

"Come unto me!" "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." The only saving faith is that which sees Jesus, accepts Jesus, obeys Jesus, and joins the soul to Jesus. It is not the central vital doctrine of the atonement that Christ presses upon the sinning, suffering souls around him; it is himself as the divine Atoner, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me."

How this simplifies the work of the minister, the evangelist and teacher! How it intensifies our office and brings our message to one bright, burning point! Some ministers lament the fewness of conversions under their preaching. May not the cause in many cases be that they do not converge all the shafts of their pulpit light upon one point, and that point the divine, loving, sin-atoner Saviour? The humble Primitive Methodist preacher whose sermon converted Spurgeon when he was a boy, did nothing but repeat over and over again the one truth "look to Jesus!" No discourse delivered on that Sunday by the most profound theologian or brilliant orator did such execution as that Methodist's plain, persistent exhortation. It converted the greatest preacher of the century.

People come to church on the Sabbath after the wear and tear of the week—some of them with heart-troubles and others saddened by disappointments; others sorely tempted, or conscience-smitten; others longing for a word of comfort. Having made sad failure in their own attempts, some of them want a power out of themselves to lift them to a better life. Feeling the prick of sin through their own consciences, they desire to be delivered from besetting sins. More than one brings an aching heart and longs for a comforter. If all these people could make their desires known, they would cry out "we would see Jesus!" Oh, my beloved brethren, is not the chief demand upon our ministry that first, last and all the time we should be holding forth Jesus the sin bearer, pardoner, Jesus the life-giver, Jesus the sympathizer and consoler, Jesus the intercessor, and the centre and glory of the gospel of salvation? If we fail in making our congregations see him, then the most eloquent or erudite ministry is a pious sham.

Perhaps there is another reason for the paucity of conversions in many communities. It is that men of the world see too little of Christ in the daily lives of many who claim to be his representatives. There is no argument for Christianity equal to that which is presented by a pure, honest and noble life, inspired by the Spirit of Christ Jesus, and nothing repels the unconverted like the daily contact with those who profess Christianity and make it odious. Dr. Horace Bushnell once said, "We preach too much and live Christ too little." There are those who go home from church saying, "what a capital sermon!" and they preach right against it by their sad inconsistencies of conduct. They devour sermons, but with no growth in consistent godly living.

We emphasize the word living. Is it church going or Sunday-school teaching or praying, or even special acts of Christian service that are the main duties of Christ's followers? No. All these good things ought to be done; but the weightier and more vital thing is to copy Christ Jesus with some impressiveness before a sharp-eyed world. An eloquent sermon may set forth how to live; but a true, faithful, holy life is the actual achievement. No words that Paul ever sent to Rome or Corinth have impressed the world like the "living epistle" in which he copied his divine Master. Dr. Bushnell was right. There is vastly more good preaching than practising. Our crucified Lord demands more of us than a single act of formal confession of him; he demands "much fruit" to prove that we belong to his vine; he demands fearless fidelity to conscience; he demands a discipleship so distinct and clear-cut and consistent that when men see us, they may in us see Jesus.—Standard.

Walking With Christ.

Christian life is to be a proper exemplification of the life of Christ by his followers. We are to strive to live close to him, walking by his side, being like him, and treating those around us as we would if he were in our place.

We have very simple duties as Christians. God has put us in this world to fill our place, to do our duty, to accomplish those things for which we are fitted, and none of these things are beyond our power. We are to make it the rule of our life to do what God wishes us to do in our own place, his wish being made evident by his Word and by his Providence.

Christianity is more than a mere code of ethics. Christian living is more than a mere system of morals. It is a life of obedience to the will of God, and of personal service of and companionship with Christ. We are to take Christ as our friend and leader, our Master in all things, and are to walk with him continually.

