

THE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE.

Just to trust, and yet to ask
Guidance still;
Take the training or the task,
As He will;
Just to take the loss or gain
As He sends it;
Just to take the joy or pain
As He lends it.

He who formed thee for His praise
Will not miss the gracious aim;
So to-day and all the days
Shall be moulded in the same.

Just to leave in His dear hand
Little things;
All we cannot understand,
All that stings;
Just to let Him take the care
Sorely pressing,
Finding all we let Him bear
Changed to blessing.

This is all: and yet the way
Marked by Him who loved thee best,
Secret of a happy day,
Secret of His promised rest.

The Pulpit.

THE HABIT OF THANKFULNESS.

BY REV. J. A. BROADUS, D. D.

We hear a great deal about character and a great deal about the power of habit, but it is generally about the power of evil habits. Why don't we talk more about the power of good habits? Let me suggest to you that you reflect on this, and seek to impress upon those whom you can influence the value of good habits. Think how much good habits will help us on in the world. You know a great deal is done almost without effort. For example, ability to operate the type-writer is wearisome work at first, but after a time the manipulation of the keys becomes so habitual that one can write almost without thinking about it. As people grow old they know what it means to have well-formed habits. Men who do a great deal of work are often asked: "How do you manage to get through so much work?" Busy men get through their work because it is their habit to do so. Habit, therefore, is invaluable. You say that we must not run in ruts. Well yes, no. Why not run in the ruts if the ruts are smooth ones? Good habits help us to do the good work we have to do. If you are in the habit of speaking the truth and you are suddenly tempted to say something false, you will be enabled to overcome the temptation by your good habit. The formation of good habits is the only possible way to avoid bad habits. A person must have habits of some sort, either good or bad. Good habits when formed are just as easy to maintain as bad habits. Frequent repetition of any form of action will make it habitual.

To-night I want to speak on the importance of forming the habit of thankfulness to God, and give some reasons why such a habit is valuable. Thankfulness will tend to quell your repinings. Are you not ashamed of yourselves for your repinings because you have not certain things that you would like to have? It is not good for you to murmur about your lot in life. Murmuring will not make it better. Think of the blessings you have rather than the blessings you have not. If you were to form the habit of thankfulness it would stop you in the midst of many a murmuring sentence. It would help you to quell your repining and thank God for the blessings you have. Anything is pleasant when it becomes associated with gratitude. Children value their Christmas gifts so much the more because they are gifts. Though they value the gift for its own sake yet they value it more because of the love which prompted it. The more we think about God's gifts, the more we feel our indebtedness. We all have abundant cause for gratitude, and if things do not always run smoothly we shall do well to adopt the old negro's philosophy and say: "Bress de Le d tain't no wus." If you look over your past life and it has been your habit to thank God for his goodness, how much occasion you find for gratitude.

Habitual thankfulness tends to soothe and relieve distress. A great deal of trouble is inevitable in this world. It may seem unkind to wish your friends trouble, yet you do this when you wish them long life, for the longer a person lives the more trouble he will have. Habitual thankfulness not only soothes and relieves the distresses of life, but it also deepens penitence. When you have done something wrong, O how you feel it when you have been in the habit of thanking God. You say: "Is it possible that I have been so sinful after all these manifestations of his favor?" Habitual thankfulness will also brighten life. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, says, "In nothing be anxious;" but he does not stop there. He tells us how we may avoid anxiety. He says, "In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

* Substance of a sermon by Dr. John A. Broadus, at the Calvary Baptist church, New York, March 14, 1886. Text, I Thess. v, 18: "In everything give thanks."

standing shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

We should be thankful to God for whatever we find pleasant. Everybody will agree that this is right, but does it not frequently happen that we are longing for the things we have not rather than being grateful for the things we have? The oxen when grazing in the meadows lift up their eyes as if in recognition to God; but man often neglects to do this and thus becomes more ungrateful than the oxen. Let us reproach ourselves for our ingratitude, and let us recount the mercies of the Lord.

The apostle does not say for everything give thanks, but in everything give thanks. No matter how painfully we are exercised we may find occasion for thankfulness. We shall do well to thank the Lord for the blessings of other days. In recounting the blessings of the past we shall be all the more likely to appreciate the blessings of the present and the future. Even the memory of blessings which have been taken away from us may be sanctified to our spiritual good. Perhaps husband, wife, or child, or some dear friend have been taken away from us and we are grieved at their departure. But have we not reason to be grateful to God that we were permitted for so long to have them with us and to enjoy the sweetness of their presence. All the things which we find so painful here will prepare us for a richer enjoyment of the blessings of our Father's house on high.

