

THE GOSPEL CALL.

Christians, up! the day is breaking,
Gird your armor on;
Slumbering hosts around are waking,
Rouse ye! in the Lord be strong.

While ye sleep or idly linger,
Thousands sink with none to save;
Hasten! Time's unerring finger
Points to many an open grave.

Hark! unnumbered voices crying,
"Save us, or we droop and die!"
Succour bear the faint and dying,
On the wings of mercy fly.

Lead them to the crystal fountain,
Gushing with the streams of life;
Guide them to the sheltering mountain,
For the gale with death is rife.

Imitators Of Eccentric Preachers.

At intervals men naturally eccentric appear in the Christian pulpit. Their eccentricities may be of matter, manner, or both. If they are honest, and mean to do good, and come to their methods without the sacrifice of sincerity or the inflation of self-consciousness to such proportions as to pervert or destroy conscience, and if they preach sound doctrine and have real ability, a large balance in favor of their lives may exist.

Such a man was Lorenzo Dow. Some such men are now upon the scene. But whenever they arise imitators spring up who affect similar eccentricities or go further in the same direction. When Henry Ward Beecher was new, a host of men without a tithe of his ability introduced spurious wit into the pulpit, and employed coarse illustrations, not redeemed by genuine eloquence or appositeness.

Lorenzo Dow understood the difference between a man's being true to his own nature and being a cold-blooded imitator. It is said that a young man called upon Mr. Dow, and thus addressed him:

"Mr. Dow, I have heard you a great many times; I admire you to such an extent that I shall imitate you."

Dow looked upon him, and said: "Young man, if you imitate me, you will go to the devil."

This might easily be true; the original, being sincere and spontaneous, might not, in the sight of God, be guilty of irreverence or duplicity. The imitator, doing and saying the same things, might be justly chargeable with both.

There are some indications that the style of Sam Jones is being imitated by certain preachers. God forbid! Mr. Jones, according to an abundance of testimony, has done, may be expected to do, much good. His success is the result of his originality. But he says some things which, said by another, would do evil. The imitators cannot buy, beg or borrow, his personality, and thus they will diminish their native capacity for doing good, and will do much harm.

An aged minister, himself somewhat eccentric, offered the closing prayer after a strange sermon preached by an eccentric Presbyterian minister, and in it were these words: "We thank Thee that there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and we thank Thee that Thou hast given the Christianity of this age one—"; the blank being filled by the name of the officiating minister.

He Left A Very Large Property.

This is the closing sentence of an obituary, and it suggests some reflections.

What a pity he was obliged to leave it! He had taken great delight in accumulating it. As he added field to field, and farm to farm, he had looked with pride upon his extended domain, conscious that he was the largest land-holder in his community. His cattle, if not wandering upon a thousand hills, ranged over thousands of rich pastures. Stocks, notes, bonds, mortgages, crowded his safe. And it was all the fruit of his own industry, energy and good judgment. The rust of usury and the canker of extortion had not scarred any of his gold. It grieved him to leave this large property, to depart from the world as poor as he came into it, and to enter the other world utterly destitute of the wealth he so much loved in this. But he had to leave it, every cent of it.

He might have it with him. Rather, let us say, he might have sent it forward in advance of him. As the capitalist, who contemplates moving to a foreign country, converts his property into drafts and remits from time to time to the land of his future residence, he might have made remittances to that undiscovered country, so that on his arrival there, he would find abundant treasures laid up in heaven. Every dollar which he had given, consecrating it with sincere prayer, to assist in carrying the glad tidings of salvation to the ends of the earth—every contribution in aid of the many Christian enterprises for the glory of God, and the good of man; every cup of cold water given to a

disciple; every tear of pious sympathy for the suffering; every gift of kindly charity to the needy, would have added to the store of his "durable riches." He might have been rich toward God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. If it was sad for him to leave that large property, how much sadder that he sent none of it before him.

It is much more pleasant to go to, than to leave a large property. The man who, poor in this world's goods, but rich in faith, closes his eyes upon this life, goes to take possession of a large property. "He owned not a foot of land on earth, but for him 'sweet fields beyond the swelling flood stand dressed in living green.' His food here was coarse, perhaps scanty; but there he will eat freely from the tree of life, which yields twelve manner of fruits. His garments here were plain and poor, but there he shall be clothed in white robes, washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. He associates here with those who are despised and rejected of men, but there his companions will be an innumerable company of angels and the church of the first-born. Who would not rather go to a large property than to leave one?"—*Western Recorder*.

Unrecognized Indebtedness.

