

walks. Surely the place of the Lord's feet should be made glorious. The palm branches and garments which bestrewed the Master's path in his triumphal march into Jerusalem should still be forthcoming. Garlands of the fragrant flowers of purity, love and holiness should decorate every department of Christian life, in the home and in the church.

But a rose-strewn pathway at our own doors does not meet the full extent of our spiritual obligations. Like the great highways of ancient Rome, the purpose of the way of salvation is to reach the remotest habitations of mankind. We must aid in its extension till every human being shall have the opportunity of walking therein and finding his way to the city of refuge. Millions of our fellow-men are yet in the darkness and deserts of sin. The way must be prepared for their escape, and to our hands the great undertaking has been committed.

Where circumstances prevent us from personally laboring in this highway extension in distant lands or even in the home fields, we can meet our obligations in some measure by the payment of what is termed commutation money. Our contributions for the Lord's service will be accepted as an equivalent for manual labor. We can aid in sustaining those who give all their time and energies to the furtherance of the Redeemer's Kingdom. But in too many instances there is neither performance of statute labor nor payment of commutation money, even by those who enjoy all the privileges of Christianity in both secular and religious affairs. The royal treasury is often empty on account of our penuriousness, and those who have done the Lord's work for us remain uncompensated and discouraged. Let us not forget our commutation money. Part of our service, at least, can be rendered in this form. Those who decline to respond to the King's requirements may find with sorrow that disease and death have placed them under arrest for arrears, and that their property is seized and given to more worthy custodians.

It is obvious also that the way of life should be made so plain to men that the wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein. In all parts of Great Britain the roads are furnished with old-fashioned finger-posts, plainly showing every traveller where he is and in what direction he must go to reach his destination. The road to Zion should be made equally plain. Every sermon and Bible-lesson should point clearly to the City of God and to Christ as our only Guide. As every dew-drop reflects from its tiny surface the bright round orb of the sun, so should every prayer, exhortation and song of praise reflect the light of truth and the love of Christ. We should endeavor to present to our fellow-men the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel with such unadorned simplicity that no thoughtful person could possibly mistake their character or meaning.

We have indicated a few particulars regarding the performance of spiritual statue labor. Other practical suggestions will readily occur to all who give the subject careful thought. There is pressing need in all our churches for prayerful investigation into our methods of doing the King's work. The time is short, and much remains to be done. Let us move steadily forward in the blessed pathway of service, making the way plain and smooth and attractive, giving to each person we meet the cordial invitation of the Hebrew leader of old, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." We shall receive ample compensation for all our toil and self-denial when we shall see multitudes of happy converts flocking toward the New Jerusalem, when "the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." W. H. W.

### The Lazy Man.

A SERMONETTE.

Prov. 22 : 13, (Rev. Ver.) "The sluggard saith, There is a lion without : I shall be murdered in the streets."

Intro. Such weather as we usually have in July and August is the lazy man's weather. It gives him a possible excuse for his laziness. Although as our text intimates he is prince of excuse makers.

I. An exposition. Our text, in conjunction with similar ones in Proverbs, shows the man to be a town-dweller. His property through neglect is in a deplorable condition, stone curbing broken here and there, lawns ruined, weeds everywhere, paint gone off his house, windows broken and stuffed with gummy sacks. His family present a condition as deplorable. But he does not care. He puts his hand to the dish and is too lazy to lift it to his mouth. His wife rebukes him. Possibly his mother-in-law prods him with a sharp tongue. He excuses himself. Providence has been against him. It has been a dry year. The earthquake knocked down his stone wall. Chicken disease took off his finest laying hens. He lost his best cow by her neck being broken on a picket rope. Sickness in his family brought in large doctor's bills. A scoundrelly friend robbed him of money. Finally when driven to the wall he confesses that there is another reason. "There is a lion without : I shall be murdered in the streets." This is charming.

The lion is a brave beast, but he is hardly likely to grab a man in broad day-light while weeding cabbages, or while passing down the street to find employment.

II. Application number one. Who has neglected his personal salvation? After all the opportunities to secure the benefit of Christ's atonement do you still stand aloof? Your spiritual condition is more deplorable than the physical condition of the sinner, so graphically set forth by Solomon. "But," you say "There are lions without." "I do not feel that I am a sinner." "I am too great a sinner." "I have not repented enough." "I fear that my faith is not the right kind." "I cannot believe though willing to be saved." Bosh! Those are not lions. They are cheap imitations, mere decoy brutes set up by Satan. Jesus saith, "He that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out." And in a thousand places He has made it plain that the way to His heart, and life, and home is absolutely unobstructed. You may go if you will.