I was reading the other day a history of music, and I was much interested in the conflicts of musicians as to the matter of discords in music. Wagner's music has a great deal of discord in it. I noticed this morning where I worshipped that there were several striking discords, but the discords made the harmony all the sweeter. And so the ills of this life will be to the saved only "the brief, discordant prelude to an everlasting harmony." To-day has been a most delightful day, and we have enjoyed it all the more because it has been preceded by three or four dull, dreary days.

I am not a pessimist and I hope you are not. This is not the worst possible world, neither is it the best possible world. Railing at the world will never make it better. I cannot say with Alexander Pope: "Whatever is is right." I believe whatever is we must make the best of it. When we get home to heaven and look back upon the way God led us, we shall see that his way was the right way. Perhaps you may say sometimes: "Why don't my trials make me better? I don't think that I am a better man or a better woman because I have these trials." You don't know what you would be without them. President Madison was extremely polite and never gave offence to any one if he could possibly avoid it. During his illness many persons suggested "unfailing remedies," according to their judgment. One dear old lady sent him a box of pills and she insisted that they would restore him to perfect health. The President took them, and in response to the old lady's inquiry wrote her as follows: "Dear Madam, I took the pills you so kindly sent me, but I regret to say I am no better. I know not, however, what my condition would have been if I had not taken the pills, Yours truly, etc." The same thing is true of the disagreeable things of life. We may not feel any the better for them, but we know not what our condition would be if we didn't have them.

The "Golden-Mouthed" Chrysostom was a very devout and grateful man. In early life he formed the habit of saying: "Glory to God for all things." He greeted joy and sorrow with these words. There were many times in his life when it was hard for him to say this. His eloquence drew about him thousands of admiring friends and the king took him by force to make him court orator, but his fearless denunciation of wrong led to his banishment. On the way to the place of his banishment, he had to travel in the burning sun without a hat and he was smitten with the burning rays. The guard carried him into a little chapel by the wayside to die. As they laid him on the cold damp floor he uttered with his expiring breath: "Glory to God for all things."

Now, how shall we form and maintain the habit of thankfulness? How do we form any habit? Before you sleep to-night think how many things you have for which you ought to be thankful. To-morrow morning do the same and keep on recounting your blessings and mercies, and by and by you will have formed this invaluable habit of thankfulness. Yesterday I saw a life of Ole Bull, the great violinist, and the book recalled a very pleasant conversation that I had with him many years ago. I found him delightful in conversation. He was a man who had seen a great deal of the world and his character was a lovely one in many respects. He said: "When I fail to practice one day I notice

the difference, when I fail to practice for two days my friends notice the difference, and when I fail to practice for a week the public notice the difference." Ole Bull practiced in order to please earthly kings, but we practice in order to please a heavenly king. When we remember the blessings that are constantly coming from his hand, is he not worth pleasing? Many of you who are here to-night are young men and you may live to be old men and I want to give you a message for those who may be young when you are old. I want you to tell them what I have said about the importance of forming the habit of thankfulness. You need not tell them who gave you the message to deliver to them. Let me quietly sleep beneath the greenward until the morning of the resurrection. Try and remember this little sermon and "In everything give thanks."—Standard.

"FRET NOT THYSELF."

David repeats this exhortation three times in the 37th Psalm. If he was writing that Psalm to-day, for the nominal believers of this generation, he would repeat it twice as often. We are sorely tempted to doubt and despondency when we see how many foolish and bad men there are in positions of influence, and how easily multitudes are led astray. At times we almost despair of the Republic and even of the church. Pessimism, which is chronic fretting, prevails to an alarming extent among thoughtful and even Christian people. The times seem out of joint. There is no clear sky in any direction. When the storm is not raging, the clouds are gathering and the thunders are muttering.

Now what shall we say to those of our readers whose hearts are failing them for fear? This is our message. It is old and yet it is new. It is a message from heaven for all generations and for all hearts: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." The announcement in the 97th Psalm is repeated in the 93rd, the 96th and the 99th. Four times we are told this familiar truth, because we are tempted to feel and act as if we knew it not. The remembrance of God—that he knows all, that he controls all, that whatsoever comes to pass is a part of his great plan, that he will make even the wrath of men to praise him—this is the panacea for pessimism; this is the tonic for all whose faith is weakened by the malaria that prevails.

