

Sunday Reading.

REPENTANCE.

False Ideas of This are the Basis of All that is Deplorable in the Church.

False and mischievous ideas of repentance are at the basis of all that is deplorable in the church. The inconsistencies of its professing members have their origin in a misunderstanding of that word. The idea is prevalent that the man who weeps and trembles in terror under a powerful sermon is "under repentance." He may be repenting, but it is a great deal more likely that he is afraid he is going to be righteously punished for his sins and is terrified at the thought of the extent of that punishment. A child may have the same feeling when he has been caught in a lie, or in some other misconduct, and is obliged to bear the castigation which is to be administered. The thief has the same feeling when he stands up to receive his sentence, and the murderer has it when he is going to the scaffold.

It is simply dread of the consequences of wrong-doing, and is not repentance. The difference appears distinctly if we can imagine that there's no punishment for sin. If men could sin with impunity, how would they feel and act? Would the occupants of the mourners' seat continue to cry to God for salvation, if they were assured authoritatively that there were no hell? Any man among them, who on such assurance, ceased to seek salvation, is not truly repenting. All too long have we held for ourselves and encouraged in others the conception of conversion as a transaction begun and finished by an outward formality—an idea that it consists in escaping hell and acquiring a claim on heaven, by a process not differing in principle from the process by which we might acquire estate. The converts who backslide, or who keep their membership while feeling no heart in their religion are, as a rule, those who have been taught that they have simply to accept Christ as their Saviour, simply to believe that God has punished him instead of them and to rest content with their escape.

As St. Ambrose said, "True repentance is to cease from sin." Salvation is not mainly to escape hell, though that is included, but to be saved from the guilt and power of sin. It is to change our standpoint. To see sin as a hateful loathsome thing in itself and not simply because disagreeable consequences are attached to indulgence in it. Repentance stands at the entrance of a Christian life because nothing can be done for the renovation of a man until he does repent. The Holy Spirit's office is to enlighten a man, to show him that sin is abominable and hateful and injurious. Like a man in a dark cellar full of filth and miasma who sees his surroundings when light is brought in; like a traveller who discovers that he is on the wrong road, the truly repentant sinner does not linger, but resolutely and promptly changes his relations. He quits and does not desire to return. Sin is no longer to him what it used to be; he has lost his delight in it. He does not need any one to threaten him with punishment, or to reiterate the command, "Thou shalt not." He is deeply sorry that he has committed it, would undo the past if he could; but is resolved that he will quit it now and forever more. Is that impossible to man? Then we know of him of whom it was said that he was exalted to give repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

MEN BROUGHT TO JESUS.

A Talk on the Christian Endeavor Topic for the Week Beginning August 19.

Concentration of effort on one supreme object is the lesson taught by the Apostle in the passage selected for the Topic. In order that he may win men for Christ he is willing to subordinate everything else. He became as a servant, he took the attitude of a Jew or of a Gentile, or of a weak man, that he might win souls. It mattered nothing to him if the man's prejudices and principles were absurd, he would adapt himself to the man's standpoint in his own practice even at the cost of self-denial if by so doing he might hope to win him for Christ. This was no surrender of individuality. No man had a clearer view of the truth than had Paul, but he also had a clear view of what was essential and what was not essential. He refused to be entangled in disputes about minor things. The question of whether a man might eat meat publicly sold, was in his time agitating the Church. Some said it was possible that this meat might be part of a carcass that had been offered in sacrifice to an idol and they were horrified at the thought that they should eat it. Paul scorned all such silly notions. The kingdom of heaven, he said, was not meat or drink. Still, if the consciences of others were disturbed by it, he would abstain altogether and eat no meat while the world stood. He would not allow such a question to diminish his influence. So with baptism, which separates the church. He congratulated himself on having kept out of that controversy. He thanked God that he had baptized none of them; God had sent not to baptize but to preach the Gospel. He wanted to live with men as a brother that he might bring them to Jesus. He would accommodate himself to their ways, respect their weakness, sympathize with their trials, make himself one with them that he might gain their confidence and save their souls. His example gives us the key to success. The Salvation Army has won its way by this means. It went to the slums, it rescued the fallen and sent them to win others. It occupied no pulpits, but sat with the sufferer in his chamber, knelt by the drunkard in the gutter, showed human sympathy and brotherliness, and so accomplished its purpose. And the purpose—what was that? We have too much forgotten it in our day. We have sat at the feet of eloquent and learned preachers to learn of them, but Paul's desire was that men should learn of Christ. His mission was to bring them to

Jesus. That achieved all would be well. Contact with that divine Being would be sufficient for all things. It is the glory of Christianity, the distinguishing feature of the Christian religion—this personal element. Jesus is to all that any man needs. From him directly come all our blessings. Ministers are servants to bring men to him. They cannot save but they can bring the sinner to One who can save and teach and purify and strengthen. The minister may do much but he has done the chief thing for any man when he has led him to Jesus.

