

Sunday Reading.

FAITH AND PRACTICE.

What a Man Should Have in the Way of Confidence in God.

"Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

The apostle's definition of faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We hope for a good time to come, for blessings upon our efforts, and for the enjoyment of a blissful eternity, and the belief that such will be our portion, constitutes faith. That belief gives us the conscious evidence that the substance will be a reality at the proper time. What a man believes, he will attain to, that he hopes for and will labor for. If he really desires to accomplish his hopes, he will show his faith by his works. Truly faith without works is dead.

A man desires to have an orchard. He quietly sits down and waits for chance winds to plant the seeds, he will find, no matter how strong his faith may be in the winds, nor how firm his belief that "all things are possible with God," and He can make an orchard to grow in the desert of Sahara, yet without effort on the man's part, without the planting of the seed, there will be no orchard. God does not work that way, neither do orchards grow that way.

There is a great deal of faith in the remark of Napoleon, that "God is on the side of the heaviest artillery." There is no sacrifice in the saying. It is simply God's own law, and proving faith by works.

The preachers of the present, and indeed, all time, have proclaimed that faith in certain revealed truths is a certain passport into heaven. That is true provided it is the right sort of faith. He whose belief in the doctrines of the Bible, and of Christianity, are simply for the sake of getting into heaven, is, as a recent writer has said, "a mercenary creature and does not deserve to go there." On the other hand, if he has this faith simply to escape punishment in the future world he is equally mercenary and undeserving of the blessings of heaven.

His faith must be made of different stuff. He must have an unbounded confidence in God that he will do all these things well. He must recognize the fact that every man will, here and hereafter find his proper place.

Look at the world to day. The race of mankind runs in classes, as fishes run in schools. They are divided by climatic and social influences; by wealth and education; by civilization and refinement, and by ignorance, superstition and barbarism. Each class naturally finds its affinity. The refined and cultivated seek the purer atmosphere of culture as surely as the balloon ascends to the clouds. The good and virtuous are bound together by those divine principles that make vice revolting. The ignorant and wicked sink to their own level, and fall to the depths of degradation as surely as the apple falls to the ground. It is but the law of moral gravitation. The good seeks to be better and the bad to be worse.

We cannot alter this law of the Creator. It is as immutable as His divine character. A man may escape from his ignorance and rise to be cultivated and refined, but that does not change the law. His faith being strong, he proves it by his works, and fits himself to fill the better place. That man was a pearl out of place in the rough. Had he been simply a quartz, no amount of effort could have changed his condition.

As to the hereafter. At death, there is but one thing that is changed, and that is the body. The man who wore the clay garment is precisely the same after death as immediately before. The body is changed, but the man is not. If he is vicious he will be vicious still. If he is refined he will be equally so hereafter. Just how he will progress to a higher or a lower plane is the mystery of eternity, and is known alone to the Creator.

Faith should develop in the heart the noblest qualities, and should make a man better simply because to be good is what makes his own existence happy. He should be good not for the sake of reward, that is selfish and mercenary. He should refuse to do wrong, not simply to escape punishment; but because it is wrong to do wrong. That faith that can look into the face of God and say: "I believe, what shall I do?" without asking what reward shall I receive, is the only faith that will avail.

Works are the evidences of faith, and works make faith a reality. We go on from day to day blindfolded, in the dark, without safety. Every step we take, without faith, our works would fail, and without works we would have no faith. What a team is faith and works! As a man pulls together, and never fails. As a man works he strengthens his faith, and as his faith is unflinching and strong, his works will be a blessing.

Let us prove our faith by our works in all things, overcoming ignorance and superstition, and rising by our own efforts, aided by the almighty power of the God of faith, to a higher and purer life.

Our Boys and Tobacco.

The boy, says the current number of the "Journal of Hygiene," who starts out in life as a user of tobacco, embarks on an unknown ocean, from which he can never return with the same vigor and strength of body and mind, the same sweet breath and clear eye. He may keep in sight of land for a life-time, and live to be old, but it will be only through a combination of the most favorable circumstances over which he has no control, or cannot foresee. The smoker is likely any time to be wafted out into the deep waters of serious nervous disease, or injure his eyes or sense of taste, or form a love for exciting food, or even drink, or he may go down on the rocks of some acute disease because he has wasted his nervous force, and has not enough vitality to resist it. No other known drug except opium produces such pronounced impression on the nervous system, so concealed as to be unknown until it is too late to repair the injuries. The tobacco-user is not so bad as the inebriate to alcohol, but he comes next to him, and in many ways he is entitled to more sympathy. The day will come when there

will be as vigorous a crusade against tobacco as against alcohol—a crusade, not for its moderate use, but for its total disuse. It is for women to begin this crusade; few of them use the poison, but they see their husbands and their children suffer from it indirectly. Let us then use our influence in every way against it, and do all we can to prevent its use.