We cannot tell, you cannot tell, nobody can tell just why God permits such folly and madness. But he forges the end from the beginning. He is working out through the very events that trouble and discourage us the purposes of his wisdom and his love. Those events are the warp or the woof in the loom of his providence, and when the weaving is complete the texture will be perfect. This is the teaching not merely of Christian faith, but of faith in any rational idea of God. If we burn up our Bibles and forget all their precious teachings in regard to God, yet we must believe that the universe, with its manifold harmonies and adaptations, is the work of a wise and mighty Creator. But he who made it so well, must surely be able to govern it, and to secure through its operations the object for which he made it. To believe that a company of human anarchists, no matter how numerous, can thwart a divine plan is as absurd as to fear that the bursting of a bubble will hurl the earth from its orbit. Hence, pessimism in its ultimate analysis is sheer atheism. If there is a God he reigns, and if he reigns as God he reigns supreme. He doeth his will among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. But his will cannot be anarchy. It cannot be the triumph of lawlessness. His will is order and harmony as all his works declare. "Therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

God has governed this world for nearly six thousand years. During that time how often have the heathen raged, and the people imagined a vain thing! How often have the kings of the earth and the mobs of the earth set themselves against him! Yet the race, under his guiding hand, has made steady progress in all that is good. There are more intelligent people, there are more pious and God-fearing on the earth to-day than ever before. There is more wealth and less poverty, more freedom and less oppression. There are more good governments and more pure homes than ever before. God's great purposes of love flow on with steady and resistless force, like the gulf stream in the ocean. Tides rise and fall, winds blow and billows roll, but beneath all these surface agitations that current moves still and strong. The God of the gulf stream, the God of Creation and Providence, has promised that Christ shall reign on earth. All the over-turnings of the ages are to prepare the way for his coming. Road-

making is rough, hard work. Where the carriage or the car runs so smoothly, there was digging and blasting not long ago—the mountains had to be leveled and the valleys filled. This is the process that is now going on in the earth; and even dynamite may be one of the forces needed in its preparation for the millennial kingdom.

Ours is the Christian era of the world. Everything in it must contribute to the extension and completion of the work which Christ began. Malachi says of him that he shall sit "as a refiner and purifier of silver." The silver that is to be refined is put in a crucible and a fierce fire is kindled about it. To an ignorant looker-on it might seem as if the smelter was trying to destroy the ore. If he had an interest in it he might begin to fret and worry lest he should lose it. But to his anxious questions the smelter would reply, "I have been refining silver for years. I understand just how to do it. I use just fire enough to burn off the dross. I control it all the time, and as soon as the metal is purified I extinguish the flames." That is God's answer to his fretting ones to-day. Does not he know what he is doing and just how to do it? Does anything escape his notice? Is anything beyond his control?

When the mob lifts its hydra-head and startles the city with its roar, not only the citizens, but the mayor and chief of police may be taken unawares. But God is not. He saw the first gathering and heard the first muttering of that storm. Nay, he knew just when it would come and where it would strike hundreds of centuries before the city was built. And God not only knew of its coming, but he was there when it came. His great arm was over and around all the warring elements. He controlled them as he controls the tempests in the sky. Then how foolish, nay, how atheistic, our fears! If the Lord had opened our eyes as he opened those of Elisha's servant, we would have seen chariots of fire and horsemen of fire, able and waiting to control the human forces marshalled beneath them. With such a vision, who could fear? But that is the vision of faith in all times of turmoil and trouble. It ought to be the vision of every one who believes in God.

Some one has wisely said that there are only two kinds of trouble in this world—that which we can help and that which we cannot help. The first kind we have no business to fret about. We must just go to work and help it. The second kind fretting won't prevent, but only aggravate. Why, then, should we fret about it? God has taken pretty good care of us and of the world thus far, and we had better simply do what we know to be our duty, and trust the rest to him. Fretting is about the worst waste of time and temper that we can indulge in. And good people would not be tempted to the indulgence if they realized, as they should, that its true name is—atheism.—The Interior.

TAKE GOD'S WAY.

An incident in the life of the Rev. Mr. Clough, the well-known missionary of the Ongole Mission, India, strikingly illustrates the fact that the only safety for the Christian worker, and the only hope of successful work, is in finding out the way God would have His work done, and then doing it at any cost or risk.

