

Thy Love to Me.

BY MRS. MARY C. GATES.

Thy love to me, O Christ,
Thy love to me,
Not mine to Thee, I plead,
Not mine to Thee!
This is my comfort strong,
This is my only song,
Thy love to me.

Thy record I believe,
Thy word to me,
Thy love I now receive,
Full, changeless, free,
Love, from the sinless Son,
Love to the sinful one,
Thy love to me.

Immortal love of Thine,
Thy sacrifice,
Infinite need of mine
Only supplies.
Streams of divinest power,
Flow to me, hour by hour,
Thy love to me.

Let me more clearly trace,
Thy love to me,
See in the Father's face,
His love to thee,
Know as He loves the Son,
So dost Thou love thine own,
Thy love to me.

KEEPING THE SOUL ON TOP.

The story is told of a little girl who, upon returning from school was asked what the text had been. She replied, "I keep my soul on top!" Somewhat surprised to hear such unfamiliar Scripture, her father inquired where the text could be found. The child eagerly pointed out the well known passage in the writings of the great apostle in which he says: "I keep my body under!" If the little girl had been the wisest philosopher in the universe she could not have coined a phrase which expresses more exactly the true sense of the Apostle's language. Her interpretation voices the need of the century. The materialism of the age holds, with a grip of steel, the thought, brain and life that should throb with the invigorating pulse of true spiritual culture. Much of the labor of to-day, in the words of Emerson, is but "a malignant, haggard, care-worn running after luck." As a result men are old, weary, joyless, when they ought to be strong, alert, happy. The pressure of population upon subsistence renders the struggle for bread a desperate one to many classes in the community, at a disadvantage in the race of life. The condition of thousands of our fellow creatures is well described in a sentence quoted by Wm. Morris from the writings of Daniel De Foe: "And the men of labor spent their strength in daily struggle for bread to maintain the vital strength they labored with; so, being in a daily circulation of sorrow, living but to work, and working but to live, as if daily bread were the only end of a wearisome life, and a wearisome life the only occasion of daily bread." Thus habit and necessity combine to stifle the influences that might "crimson our lives with brighter hopes."

But there is something better for all of us than to live for pleasure, gain and physical well being. There is room for meditation at the eventide in the life of the humblest worker. God may be the apex of his thinking, and ideals of beauty the heavenly vision on his pathway in the intervals of toil. "To keep the soul on top," the spirit upmost amidst all the cares of the present—shall this become a lost art to the mechanic, farmer, tradesman, merchant, manufacturer, and all other busy workers? "It costs neither time nor money to forswear the epicurean philosophy of modern times, which finds expression in the debasing sentiment, 'To drift with every passion, till my soul is a strangled lute on which all winds can play.' If we look for higher things, Let a man watch the stars come out every evening, and he will read the secret of the soul's peace in the mysterious depths of their tranquil light. There is no aspiration without meditation. The workman who adds a good book to his library, inexpensive picture to the walls of his home, a pleasing ornament to his shelf, contributes to his own elevation and refinement. More important still, any man who values his higher nature cannot neglect to make religion, as taught by Jesus Christ, his friend. To keep the soul on top requires constant effort. Try to swim in the atmosphere of celestial aspiration, and a momentary suspension of strokes means a descent to lower areas of endeavor. Refuse the aid of the Divine Spirit in seeking to live for noble ends, and free progress in righteousness is checked by a thousand obstacles. A friend outside the city showed me his silo, a few days since, crammed with grass and clover slowly sinking beneath a platform loaded with heavy stones, until it should possess the requisite consistency. Out from under the blue sky and bright sun the green blades had been brought to the semi-darkness of the dusty barn. Thus do many of us con-

fine our souls between walls of habit four-square, and to them attach the stones of earthiness, choosing darkness in the place of light, the downward instead of the upward destiny. Surely it were better to keep the soul on top! In trouble, temptation, sickness, calamity, there is a window fronting the sky in this frail tenement of the body. The light that shines through it will never grow dim, for it is a fragment of the rainbow of God's love that arches eternity. The version of revelation that blundered upon the lips of the child contains the deepest and most abiding truth of the universe, to-wit, that man only lives when his thoughts and purposes are subordinated to the eternal interests of the soul in which the spark of divinity kindles the flame of religious hope.—N. Y. Observer.

Family Prayers.