III. Application number two. But there are lions, and tiger, and bears in the streets. Intoxicants, gambling, desecration, blasphemy. Their bite is worse than that of any fierce Numidian lion. It is as bad as that of a mad dog. But you have become accustomed to these. The manly, courageous, sensible thing to do is to ally yourself with the best, cease the insane folly of charging God with your lack of all the good. He has shown Himself so willing to give you, and then though you may recognize real lions you will not fear them, and you will not be trembling in sight of Satan's dummy lions.

San Bernardino July 27.

M. B. SHAW.

### The Secret of a Strong Life.

BY REV. THEODORE L. COYLER, D. D.

I crossed the ocean lately on a powerful steamship, which weighed over twenty thousand tons, and pushed her way against wind and waves at the rate of over twenty knots an hour! I could not see the propelling force; that was hidden deep down in the glowing furnace-heaped constantly with fresh coal.

That illustrates the spiritual life of every strong, healthy, growing Christian; his strength is measured by his inward supply of divine grace. The spiritual force and progress of a growing Christian prove that his life is hid with Christ Jesus. The moving hands on the face of any watch are the evidence of a mainspring. Happy are you if your neighbors, who see you every day, can know by your outward conduct that your inner life is fed by an unseen Christ.

The Great Apostle describes this inner life of the true believer as "with Christ in God." The source of this spiritual life is divine; it begins with the new birth by the Holy Spirit. By a mysterious but very real process the new-born soul's heart-life is so united to Christ, so dependent on Christ, that the apostles describe it as "hid with Christ in God."

As the root of an apple tree, concealed from the eye, goes down into the soil, feeling its way after earth-food and water, and drawing up nourishment for every limb and leaf, so a truly converted soul learns to go down into Christ for his spiritual nourishment. He learns to find in Christ not only pardon and peace, but power to resist temptation. He learns the sweets of fellowship with his Master; and so close is his intimacy with Christ, that in times of trouble or perplexity he has only to put the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" A genuine and joyous Christian life is such a partnership with Jesus that the believer can say, "I live—yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, which is in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." This faith is not a mere opinion, nor is it a mere emotion. It is our grip on Christ, and his grip on us. Saving faith means the junction of our souls to Jesus Christ. The mightiest of all spiritual forces is the Christ-faith, because it puts the omnipotent Lord Jesus into our soul as an abiding presence and an almighty power. It was no idle boast, therefore, when Paul exclaimed: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

Paul knew whom he believed. In the days of my boyhood it used to be said of a person who was converted that he had "experienced religion." A good phrase; that for a religion that is not a genuine heart experience is not worth having. The poor weaklings in our churches have had but little or nothing of this experience. They joined the church more than they joined Christ. If they had ever experienced the incoming of Jesus into their hearts, and had experienced a new birth by the Holy Spirit, they would not so easily topple over into worldlings and money-worshippers and moral cowards—too often into disgraceful defalcations of character. A steamer without coal is a helpless waif on the ocean billows. Empty bags cannot stand upright. It is the terrible experiment of joining a church without any heart-union with the Saviour, of trying to live without honest prayer and daily Bible-feeding, of fighting Satan with spears of soft pine instead of the sword of the Spirit—in short, the experiment of trying to pass for a Christian without Jesus Christ—this it is that accounts for so many pitiable weaklings on our church rolls. To stand up against all the social currents that set away

from God and holiness, to resist the craze for wealth at all hazards, to conquer fleshly appetites, to hold an unruly temper in check, to keep down selfishness, to direct all our plans, all our talents, all our purposes and influence toward the good of others and the honor of our Master, requires more power than any unaided man possesses. It requires Jesus Christ in the soul. Christ's mastery of us alone can give us self-mastery, yes, and mastery over the powers of darkness and of hell. This is the secret of a strong and a joyous life.