RELIGION IN KOREA.

Some Current Misstatements Corrected by a Missionary.

It has been said by some careless observers that Korea is without a religious system. Statements to this effect have appeared so often in American papers, that there ought to be some reason for the misunderstanding. Perhaps it is because Korea has no religion apart from her national life, her whole existence from king to coolie being one complicated system of ancestral worship, that one may easily fail to notice, seeing it enters so subtly into every detail of life.

While writing this to-night (Feb. 16)—Korean new year's eve—there is to be found in every loyal household a spread of ancestral food. Even the poorest puts forth his greatest effort to make a luxurious display in the presence of the spirits of his fathers. Fruits, rice, meats, distilled drinks, incense, candles, are some of the items on the list for ancestral worship. The natives put off their greasy garments, and, dressed immaculately, sit out the night. When the first cock crows the candles are lighted before the tablet (two walnut slabs fastened together, with an opening between where the spirit is said to reside). The worshippers bow, offer drink, and call on the shades to accept their sacrifice. Then when each in turn has made his salutation, they retire from the room and lock the door, in order that the spirits may in peace (as they say) the offering unembarrassed by the presence of the living. Again they circle about and bow repeatedly until the end, when they set to and feast upon what the spirit leaves—a dinner that is supposed to bring them earthly prosperity, but which, to all appearances, leaves them disordered in stomach and poor in pocket for many days to come.

New Year is the sacrificial season, but it is by no means includes all. For three years after the death of parents, night and morning the children offer food, meat and tobacco before the tablet in the room where the dead once lived, making, besides, numerous offerings at the grave. From the palace to the lowest mud hut the three years of mourning and daily sacrifice are observed with the utmost strictness. During such time the royal household is occupied entirely with the spirits of the dead, believing that the prosperity of their dynasty hangs on such worship. In the case of the poor people they bring their food, and staff in hand, with loud lamentations (usually purely mechanical), spread it out before their father's ghost. For three long years this endless ceremony goes on, after which a period they limit the direct sacrifices to about six important days in the year—the four national lute days and anniversaries of birth and death. A native absent from his ancestral home will walk from the farthest end of the peninsula, if necessary, to be at the grave on the appointed day. Such devoutness in religious service I have never seen.

As far as its being universal is concerned, I have never heard of any failing to sacrifice except the handful of Buddhists, and a few professing Christians. To neglect this is to make one's self an outlaw and an alien to the land of his fathers, "beasts and dogs that ought not to live!" Last month a Kim went, according to custom to pay his respects to an elder relative. The first question was, "Have you failed of late to sacrifice?" "Yes," says the Kim, "I cannot sacrifice again." "Then away with you; you are no relative of mine—a villain that would mix with dogs and forget his fathers!" It is quite as much as a man's life is worth to neglect this sacred custom. —Missionary Review.

DESCRIBING THE SAVIOUR.

How He Appeared as Seen by the Roman Officials in Judea.

The recurrence of the Lenten season has suggested the translation of the following description of our divine Saviour's personal appearance. It has come down through "the corridors of time," having been sent to the Roman senate by Publius Lentulus, governor of Judea, when the renown of Christ's ministry was becoming widespread, and his miracles exciting universal commotion. The document reads as follows:

"There is now in Judea a person of the most exalted virtue who is called Jesus Christ. The Jews believe him to be a prophet, but his adherents, to whom he is an object of unbounded veneration and love, adore him as one who has sprung from the immortal gods. His lightest touch or simplest word can scatter the pestilential breath of the most loathsome malady, and at his call the silent dead walk forth in health and life upon the earth.

"In appearance he is of a type but seldom seen, tall, perfectly formed and of a dignity at once attractive and impressive, his superiority evincing itself as he moves along.