It is often claimed of late that the proportion of professed Christian families which maintain family worship is less than it used to be. There are, however, no figures to show whether this is the case or not. This a private matter, and there are no statistics upon it to which one can turn. There is probably no pastor who has anything more than a general idea as to the extent or neglect of this practice within his own parish.

But even if we cannot find out exact proportions here, it is at least true that not all nominally Christian households maintain the family altar. It is equally true that it is the duty of every household, much more of such as profess to be in covenant with him, to daily worship God. We make our appeal here to those households which neglect this duty or which only occasionally attend to it. Our claim is that every family, morning and evening if possible, certainly once every day, ought as a family to come before God in devout worship.

We know that there are many apparent hindrances. In many places the necessary circumstances of our living seem ordinarily to put a barrier in the way. Where early work has to be done, where a certain train must be taken, it seems difficult to find the convenient moment. One reason for this, we take it, is that it is often supposed that more time is required for the discharge of the duty than is really the case. Visions rise before the mind of the protracted manner in which this was done in a more leisurely day than this. But the question is not as to the amount of time to be spent in the service. The real question is, Shall there be a gathering of the family to acknowledge God, to read his Word, to ask his blessing? All this can be reverently done in five minutes if there be no practicable arrangement by which a longer time may be secured. Surely no one can honestly say that at least five minutes cannot be secured from the occupations of the day in which the gathered household may worship God! Of course, it is better when a somewhat longer season can be thus spent. It is desirable that sacred song be added to the reading and prayer. But the essential thing is the worship, and the details of the act must be left to each family to settle according to its particular circumstances.

Another thing that operates against the performance of this duty is the hesitation which some have of uttering audible prayer in the presence of others. There may be cases where this hesitation is unconquerable. But in most instances all that is needed is the resolute determination to do the duty. In such a service as this, as in other places in our experience, he that hesitates is lost. On the contrary, let one make a beginning, and it will probably not be long before he will be wondering that the duty ever seemed so hard.

The advantages of regular family worship cannot be overestimated. God's blessing is promised upon the families that call upon his name, and to have this is to be rich, whatever be the other circumstances. Apart from this chief good there are also other blessings that come upon the household that daily gathers to worship God. The members of the family are bound together as they would not otherwise be, and the precious memories of the family altar linger while life lasts. There is here brought into the life that sense of eternal things and of an eternal Father which is necessary to make living in this world of material things safe. There is an elevation of tone that would not otherwise come into the family. There is a spirit of obedience that would not otherwise be engendered. There are no drawbacks whatever to the influence for good that come in the train of devout, regular family worship. The best image of heaven which this earth can afford is found when a household is gathered to learn God's will from his holy Word, to raise the song of praise in honor of his name, and to hold communion with him in prayer. Every family can thus

breathe the air of heaven every day.—*Illus. Chris. Weekly.*

The Governor's Pardon and God's Pardon.

According to a custom of long standing in Massachusetts, a convict was pardoned out of the State Prison on the last Thanksgiving Day. The five hundred and fifty convicts were assembled in the chapel to an entertainment of instrumental and vocal music furnished by a church choir. At an opportune moment, when all hearts were made tender by a pathetic song, the warden opened a sealed communication from Governor Robinson, announcing the pardon of Daniel J. Dwight, convicted of murder in the second degree ten years ago, and sentenced for life. It is said that the prisoners greeted the announcement with rounds of applause, and that Mr. Dwight's sister, who arrived soon after with some gifts for her brother, fainted quite away on hearing the joyful news.

This incident may suggest how joyful is the news of the sinner's pardon. It is not strange that the multitude of the heavenly host sang praises on that first Christmas at Bethlehem, for the birth of Jesus meant to them the offer of pardon to a guilty world. It is not strange that angels in heaven rejoice over one soul turning from sin to holiness and God, for God's pardon of a sinner is infinitely more than the Governor's pardon of a convict.

But suppose God's pardons were doled out like the Governor's pardon, and only one was given in a year, how breathlessly, as the time came round, would the world listen for the name of the favored one. Or if only one in five hundred could be pardoned in a year, how precious would the pardon be.

Shall pardon be less precious when it may be had by any one, and all are entreated to accept of it? God deals out His pardons by handfuls; shall we not rejoice, both in the pardon and in the freeness with which it is bestowed? God does not withhold his pardon until a given day in the year. He offers it now; to-day it may be had for the asking. Then "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."—Ex.

Keep Ahead.