A young man with skeptical tendencies asked of his Christian friend one conclusive evidence that the Gospel is divine. His condition had become already perilous for the reason that unsatisfactory investigations had led him to the verge of hopeless indifference. "Consider," said his friend, "what this community would be if every vestige of this Gospel were immediately removed; every church demolished; every line of sacred literature blotted out; every Christian agency abolished—the entire population at this moment destitute of a single ray of gospel light." "Imagine, if possible, such desolation; and then, by way of contrast, think of our present exalted condition."

The serious thoughtfulness revealed in the countenance of the inquirer was the hopeful sign of his recovery from cheerless doubt. This view had not impressed him in precisely such a manner before. It is reasonable to believe that the suggestion made a lasting impression upon his mind. The authoritative proof, arising from other forms of Christian evidence, was not, in his case, equal to this simple appeal made by human lips. Reflection upon the beneficent results achieved in society through the truth of God, compelled him at last, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to an unreserved submission of his whole heart to Him.

We may well adopt, at this Christmas time, a similar method. What would be our present condition were we destitute of that light which broke upon the world at the advent of Jesus the Christ? Ought we not find occasion for the sincerest gratitude in such contemplations? Every blessing that we may name has its origin in this gift, the greatest of all. The good cheer in our family circles; that mutual confidence in our social life which is at once our joy and our protection amid the exposures of an earthly pilgrimage; the rich compensation that comes to us as the reward of tender sympathy for the distressed—all these are through Him, whom long ago the celestial throng delighted to honor.

Will it not form a part of the employment of the redeemed in heaven to seek the divine Source of all earthly good? And is it unreasonable to think that he who finds his highest joy in such employment on earth, will possess the greatest possible fitness to enter that blest abode when his Master shall say, "I come to receive you unto myself?"

Kindness.

No one can appreciate the value of a kind word unless he or she has been sore of heart and troubled in spirit. Then, when the heart is sad, when the heart is tempest-tossed, as it were, when all the world seems cold and drear, a little word of kindness is like a burst of glorious sunshine, and exerts a magical power in driving away the somber clouds of despondency that hang as a mantle of death over a wearied soul.

In every life there comes a time when life seems a mere empty nothing, a time when the soul sickens and the heart feels faint and weak. These periods come to us all—these blue days, when we see nothing bright or fair to live for. And when they come, how we long for a kind word from some one! How the heart yearns for sympathy, for the healing balm of love, for a little token of remembrance!

Oh, how great, how incomprehensible, how deep and unfathomable is the human soul! And yet what a potent power a little kindness has over it—a kind word, an act of love, anything to show that some one appreciates us!

We have at times been sad. At times a deep melancholy has settled down upon us, in spite of all our efforts to throw it off. We have at times felt that life was not worth living; have grown weary and despondent and sick at heart, weary of the continual and unceasing round of the never ending duties of life's toil; have at times almost given up. But when we thought of all the people in the world, there were a few who cared for us, a few who were ready to offer words of encouragement and love to cheer up our drooping spirits, then we took fresh courage, and commenced the warfare of life anew.

Oh, what a grand and glorious thing is kindness, that charity that is almost love, that virtue that surpasses all others! How desolate, how callous must be the soul that does not feel a new vigor and a new strength when some one who cares, speaks earnestly a few encouraging words!

Thousands of lives go down in gloom and are lost from the light, for the want of friendship and love. Thousands become impressed with the idea that no one cares for them, and that they have nothing to live for, and then throw themselves away and go down into the great vortex of human vices,—and all because some one fails to show a feeling of love or friendship for them.

The human soul is a peculiar thing. It becomes hungered for love. It has been said that troubles do not kill. Perhaps not. But thousands of souls have starved to death because they had no food but sorrow. What is life when ambition is fled? What is it to live when seemingly there is no longer anything but self to live for? Without love life is a waste, a mere breathing and moving, with no object or purpose in view, nothing to encourage one to work on and on for the consummation of glorious expectations. A little kindness, a word of love, a tender look, may do much to lighten the burden of those who have an overload of sorrow. Little things, easily given and of no cost, are yet, perhaps, worth more than any gift you can bestow, to the one who receives them.—*Arrow Rock Times*.

Why A Sermon was Discarded.

In a biographical notice of Rev. J. Phillips, Baptist minister, who died in 1880, we read, "One Saturday night after Mr. Phillips had prayerfully studied his sermon, he felt a strange sense of oppression and heart-weariness."

