the road we are accustomed to travel."

Fading of Ideas From the Mind.

Ideas quickly fade, and often vanish quite out of the understanding, leaving no more footprints or remaining characters of themselves than shadows do flying over a field of corn. The memory of some men is very tenacious, even to a miracle; but yet there seems to be a constant decay of all our ideas, even of those which are struck deepest, and in minds the most retentive; so that they be not sometimes renewed by repeated exercise of the senses, or reflection on those kind of objects which at first occasioned them, the print wears out, and at last there remains nothing to be seen. Thus the ideas, as well as children of our youth, often die before us; and our minds represent to us those things to which we are approaching, where, though the brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away. Pictures drawn in our minds are laid in fading colours, and, unless sometimes refreshed, vanish and disappear. How much the constitution of our bodies and the make of our animal spirits are concerned in this, and whether the temper of the brain make this difference, that in some it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others like freestone, and in others like sand, I shall not here inquire; though it may seem probable that the constitution of the body does sometimes influence the memory, since we oftentimes find a disease quite strip the mind of all its ideas, and the flames of a fever in a few days calcine all those images to dust and confusion which seemed to be as lasting as if graven in marble.—Locke.

Striking Freak of Nature.

It is one of the most striking things in nature that objects are fitted for a new purpose by becoming unfitted for their primary purpose. Thus the botanist as a degenerated statesman; that is, a statesman that no longer serves its original object in helping to propagate the plant; and yet, strange to say, in its altered form this nectary or degenerated statesman secretes a sweet fluid which attracts bees and other insects, by whose entrance into the flower the pollen-dust is scattered and carried from one blossom to another. In this way the nectary helps to fertilize the plant more effectually, and fulfils in a more admirable manner its part in the economy of the flower, than if it had retained its original form and function. It serves even higher purposes than those which belong to the plant itself; it looks to the wants of other orders of life beyond and above its own. It feeds the insect world; the bee fills its comb, and thus stores up nourishment for itself during the idle winter from the sweet golden tears which it secretes. Nay, more, the nectary ministers to the wants and luxuries of man himself—the lord of creation—and supplies one of those pleasant gratifications of the senses which God did not disdain to promise when He spoke of the Land of Promise as a land flowing with milk and honey.

A Satanic Deception.

It is recorded in ecclesiastical legends that the devil on one occasion appeared to a famous saint in a vision, in order to tempt him to be unfaithful to his Lord. The arch-deceiver personated the glorified Redeemer, and thought he could do this most effectually by presenting himself dressed in splendid robes, with a golden crown upon his head, and his face and form radiant with dazzling loveliness. He expected in this way to fill the saint's mind with awe, and make him do easily what he wished. But the spiritual instinct of the saint knew that not thus would Jesus appear to him. He looked for the marks of the Cross upon His person, and for the signs of suffering in His face; and finding these altogether absent, he knew that it was not Jesus that stood before him, but a mere satanic counterfeit. The device of the devil was one that might seem to be in full accordance with human expectations. We should have imagined that in some such resplendent manner the risen Redeemer would have manifested His glory to Mary Magdalene.

Curious Calculations on Gould's Wealth.

Dr. Hitchens, of Eccleston square, Belgrave road, London, preaching recently, said: "To get some idea of the vastness of the possessions of the late Mr. Gould, let us take," said the preacher, "some interesting calculations. Suppose his millions to be changed into £5 notes, and these notes joined together in one strip, it would reach from London to Moscow. Suppose you change those notes into sovereigns and place one sovereign upon the other, they would make a column seventy-three miles high. Suppose the sovereigns were to be transferred from one place to another, you would require an army of 11,400 porters, each to carry 240 pounds, or fifty-seven railway trucks. Suppose, again, those sovereigns were changed into shillings, it would take you nearly 240 years, working night and day, to give away one shilling to each person, at the rate of ten persons each minute. You would have one shilling for every person in the wide world."—Western Mail, Cardiff.

Church Hospitality.

The anecdote is told of Gen. Grant that soon after his first nomination for the presidency he was in the city of—, where he had not been expected and was known to but few, and there, on a rainy Sunday, entered a church and took a seat in a vacant pew not far from the pulpit. The man who rented or owned the pew coming in and seeing someone in the seat, sent the sexton to ask him to leave it, which the general quietly did, simply saying: "I supposed it was probably the pew of a gentleman, or I should not have entered it."

True Greatness.

A little girl was on one occasion brought to see the Queen as she passed by on a visit to a nobleman's castle, and she was greatly disappointed. She could not believe that the simple lady, dressed in widow's mourning, sitting in the carriage, was actually the Sovereign of the great British

Empire. She expected to see a majestic figure, clothed with magnificent robes, with a jewelled crown on her head, and a golden sceptre in her hand. This disappointment of the little girl was a very natural one; but she did not know what she would afterwards find out, that true greatness does not depend upon outward show and circumstance. Emerson wisely says that the gods always come in low disguises.

Where Borrowing is a Favor.

The city of Pskov has a high-minded mayor. The city owed to one of its aldermen, V. N. Khemielsky, 6,000 rubles. The mayor of the city recently informed the creditor that he could have 3,000 rubles refunded him for the present. To this Khemielsky answered by letter that he "assented to the self-humiliating request of the city," and would accept the 3,000 rubles, leaving the balance for some time yet at the disposal of the municipal council. The mayor, on receiving this note, made a complaint against the alderman for using disrespectful language toward the municipality of Pskov. The city council adopted a resolution that Khemielsky be ordered to withdraw his abusive note and to apologize publicly to the mayor. If he will not do this his 6,000 rubles should be paid him at once and a resolution of censure be entered against him in the city records. Such a resolution in Russia is tantamount to the deprivation of right to hold an office in the municipality.—N. Y. Sun.

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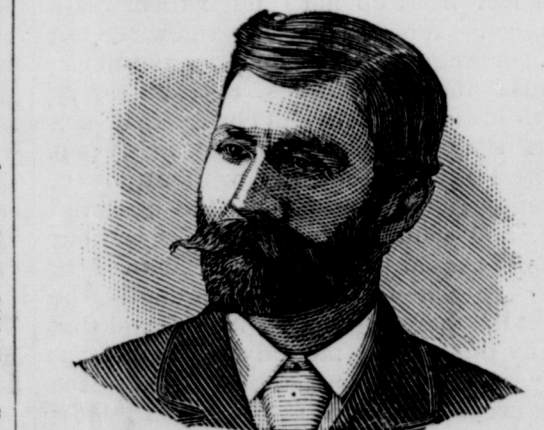
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