One of the grand secrets of success in life is to keep ahead in all ways possible. If you once fall behind, it may be very difficult to make up the headway which is lost. One who begins with putting aside some part of his earnings, however small, and keeps it for a number of years, is likely to become rich before he dies. One who inherits property, and goes on year by year spending a little more than his income, will become poor if he lives long enough. Living beyond their means has brought multitudes of persons to ruin in our generation. It is the cause of nine-tenths of all the defalcations which have disgraced the age. Bankers and business men do not often help themselves to other people's money until their own begins to fall off, and their expenditures exceed their receipts. A man who is in debt walks in the midst of perils. It cannot but impair a man's self-respect to know that he is living at the expense of others. It is also very desirable that we should keep somewhat ahead in our work. This may not be possible in all cases; as for instance, when a man's work is assigned to certain fixed hours, like that of the operatives in a mill. But there are certain classes of people who can choose their time for the work which they are called to do, and amongst them there are some who invariably put off the task assigned as long as possible, and then come to its performance hurried, perplexed, anxious and confused—in such a state of mind as certainly unfits them for doing their best work. Get ahead and keep ahead, and your success is tolerably sure.

Fruit from a Voice-Test.

A friend of Mr. C. H. Spurgeon recently mentioned a remarkable conversion, resulting from an experiment Mr. C. H. Spurgeon made upon the acoustic character of a building in which he was to preach:

Some years ago Mr. Spurgeon, intending to preach in the Crystal Palace on a certain date, himself went to the palace for the purpose of giving orders as to where the partitions were to be put up, that his voice might be heard over as wide an area as possible. He tried his voice from various parts, reciting aloud the text, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Years passed by, and last year, when Mr. Spurgeon was laid aside by sickness, a message came to him requesting that he would visit a man who was dying, and was desirous to speak with Mr. Spurgeon. He,

being unable to go, sent his brother, and the dying man said, "Tell Mr. Spurgeon that twenty years ago I was working in the Crystal Palace, making some alterations previous to a sermon which he was going to give. He came to the palace to see the partitions raised, and called out several times, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' It was that text, sounded out in a strange manner, that was the arrow which God used to pierce my heart and make me see my Savior."

Friendship.

"Be not overcome of evil." Do not choose for your friends evil companions. In the first place because you will fall into the same evil practices with them. No matter how pleasant, how jolly, companionable he or she may be, if your friend lacks good principles, good motives, good ambitions, if he or she is dishonest, irreverent, impure, that friendship can only be a hurt to you. You will not rise much above the level of your intimate friend. If you do wish to rise above that level, you will have to break friendship. Do not choose evil companions, because your bad friends will prevent you from forming good friendships. Perhaps your association with a bad class will keep you out of good companionship, and make it almost impossible for you to enter it when you desire to do so. If you desire the help of good surroundings, you must give up evil associations. He who prefers to go with evil associates, may remember that if even he would escape their power, he must pay with time and patience for the distrust which he has himself raised toward himself. Be heedful then that you do not go into bad company, lest you lose the confidence of those whose confidence you need if you would keep your self-respect.

Nor is this all, for the young man who starts in life under evil influences, will have the whole future of his life dwarfed and stunted by the fact. Repentance may come, but the lost years cannot be lived again. The lost energies cannot be regained. The lost opportunities are gone forever. The old scars will never vanish entirely in this life. We may put behind us the old sins. But their results, in some degree, will never fail to be felt.

"Be not overcome of evil." But yet more, "Overcome evil with good." This last part of the text is equally important with the first. Find help of good friends to overcome the evil that is in your own life. We all need all the help we can get. The best man cannot afford to stand alone when he may gain the help of friends. Seek after all good influences. Surround the life with powers that shall educate and upbuild life. In history, on every page, is written the story of some brave, good life. Know the good men and women of the past. Study the lives of the saints of the Bible. Put yourself under the influence of helpful friendship. Above all walk with the One man who knew no sin, in whom every influence is blessed; who never spoke a word or performed a deed to harm His fellowmen. Learn from the life of the Son of God, and imitate it as near as you can with all the mind and heart and soul and body. Let the motives of Christ's life, the faith of His life, His broad sympathy, His devotions. Build after the likeness of His character—a character of your own. And if you are so doing, then it will be possible for you to be a friend of others and to help them even as Christ helps you. If a strong current of good is going out from our lives, there can be no stream of evil set back to defile us. Let us see to it that we are not overcome of evil, but that we endeavor to "overcome evil with good."—Extract from a Sermon by Rev. P. T. Farnell.