Such a life is self-evidencing. Although the interior union of a believer to his Redeemer is invisible, yet the results of it are patent to the world. They are seen and read of all men. Just as we know the supply of coal and the power of the unseen engine by the steamer's speed, so we can estimate the fullness and strength of a man's piety by his daily life. Our outward lives can never rise above the inward; he who has not Christ in his conscience will not have Christ in his conduct. In a thousand ways does the hidden life with our Master come out before the world. It is manifest in the man of business who measures his goods with a Bible yardstick; in the statesman who would rather lose his election than lose God's smile; in the citizen who votes with the eye of his Master on the ballot; in the pastor who cares more for souls than for salary. The mother displays it when she seeks first the kingdom of heaven for children, and the daughter exhibits it when she would rather watch by a sick mother's bed than enjoy an evening's gay festivities. No life is so humble or so obscure, but it can shine when Christ shines through it. If Christ is hidden within you, let him not be hidden by you from an observing world. You are to be his witness. The sermon that no skeptic can answer is the sermon of a clean, vigorous, happy and fruitful life.—The Sunday Magazine.

### Top-Heavy.

BY OBADIAH OLDSCHOOL.

My neighbor, Jedediah Jones, is an ambitious orchardist. He thinks, too, that he knows just how to do it. He has been using all the most popular fertilizers, and the growth of his trees last year was wonderful. As he was calling my attention to them one day, expecting unbounded admiration, I said: "It seems to me that you need to do a good deal of pruning here if you expect these trees to continue healthy and to bear a full crop of fruit." "Oh, no," he replied, "they are all right, and next summer I will have the model orchard of this valley."

I examined some of the trees. In the roots of not a few the borer was at work; others were attacked by the black-knot; others had been soaked and rotted by excessive irrigation; and there were evidences here and there that the gopher were busy. As I walked thoughtfully home, I said to myself, "I do not believe that the way to have a good orchard is to stimulate the growth of the trees. We must look after the roots as well as the top. We must see to it that there is a healthy development underground. The real vitality and vigor of a tree depends more upon the part beneath the soil than upon the part that is above it."

A few days after this there came a storm. It swept with great force and fury through our beautiful valley. All of our orchards suffered; for, in all of them, in spite of our pruning and watching for root-pests, there were some top-heavy trees. But Jedediah's model orchard was ruined; two-thirds of his trees were uprooted. And then I thought of that first vision of the blind man, whose sight was partially restored. "I see men as trees walking." Mark 8 : 24. There was a great deal of practical truth in that vision. Men grow in some respects, as trees grow; though they are not confined, like the trees, to one locality. They walk about while they grow, yet if the root-growth is not healthful and vigorous, they become top-heavy, like Jedediah's trees, and are in constant peril.

Why are there so many young men in all our communities who set out with high hopes, that soon end in disastrous failures? Like Jedediah's trees, they were top-heavy. They stimulate the growth which gave them popularity and the prospect of temporary success. They did not cultivate themselves, the inner and invisible part which we call character. They did not watch for and subdue their secret sins—their irreligious evil habits, as we try to find and destroy the root pests in our orchards.

Why are our daily papers filled with reports of bankruptcies, disappointments in politics, and suicides? These people were too impatient to meet the conditions of true and permanent success. They were in haste to be rich. They were more anxious to secure popularity and place and power than to be worthy of them. They wanted to get all the good in life without that patient culture which is the condition of true fruitage. Alas! how many "men like trees walking" are top-heavy.

In legitimate banking a balance is preserved between deposits and discounts. A sensible board of directors will not expand their business beyond its reliable basis in assets. But top-heavy directors will take risks and the result is that often they are driven into suspension, even when there is no financial cyclone. We have some top-heavy reformers. They take a superficial view of the inequalities of human conditions. They overlook the great fact that all social evils are rooted in depravity, that the only radical remedy for them is in the renovation of the heart. So, in their ignorance and conceit, they propound theories, and inaugurate experiments, which fail, of course, but only to be succeeded by others equally delusive.

We have some top-heavy preachers. They preach themselves instead of "Christ Jesus the Lord." (See 2 Cor. 4 : 4.) They cultivate logic and rhetoric, not that they may present the Gospel more forcibly, but that they may be popular. They keep abreast of the times, bring all the topics that are talked and written about into the pulpit to show that they are "up-to-date." Their sensational sermonizing secures them a superficial and temporary influence. But it can not bring forth fruit, because it is not "rooted and grounded in love." (Eph. 3 : 17.) The beginning and condition of the ministerial success is in a deep, abiding union with Christ. The life of the true ambassador must be "hid with Christ in God," as the roots of a tree are hid beneath the soil.—Interior.