THE SOCIABLE MAN.

Some of His Characteristics and Why We Love Him.

The sociable man is the most favored of mortals, if he who is always cheerful and happy can be said to be favored, and who shall hold to the contrary?

It does not necessarily follow that the sociable man is always a source of cheerfulness or happiness to those with whom he comes in contact. On the contrary, a very little of him is sometimes quite enough, while very much of him is cloying, not to say wearing.

But the sociable man is ever upon the best of terms with himself, and it is impossible for him not to obtrude his buoyancy where it is not absolutely yearned for. The sociable man, were he a book that could be shut up at one's pleasure, would be a comfortable man to know, but one is not in the mood to read the most interesting or the most diverting of books, and so with the sociable man—his sociability is at times unattended to our feelings, and then it is a distraction rather than a diversion, an annoyance instead of a benediction.

It is true he always has to say what he considers the proper thing for the occasion. If it is a sweltering summer day, he remarks how hot it is, which cannot be otherwise than comforting to one who is nearly melted. If you are pale, or abnormally flushed, he very appropriately informs you that he never saw you looking so bad, and then perhaps endeavors to reassure you by narrating how Mr. So-and-so was taken the same way you seem to be taken only a week ago, and that he was buried yesterday.

All this is told in his own sociable way, and if it does not immediately interest you it is a pleasure, or should be, to see how it interests him.

The sociable man has a way of worming out of you the story of your daily life, with all its care and care, and in doing this he seems to be performing a disinterested service, inasmuch as it is a relief to have an ear at hand into which to pour the tale of our troubles and disappointments, and the sociable man in thus casting his bread upon the waters, has it all returned to him, not after many days, but immediately, and so he has the wherewithal to be more sociable than ever to others in rehearsing what you have told him.

The sociable man is seldom profound. His tongue is not idle sufficiently to give him the opportunity for reflection. So he is not given to thinking. Talking is his forte, and one who is always talking can hardly be expected to do anything else.

The sociable man is, in short, just the kind of a man that one likes to meet once in a great while, the longer between whiles the better, not that you do not appreciate his worth, but because you do not feel that it is right to monopolize his talents when perhaps others may be suffering to enjoy them.

THE LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

David's Name at the Root of the English Royal Family Tree.

Even queens have their ungratified desires. Her Majesty the Queen has so far been denied a pleasure which many women have had. It has been a dream of hers to look down upon Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. Books on the Holy Land have always been a delight to her. Apropos of this fondness of hers a curious little story is told.

It is said that her Majesty has a certain faith in the theory that the Ten Lost Tribes can be proved to be the British people of today. Consequently she must have some sort of faith in one branch of the remarkable problem—that which professes to prove her direct lineage from David through the eldest daughter of Zedekiah, who, with her sister, fled to Ireland in charge of Jeremiah, the prophet, then an old man, to be married to Heremon, the King of Ulster of the period.

A Mr. Glover, a clergyman in the Anglican Church, made the interesting discovery of the Queen's belief when in 1869 he addressed her on the subject of the connection between the British people and the Lost Tribes. Her Majesty sent for him to Windsor, and, to his astonishment informed him that what he thought he had been the first to discover had been known to herself and the Prince Consort for many years. The Queen then caused the Royal Family tree, which is a very sacred object to Her Majesty and her sons and daughters, to be shown him; and there Mr. Glover found various missing links that he had been vainly seeking. David's name he discovered engrossed at the root of the tree, and the name of Victoria in a remote top-most branch, yet for all that in an unbroken straight line, all other lines having apparently ended centuries ago.

The Effect of a Good Deed.

No one can estimate the effect of a single worthy deed, still less fix any limit to its influence. One effort to encourage the despairing, to lift the fallen, to help the helpless, to educate the ignorant to promote happiness or welfare in any manner, is productive of results far beyond anything that was hoped for or intended. The influence for good on those who are thus aided, and the degree to which it reacts upon others and extends to future generations are utterly incalculable.

The Field Flowers' Text.

Silence everywhere, and shadows, save where the red glow of the sanctuary lamp and the pale gleam of flickering tapers faintly illumined the shrine. Stately palms standing ghostly in the shadowy background, roses and lilies of regal beauty, trailing sprays of lustrous blossoms twining the pillars of the tabernacle, and just

at the door a cluster of field flowers, buttercups, cloverblooms, and daisies, in lowly reverence paying homage to their Maker. Common field flowers, nearest of all to the living presence! "The lowly shall be exalted," murmured a worshipper, as the message of infinite love entered the heart; "it is not here, dear Lord, then at the eternal door of thy tabernacle, shall the lowly be exalted."

A Policeman's Heart.