His hair is of a most beautiful color, flowing gracefully upon his shoulders and parted above his noble brow, after the fashion of the Nazarene. His forehead is high, his cheeks show the faintest tinge of color, his nose and mouth are perfect. His beard is full and in color corresponds to those waving locks which often imprison the sunlight as he walks. His eyes are brilliant, but although lovely in form and color they seem ever to hold the shadow of coming sorrow in their unflattering depths.

"He rebukes with a majesty which few can withstand, and when he exhorts it is with a sweetness which none can bear unmoved. His every word and act are marked by a refinement exceeding great, and characterized by a gravity which becomes him well. Never has he been seen to laugh, seldom to smile, but often to weep, withal he is gentle, unassuming and wisdom itself. Truly by his remarkable beauty and divine perfections does this man—Jesus Christ—rank far above all other children of men."

MOODY IN WASHINGTON.

Great Success of the Meeting of the World Famous Talker.

A Washington correspondent of the Chicago Herald, writes under date of March 3, as follows: Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey began their meetings here on Ash Wednesday and are to finish them next Wednesday. Every evening and every afternoon, except on Saturdays and Monday afternoons, since they came, they have had such meetings as were never known before in Washington. In point of size alone they have far surpassed any former meetings of any character. Convention Hall, which is a block long and half a block wide, has been filled to overflowing. Ordinarily there have been between 5000 and 6000 persons in the building an hour before the meeting was announced to begin, when the doors have been closed by the police, and from 1000 to 3000 people have been turned away; many of them going to the overflow meetings, which filled three neighboring churches, and in which Mr. Sankey takes part during the evening.

The magnificent choir of fifteen hundred voices, such as was never seen in Washington before, was an important part of the means by which Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey carried on their work. As such it was regarded as indispensable. Trained at faithful rehearsals for weeks before Mr. Moody came, and most regular in their attendance on the meetings, the members of the choir have had much to do with their success. They sang hymn after hymn for half an hour before the meeting began and for its first half hour. They sang from time to time during the meeting and they sang for an hour at the end.

Better chorus singing was never heard. The splendid volume of melody was not so remarkable as the absolute accuracy and the admirable expression with which every line was given. There were solo singers too in plenty, besides, of course, Mr. Sankey himself; but none of them, except Mr. Sankey, made any such impression as did the great chorus. Outside the building you could hear every word in every hymn distinctly more than a block away, through the windows in the roof, and in the hall the singing poured like a flood sweeping over the audience, yet in the part songs each section of the choir sang as one tenor or soprano or whatever it might be. There were organs, a piano and a small orchestra, but the glorious voice of the choir could have dispensed with them all.

People of absolutely every class sat in the seats which the choir, the ministers and the other workers did not occupy. It being Lent, even fashionable society was more or less free to go, and some of its representatives did go, while official society was there in force. There were all sorts and conditions of men and women besides; rich and poor, respectable and disreputable, of every grade of society down to the lowest.

Mr. Moody, especially since he has grown stout and gray, short figure that he is, has not a prepossessing appearance. He has a harsh, unmusical voice, and awkward gestures. His delivery, however, is actually ungrammatical. What he says is simplicity itself compared with the average sermon, or a formal discourse of any kind. It is really more like conversation in a loud tone of voice than like any form of speech-making.

It is so of Mr. Sankey, too. From the music critic's point of view, his singing is hardly to be considered seriously, as compared for example, with that of the fine musicians who have sung solos in the present meetings; yet his simple singing of "The Ninety and Nine" to the accompaniment of the shrill and almost wheezy kind of organ which he always plays, has changed the course of the lives of thousands of men and women, during the 19 years since he found the words in a newspaper and improvised the music at a meeting in Edinburgh, impelled and inspired, as he said the other day, by the Holy Spirit. "The words and the music," he said, quietly, "came to me from God; that is why they have lived and done so much good."

ATALANTA AND HIPPOMENES.

Evangelist Mills Points a Moral From a Classical Story.

The Christian must be thoroughly in earnest. If we are weak, it is because of half-heartedness and that is the fatal thing which hinders the power of the Spirit in us. God can teach an ignorant man if he is in earnest. He can fill him with divine power. He can make him a mighty force. The condition is earnestness. Nothing can stand before intense earnestness.