When Mr. Clough came to Ongole he was warmly welcomed by the higher caste citizens, who at once sent their children to his school and furnished him with all needful funds. Such a spontaneous demand for Christian education among the higher ranks of native society was a wonder to him, and a delight besides, until he saw the inevitable difficulty.

One day three men of low caste unexpectedly presented themselves as converts. The Christian teacher of course received them; but very soon an indignant committee waited on him, and told him the support and patronage hitherto given him would be immediately withdrawn if he had anything more to do with Soodras and Pariahs.

Converts of these low castes nevertheless continued to apply, and Mr. Clough, in his extremity sought counsel with God. He and his wife shut themselves up separately for prayer. When the missionary arose from his knees he took in his hand a new copy of the British and Foreign Bible Society's Eurasian New Testament. It opened at the first chapter of First Corinthians: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to naught the things that are; that no flesh shall glory in his presence."

A moment later, Mrs. Clough rushed into the study to show him

a passage of Scripture that she had found. It was the same passage from the first chapter of First Corinthians. Startled but strengthened by this Providential coincidence, they determined henceforth to build according to God's plan. The next morning their obedient purpose was announced and every scholar left and all the support of the upper classes at once changed into bitter hostility to them and their mission.

But there, as all the Christian world knows, God has since more signally honored work done according to his plan. And among the eighty thousand Christian adherents, including twenty thousand communicants, there have been more upper caste conversions than could have been expected under the previous exclusive method of labor.

UNGEROUS CRITICISM.

A common fault is that of needlessly criticising others. Almost every day, we see those whose infirmities tempt us to make light of them, whose singular looks or awkward habits or careless dress make them the ready objects of satire. There are faults peculiar to different classes of people; and this one of criticism, though occasionally omitted by the ignorant and vulgar, is particularly the fault of people of culture—at least, of people of cultivated and refined tastes. They see the incongruities as no others do, they are shocked at the improprieties, and take a satisfaction, and sometimes delight, in pointing them out, talking of them, and laughing over them. This makes up much of what is called the harmless gossip of society; but it surely is not a very noble employment, and, if the reflections must arise in our minds, it were better that they should stay there. I think something of reverence ought to pass over us when we speak of any human being. We may seek to improve, to correct, to refine others, for this is all consistent with respect for them; but I see not how we may make light of them, for this is the opposite of respect. And, surely, I need not speak of scandal and of the devilishness of the delight which some people take in it. Human nature never seems meaner than when so occupied. Scandalous things there are in the world; but why repeat them, why pass them on? Would it not be a good habit not to hear them, save for self-protection or for the protection of others? Yes I might add, would it not be a good habit not to believe them, to distrust those that bring them to our notice, and in every case demand a justification for their doing so? Gossip is the occupation of idle minds; scandal is the occupation of ungenerous ones. Hate scandal and scandal-mongers, would I think, be a good rule of private ethics. Spread the reports of goodness in the world; and, if we have no such reports, let us, in heaven's name, keep still. We shall at last do one good thing by doing this.—Wm. M. Salter.

THE GROUND OF TRUE PEACE.

In order to have peace in my spirit I must either forget God, or falsify his character, or be reconciled to him through the blood of the cross. The first of these ways can never be fully carried out, for nothing can wholly banish from my thoughts the remembrance of the God who made me. The second of these ways will only lead me down to hell with a lie in my right hand by making me believe that God is indifferent to sin. The third is the only way of permanent, perfect peace. In being brought near to God I have peace; for that which marred it was my distance from him. In being righteously reconciled I have peace; for that which kept me from having it, was the variance between him and me. The distance has been removed, the variance adjusted, by the sin-bearing work of His Son. Over the work the great controversy has been settled forever and a friendship never to be broken has commenced between us. With God for my friend I pass through life in peace. With God for my friend, neither weariness, nor the grave, nor the judgment can alarm my soul. All is well!

BEST GIFT, OURSELVES.

And yet, on the other hand, money is the easiest gift for God. The biggest givers rarely pinch themselves for they put into the plate of their abundance. But God wants ourselves. All our capabilities, aims, hopes, lives, everything that makes up our lives. He claims all, and will give no real and abiding peace while we keep anything back. It has been well said, "If you surrender to Christ all you have, he will bestow upon you all he has."

The divinest attribute in the heart of God is love, and the mightiest, because the most human principle in the heart of man, is faith. Love is heaven; faith is that which appropriates heaven.—F. W. Robertson.

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