It was cruelly cold for a mother and her children to be thrown upon the world. The policeman on his rounds saw the dark forms under the leafless trees in the public square. It was long past midnight. The electric light flickered and snapped and dimmed, as if to hide the sight. A flood of brilliancy poured out of the big windows of a club not many yards away, and fell almost at the feet of three sleeping forms. The children were very young. The little girl nestled close to the side of the mother, with her hands buried deep in the folds of her mother's worn cloak. The boy's arm was thrown across his mother's neck, and the lower part of his body was buried in the folds of his skirt. His little round hat had fallen off, and rolled bottom up a little way off. The policeman paused. He thought he had discovered more tramps to rouse up and pass on to the next town. Then he saw his mistake. He scratched his head for a precedent. He scratched his head, and sent them the way of other prisoners convicted of vagrancy? Then he looked down into the sleeping faces once more. His hand played nervously with his trousers pocket. Then it dived in decisively and came out with several shining coins. He dropped them into the hat of the child; and as he walked away he wondered why the electric lights flickered and dimmed and danced so much more violently than they did a few minutes before.

It Isn't in the Bible.

The oft quoted proverb, "God tempts the wind to the shorn lamb," frequently and wrongly ascribed to the Bible, occurs in Laurence Sterne's "Sentimental Journey." The Inter-Ocean explains, however, that it is but a rendering of a proverb much older than Sterne's time. The "Sentimental Journey" was written about 1767. But Bishop Hebert, nearly 100 years before in his "Jacla Prudentum," uses the expression "To a close shorn sheep God gives wind by measure." Estienne, a French writer, in 1594 said, "Dieu mesure le froid a la brebis tondue" (God measures the cold to the shorn ewe). Estienne gives another form of the proverb as "Dieu-donne le froid selon la robe"; that is, "God will not let the cold exceed the warmth of the fleece," or, as it is less poetically rendered by another French writer, with a different and more practical meaning, not so frequently falsified by the actual facts of life, "God cuts a man's coat according to his measure." That this proverb is French in origin there seems no doubt, as various versions of it are found in different writers.

The Little King Ruled Well.

Another pretty little story is told of the young King Alfonso of Spain, according to the New York Tribune. The Queen Regent, as it is natural to expect has taken great pains to teach her son her own native tongue, German. To accomplish this thoroughly and rapidly, she herself compiled a grammar and primer for his use. Short poems take up a good part of the book. One of these especially interested his little majesty, to the great delight of the Queen. It was entitled "What One Should Do," and ends with the line, "Kings must rule well." Alfonso learned the poem by heart, and easily, for he has a remarkable memory. One evening, when his mother had given him his good night kiss, he asked, as usual, "Art thou content with me today?" When her majesty expressed her approval of his conduct the little fellow's face brightened up for a moment as he proudly said:

"Yes, I have in truth ruled well today."

Making Gods in the Jungle.

The jungle races in the district of Chandah, in India, appear to believe in one God or Bhagwan, and every one chooses some visible object called Deo as the outward medium of communication between himself and Deity. "I asked a man why he was painting a stone red," wrote an official in this district. "He told me he intended to put some flowers on it for the Bhagwan and make a 'Deo' of it. 'But why that stone? does it matter which stone you color?' 'No, Maharaj,' he answered, 'it might be this tree, or this rock, or this rock, or this earth; the Bhagwan made everything, and can come anywhere, and be pleased.' 'Have you ever seen the Bhagwan come to your 'Deo'?' 'No; no one can see the Bhagwan.' On another occasion I asked a man whether he would

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eat alligator's flesh; his answer was, 'No, Sahib; I have made it my Deo, but many in my village eat it.' 'But do you not get angry when they kill and eat your Deo?' 'No, Sahib, I make another,' he replied.

Messages of Help for the Week.

"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord * * * come ye, and let us go up * * * to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways" Isaiah 1 and 2:18, 3.

"Jesus in his own country could there do no mighty work because of their unbelief." Mark 6: 4, 5, 6.

"Get thee behind me, Satan." Mark 8:33. "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." 2 Cor. 2:7, 20.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3:17.

"He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Cor. 12: 9.

"Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Cor. 13:11.

It Would Do Him Good.

Dr. Wayland Hoyt, of the First Baptist church at St. Paul, bids fair to be among the leaders of the local clergy in more ways than one. Aside from his faculty of holding the attentions of a congregation by a clear and logical analysis of the points under consideration, he is a story-teller of no mean ability, and his illustrations are often amusing and always to the point. At the last ministers' meeting he was raving over the croakers who, as he said, are pleased at every calamity as a premonition of impending ruin, and he told of an individual named Stewart who would keep the good people of his town in an extremely nervous condition by prophesying the end of the world. One day an unbeliever asked Mrs. Stewart, the prophet's wife, if she really believed the world was coming to an end on the date he had named. "Well, I don't know," she replied, "but I do hope it will, for it will do Mr. Stewart so much good."

We walk here, as it were, in the crypts of life: at times from the organ and the chanting choir; we see the light stream through the open door, when some friend goes out before us, and shall we fear to mount the narrow staircase of the grave that leads us out of this uncertain twilight into eternal life?—Longfellow.

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