Missionary Consecration.

David Brainerd, at the age of twenty six, declined several urgent invitations to settle in New England as a pastor. He had at the same time a very highly flattering call from Long Island, but turning away from it all he gave himself to the work of preaching the Gospel to the Indians. Read this entry in his journal:—

"Here am I; send me. Send me to the ends of the earth. Send me to the rough, the savage pagans of the wilderness. Send me even to death itself, if it be in Thy service, and to promote Thy kingdom."

He was affianced to the lovely daughter of Jonathan Edwards, but he gave her up, and plunged alone into the wilderness, and passed his years with the savages, that he might win them to Christ.

The missionary spirit must come in larger measure upon the Church of God, or we can never carry the Gospel to the heathen world. We need 10,000 Brainerds this day. In four years he literally wore himself out, and died at the age of thirty. When

on the verge of eternity he said: "I declare, now that I am dying, I would not have spent my life otherwise for the whole world."

Dr. Thoburn, in his *Missionary Apprenticeship*, tells how his mother received the proposal that he should go as a missionary to India. "My widowed mother was beginning to feel the infirmities of age, and everyone assured me that her consent could never be obtained. I had anticipated as much, and was not surprised when told that she had said she could never consent to let me go. But when God undertakes to open one's way he can fully accomplish the task. When I began to talk the matter over with her, she spoke to me, in substance, as follows: 'I crossed the ocean in the hope of finding a home around which all my children might be gathered, and at first I felt that I could not consent to let you go the other side of the globe to spend all your days. But some days before your letter came, God began to prepare me for a great trial. Each night as I lay down to sleep a strange peace would fill my heart, and I would become so happy that I could hardly restrain myself. Something made me understand that the meaning of this was that God was preparing me for a great trial, and on every occasion I had a clear impression that in some way the trial would be connected with you. I understand it all now. I feel as if I could not bid you go, but I cannot bid you stay. It is of God, and I cannot doubt it.'"

Keep Oil in the Lamp.

In the lamp of the tabernacle was to be put "pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." This constant burning, this continual light, was to be maintained by pure and beaten oil. So, now, if we would bear a constant, uniform, and acceptable light in the temple of our God; if we would "shed a pure and heavenly ray" upon all around us; if we would maintain an acceptable testimony to the full redemption that is in Christ, if we would be living illustrations of the saving truth as it is Jesus; if we would be overcoming witnesses to Christ as the truth is; if we would "let our lights" so shine, that others may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven; then we must first see well to it that we are supplied not only with pure but also with beaten oil. O, for this calm and constant burning and shining for God! Imagine the quiet and continuous radiance of that tabernacle lamp! Through the day, and through the night, through the dark and through the light, its sole and simple duty was to shine on. Yet the discharge of every other service, within the tabernacle depended upon its shining. Ah, these meek, and quiet, and beautiful, and radiant characters, and lives, and testimony, flaming out "always" from the pure and beaten oil that is within the holy place of the saintly soul! Cleansing and chastening are two essentials of the oil of the sanctuary. Garments washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and coming up through great tribulation, fit as best for the temple below and the temple above. Have you—have I—the pure beaten oil within? Are we burning and shining for Jesus?—*Christian Standard and Home Journal.*

He saw the Gospel.

"Have you ever heard the Gospel before?" asked a missionary at Ningpo of a respectable Chinaman whom he had not seen in his mission room before. "No, but I have seen it. I knew a man who was the terror of his neighborhood. If you gave him a hard word he would at you and curse you for days and nights. He was as dangerous as a wild beast, and was a bad opium smoker. But when the religion of Jesus took hold of him, he became wholly changed. He is gentle, moral, not soon angry, and has left off opium."

A holy act strengthens the inward holiness. It is a seed of life, growing into more life.

The tale of divine pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity.

Thoughtlessness is never an excuse for wrong. Our hasty actions disclose, as nothing else does, our habitual feelings.

The Christian spirit loves with aid to go; Will not be sought, waits not for want to plead, But seeks the duty—nay, prevents the need.

I do not envy a clergyman's wishing an easy life, nor do I envy a clergyman who makes it any easy life.—Dr. Samuel Johnson.

It was a touching utterance by one of our most eminent American female writers; "She is only half-mother who does not see her own child in every child."

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