Mr. Mills told the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes. Atalanta was a great athlete, and she announced that she would give her hand and her kingdom to that man who defeated her at running or wrestling. No fewer than fifty contestants undertook to win the prize under the conditions laid down, of which one was that the defeated suitor should lose his life. Atalanta defeated one after another. She put some to death. She mutilated others. And some she thrust into dungeons. But this did not daunt Hippomenes, although he did not look as though he could have any chance of success. The race was started. The contestants flew round the course. Atalanta easily outdistanced her competitor, and Hippomenes seemed doomed to certain death. Suddenly he took from under his coat a golden apple and threw it along the course in such sort as that it should touch the feet of the maiden and glance off the course. The maiden saw the ball, and, thinking she would have time to obtain it, she left the course, and picked it up. Her suitor gained somewhat, but still the splendid fleetness of Atalanta, bore her in advance again. The suitor took a second golden apple and threw it in the same manner, and in the same manner, Atalanta, who was still greatly in front, left the course and picked it up. She was now weighted with the two apples, while the suitor was correspondingly lightened. Nevertheless, she gained upon him; she passed him. Again, for the third time, Hippomenes threw a golden apple, and again the lust of greed having taken complete possession of her, Atalanta leaves the course and picks up the third golden ball. But now she had the weight of the three balls to sustain, and she had fallen behind, while her suitor, lightened by the absence of the golden balls, and taking ut most advantage of her leaving the course,

sped away in advance. He won the race. He won a bride. He won a kingdom. Keep your eye all the time on the goal. The golden apple will glitter before you. There will be that suggestion, "let us see if we cannot make a compromise." There will be that questionable apple. But if you always keep your eye on the goal you will go on to certain victory.

Korean Burial Superstition.

Among the Koreans, says a recent writer, the time between sacrificial ceremonies is taken up with searching the hills for a propitious site for burial. The hills themselves become dragons, spirits, ghosts and what not, to gain whose favor and find a suitable resting-place for the dead is the burden of every heart, for through that alone can they hope for earthly prosperity. Hence praying to the mountain spirits, and worshipping at every hilltop is the outgrowth of ancestral reverence. Shrines or spirit trees are at every mountain pass where travellers bow or make some trivial offering.

In the choice of a grave site there are many points to be taken into consideration. So complicated and mixed are the methods of arriving at a proper conclusion, that a large number of people make a special study of it, and gain their living as experts in geomancy. A grave is chosen on a mountain front, if possible, having two arid ridges on either hand, one called the dragon side and one the tiger. After burial the native watches as a matter of the most vital moment to see that no one encroaches on or interferes with his ancestral graves. It becomes a choice between feeding or clothing the living and making some outlay for this resting-place of the dead, they will decide in a breath in favor of the latter. Should a household meet with repeated disaster, up come their ancestor's bones, and are buried elsewhere, thinking thus to conciliate the spirits. From the idea of certain localities being possessed, has grown the belief that there are spirits in every mound, rock and tree. Also from the years of sacrifice in the home comes the idea of a guardian spirit, which is worshipped by food, prayer, and characters posted on the walls. A species of venomous snake so commonly makes its home in the tiles, and is seen winding in and about the roofs of Korean huts, that they have associated him with this guardianship, and one of the commonest kinds of worship is prayer and offering to the serpent. To this has been added a host of other spirits, the guardian dragon, which they worship by dropping food into the well, his supposed retreat. In this guardianship they include weasels, pigs, and unclean animals of every kind, dividing off to each so many days in the year, making a constant round of religious ceremony.

Messages of Help for the Week.

"It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31, 17.

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." James 4, 8.

"The gate is wide and the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; because straight is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7, 13-14.

"Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." Matt. 10, 22.

"Let Thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even Thy salvation, according to Thy word. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in Thy word." Psalm 119, 41, 42.

"My lips shall utter praise, when Thou has taught me Thy statutes." Psalm 119, 171.

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matt. 11, 28-30.

It won't do any good to pray for the South Sea Islander as long as you won't speak to the man who lives in the next house.

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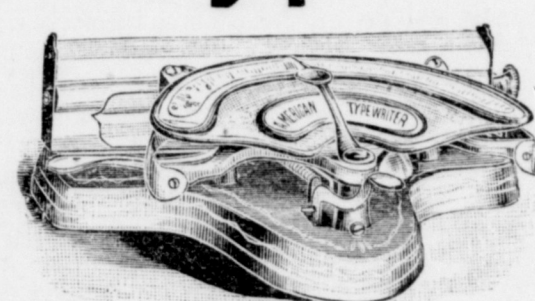
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