In the morning he said, "I cannot preach this; I do not feel the Lord present with me." His wife said, "Pray, get thee behind me Satan." He did, but entered the pulpit with a heavy heart. Service commenced. The time came for the text. He said, "My friends, I cannot tell what oppresses me, but I cannot preach the sermon I prepared. Let us pray." At the close he opened the Bible at Zech. 2:4, and read, "Run, speak to that young man," and without any preparation spoke earnestly as God gave him utterance. It was many years before he understood the cause of his being prompted to lay aside one sermon and preach another on that particular Sunday. The explanation came when long afterward he went to a meeting at a neighboring parish. A young man sought him and said, "I am a stranger to you; you are not to me," He replied, "you are mistaken; I have not to my knowledge ever spoken to you." "Oh, yes, you have, sir. Do you not remember preaching some years ago from the words, 'Run, speak to that young man?' I am that young man! I entered the chapel to annoy you and others, but the hand of God arrested me. The arrow sped home, and here I am, a living monument of God's mercy, and a minister of that same Gospel!"

Prayer-Meeting Resolutions.

1. I will make it a matter of conscience to attend.—"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together."
2. I will endeavor to bring others.—"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."
3. As I enter the room I will ask the Saviour's presence.—"We would see Jesus."
4. I will not choose a back seat.—"How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."
5. I will not seat myself as to keep others from the same pew.—"Be courteous."
6. I will fix my attention upon worship and the word.—"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, but their heart is far from me."
7. I will lead in prayer.—"Ye also helping together by prayer for us."
8. I will otherwise take part.—"Teaching and admonishing one another."
9. My prayers and my remarks shall be brief.—"For God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few."
10. I will avoid critical thoughts

of others who take part.—"Judge not."

11. After the meeting I will greet as many as I courteously can.—"Salute one another."

12. As I return home I will maintain a devout mind.—"Continuing instant in prayer."

13. By Christ's grace dwelling in me, I will daily live as I pray.—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my father."

A Good Experience.

God knows me better than I know myself. He knows my gifts and my powers, my failings and my weaknesses; what I can do, and cannot do. So I desire to be led; to follow Him, and I am quite sure that He will thus enable me to do a great deal more in ways which seem to me almost a waste in life, in advancing His cause, than I could in any other way. I am sure of that. Intellectually, I am weak; in scholarship, nothing; in a thousand things, a baby. He knows this, and so He had led me and greatly blessed me, who am nobody, to be of some use to my Church and fellow-men. How kind, how good, how compassionate art Thou, O God! O my Father, keep me humble! Help me to have respect toward my fellow-men, to recognize these several gifts as from Thee. Deliver me from the diabolical sins of malice, envy, or jealousy and give me hearty joy in my brother's good, in his work, in his gifts and talents and may I be truly glad in his superiority to myself, if God be glorified. Root out weak vanity, all devilish pride, all that is abhorrent to the mind of Christ. God, hear my prayer. Grant me the wondrous joy of humility, which is seeing Thee as all in all.—*Norman Macleod's Diary*

"Give Him a Cheer."

Many a man fails in a good but difficult effort because he receives criticism when he needs and ought to have encouragement. It is better to help than to hinder, but the latter is easier; a child may throw a railroad train off the track.

A fireman was trying to reach from the top of a ladder a poor woman who was imploring help at the widow of a burning house. One among the crowd below cried: "You can't do it, come down."

He was already sufficiently discouraged by the difficulty, was somewhat burned and almost choked by the smoke. He began to descend, and was leaving the woman to her fate, when a man shouted: "Give him a cheer."

The vast crowd made the air ring with their encouragement, whereupon the fireman stopped, again ascended towards the window, and, aided by the cheering of the multitude, wrought a seeming miracle and brought the woman safely to the ground. "Give him a cheer" is a good motto.—*Christ Church Quarterly*.

Rule for Fretters.

A little girl had been visiting me who was a fretter. She fretted when it rained, and fretted when it shone. She fretted when little girls came to see her, and she fretted when they did not. It is dreadful to be a fretter. A fretter is troublesome to her friends. We, to be sure, have our troubles; but fretting does not help us to bear or get rid of them.

I have lately come across a short rule for fretters, which they shall have. Here it is: "Never fret about what you can't help, because it won't do any good. Never fret about what you can help, because if you can help it, do so." Say this when you get up in the morning, say it at noon, say it at night, and not only say, but do; and that will be, do not fret at all—a fine doing.

The only right way of getting along is not to wish ourselves somebody else, and fret ourselves because we are not, but contentedly to bear our lot, and be satisfied with what God has given us.

Making Children Happy.

There is no better test in the world to apply to a household than that of whether the children in it are truly happy—happy in their association with their parents, and happy with any chance company under the roof. The household in which this is not the case is a melancholy, a fairly tragic failure. Perhaps the highest achievement of civilization, refinement, education, and religion, is a home in which an at once loving and reverential relation subsists between children and their fathers and mothers, children and the familiar and welcome guests of the house.—*Boston Herald*.

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