Walking with Christ means, then, the highest and holiest companionship that is possible to human beings. And it is possible, too. There is no companionship more real than the spiritual association which the true believer may have with his Saviour. Day by day, night by

night, in sickness and in health, in sorrow and in gladness, in prosperity, in adversity, the invisible, but real, presence of the Saviour is with those who trust and love him.

Walking with Christ means advancement. It is more than sitting or standing still. It is advance in the way of holiness. It is making progress in pure and holy character. It is growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. We are to know more of his truth; we are to experience more of his love; we are to practice more of his teaching as the days and years go by. We expect, some day to be perfectly established in holiness and to know more of God's truth than we can to-day comprehend. Towards this we are advancing. All time and all eternity are to be our opportunity for growing toward God and for coming into the life he calls us into. As we walk with Christ we are attaining this.

Walking with Christ means associating with Christian people. All who love him are walking with him, too. So they make a goodly company. They are all under his care. They are all taught of him. They are all striving to be like him. There is no company like that which is made up of the children of God. They are in the way of usefulness here on earth and they are to be eternally holy and happy in heaven.

Walking with Christ means, necessarily, keeping out of the company of the wicked, and away from the sinful life in which they delight. Christian people may try to do good to those who hate Christ, but they do not find companionship with them and do not make them their chosen friends.

Two will not walk together unless they are agreed. To walk with Christ means to have first chosen him as a life-long friend; and then it means to make the life, in each successive day, a revelation of unbroken loyalty, a friendship of unchanging faithfulness, a companionship of ever-increasing congeniality and joy.—Herald and Presbyterian.

Nobly Enduring God's Will.

Prosperity is not always the lot of God's people. Afflictions beset their pathway. The kingdom of heaven is reached through tribulations. Ordinarily, Christians have a mingled experience: the bitter and the sweet, the sad and the joyous, the dark and the bright; but however God deals with them, submission, hearty, uncomplaining and noble, becomes them. It is not theirs to dictate. A covenant-keeping God is over them, purposing and working out their highest good, and it becomes them to go forward bravely, patiently and persistently in the path which he marks out for them.

Paul possessed this grand spirit. He would not sink down discouraged under the load of trial which his heavenly Father had appointed him. He asked, it is true, for the removal of "the thorn in the flesh;" but when divine wisdom denied the request, and gave the assurance of adequate supporting grace, he unqualifiedly and resolutely declares: "Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." Anxious to do his Master's will—having learned both its significance and its end, he felt that all that came to him from his Lord's hand was wisely ordered, and for his own and other's benefit, and so he resolved to endure all with cheerfulness and joyfulness. His thorny ailment was radiant with a new light. It had Christ's glory written upon it, God's grace illuminating it, and his own profit as its blessed issues.

This is a high ideal of attainment. It is not reached at once, or at a bound. One must grow into this triumphant state. It is the result of grace, experience and cultivation. All who try can come unto it.

Too many, however, are content to be merely submissive to afflictive dispensations. Their faith and feeling go no further than to say, "Thy will be done." Resignation is indeed a blessed state of mind and a bounden duty; but we must not be simply satisfied with its possession. There is a higher degree of bliss and holiness. We are to catch the Pauline spirit and "gladly glory in infirmities," not for their own sake, but for Christ's. No one courts distress and mishaps upon their own account; but when they come, he of a Christ disposition and consecration, ascends to the loftier plane, and views them as the means of glorifying his Lord and Redeemer, and as tributary to the advancement of his Kingdom. A new field of usefulness opens before him. He enters upon a different theatre for the display of the grace of God in and through him. He comes more into living, personal sympathy with Christ. He enjoys more of his developing power, as well as more of his love and comfort. He becomes a stronger character, a more experienced Christian, a riper saint, a more devoted and active worker, a better guide to inquiring and tried souls, and a more heroic child of God.

The wisest and richest Christians of more modern times accord with Paul and Peter, and the early saints, as to God's gracious purpose in his sore dealings. He sees their need and worth. He sends them at the right time and in the right way. Instead of groaning and com-

plaining at their infliction, we are to cheerfully acquiesce in, and work in harmony with, their design, as God's wisdom, grace and glory are to be evolved in their right endurance. And if mystery surround many of them, it is not to be forgotten that "what we know not now, we shall know hereafter." Infinite goodness is operating. Upon the dark canvass, God is drawing our portrait of spiritual beauty and perfectness. His angels of sorrow conduct to heaven.—Presbyterian.

Success in Friendship.

REV. HUGH BLACK, M. A.

Some men have a genius for friendship. That is because they are open and responsive and unselfish. They truly make the most of life; for apart from their special joys, even intellect is sharpened by the development of the affections. No material success in life is comparable to success in friendship. There is an old Latin proverb, expressing the worldly view, which says that it is not possible for a man to love and at the same time be wise. This is only true when wisdom is made equal to prudence and selfishness, and when love is made the same. It is never given to a man to be wise, in the true and noble sense, until he is carried out of himself in the purifying passion of love or the generosity of friendship. The self-centred being cannot keep friends, even when he makes them; his selfish sensitiveness is always in the way, like a diseased nerve ready to be irritated.

There is nothing so important as the choice of friendship; for it both reflects character and affects it. A man is known by the company he keeps. This is an infallible test; for his thoughts and desires and ambitions and loves are revealed here. He gravitates naturally to his congenial sphere. And it affects character; for it is the atmosphere he breathes. It enters his blood and makes the circuit of his veins. "All love assimilates to what it loves." A man is moulded into the likeness of the lives that come nearest to him. It is at the point of the emotions that he is most impressionable. The material surroundings, the outside lot of a man, affects him, but, after all, that is most on the outside; for the higher functions of life may be served in almost any external circumstances. But the environment of other lives, the communion of other souls, are far more potent facts. The nearer people are to each other, and the less disguise there is in their friendship, the more invariably will the law of spiritual environment act.

Trust is the first requisite for making a friend. How can we be anything but alone if our attitude to men is one of armed neutrality; if we are suspicious and assertive and querulous and over-cautious in our advances? Suspicion kills friendship. There must be some magnanimity and openness of mind before a friendship can be formed. We must be willing to give ourselves freely and unreservedly.

The more we know of Christ's spirit and the more we think of the meaning of God's fathomless grace, the more will we be convinced that the way to please the Father and to follow the Son is to cultivate the graces of kindness and gentleness and tenderness, to give ourselves to the culture of the heart.—Selected.

Prayer.

BY REV. O. P. GIFFORD, D. D.

The Bible is an art gallery whose walls are hung with pictures of men at prayer. Men in all ages, under all conditions, have prayed. The body is bound to the earth by the force of gravity, mind goes out to mind in thought, heart goes out to heart in love, the soul goes up to God in prayer. There would be no civilization without gravitation, there would be no mental life without exchange of thought, there can be no spiritual life without prayer. Prayer is the soul's gravitation towards God, prayer is the soul's exchange of thought and life with God.

Men doubting the force of gravity would not build but burrow; men shrinking from exchange of thought soon cease to think; men neglecting prayer burrow in the animal life, and become bankrupt in soul.

In prayer we do not so much seek to yoke God's will to the chariot of our purpose, as to find what God's will is concerning us and get strength to do it. We do not so much seek to get favors from God as to get God himself. We seek electricity that we may use it for light and power; we seek God that he may use us, making us the light of the world, his power in the earth. We bring our needs to him that he may satisfy them or show us how needless they are; we bring ourselves to him that he may fill us with himself.

When the sun rises even the foolish virgins need no oil. When the Sun of Righteousness arises and shines through the east window of prayer, we cast our empty lamps behind us to be forgotten. With sufficient grace the thorn in the flesh becomes a nail driven into a sure place on which to hang the wreath of victory. Holding the golden chains that bind the round earth about the feet of God, our hands are empty of our own needs, but so full of God that we know not our own needs with which we came to pray.—Ex.