

## The Trysting Place.

"There will I meet with thee, and commune with thee from above the mercy-seat." (Ex. 25: 22.)

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18: 20.)

The hour of prayer,—the hour of grace!  
My God, how can it be,  
Thou dost appoint a trysting-place,  
To meet with me?

The hour of blessing! when my Lord  
Speaks to my heart alone;  
When I may listen to His word,  
Draw near His throne!

"Above the mercy-seat," He shows  
The vision of His face;  
With joy, my soul, O haste, to seek  
That "trysting-place!"

Have I that sacred meeting missed  
Again, and yet again?  
And have I left my gracious Lord  
To call, in vain?

There, where His saints each other greet  
In His own house of prayer,—  
Hath God come down with me to meet,  
And I, not there?

Master! as Mary, at Thy feet,  
Treasured each word of grace,—  
So shall my heart find safe, and sweet,  
Thy trysting-place!

Blest meeting, Thou, of God and man;  
In Thee, our way we trace!  
Redeemer,—Christ! Thou, only art  
Our Trysting-Place!

—MARTHA ELYRIA PETERS in *Inquirer*.

## The Swearer's Confession.

Profanity is an irreverent and undevout use of any of the titles of the Supreme Being. Such use of these titles, while it marks a man of low and vulgar habits, is a sin against God, and at the same time an offence against the decencies of human life. One of the precepts of the Decalog is in these words: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." (Ex. xx, 7.) This does not forbid the reverent use of God's name, as in prayer or in Christian conversation or discourse; but it does forbid all uses that come within the terms specified. The "name" of God is so identified with him, and he with it, that to take his name "in vain," as is the fact in profane swearing, is to sin against him, and expose ourselves to his punitive wrath.

Some men are so accustomed to profanity that they swear parrot-like, without any special passion or purpose at the time, and almost without thinking of it. It is as much their habit to swear as it is to walk, or do anything else that they do by habit. Hundreds of profane oaths fall from their lips in a single day, not one of which is noticed at the time. Swearing is a part of their acquired dialect, and is with them a fixed habit in ordinary conversation, and that, too, to an extent of which they really have no idea themselves.

Other men, not being such habitual swearers, break out in profane language only on special occasions; and when they do this, it is generally for the purpose of either invoking a curse upon others, or intensifying and emphasizing their own assertion. Nearly all their profanity, if not the whole of it, is the profanity of *malediction* or *emphasis*.

What then are the confessions involved in profane swearing? The first answer to this question is that the existence of God is confessed by the profane swearer, just as really as it is confessed by one who devoutly says: "Our Father, which art in heaven." The swearer profanely uses one of the titles of God, and generally the title *God*, and virtually concedes that there is a God whose name he takes upon his lips. He may not have thought much of this God, and certainly has not; yet some idea of the great Being to whom the title is usually applied more or less exists in his own mind. He does not confound that idea with his idea of man, or of an angel, or of anything else. All swearers mean the same being when they take the name of God in vain. Some idea, however imperfect, relating to this God, is common to them all; and this would be found to be the fact if their mental condition at the time were analyzed.

A second confession of the swearer, when the oath is *maledictive*, is that God has power to inflict curses on men. Sometimes maledictions is the exact form of the oath. God is in express terms asked to curse the object of the swearer's passions. He is angry with somebody; and he vents his passion by asking God to curse that somebody, thereby confessing both the existence and the power of God. The vengeance of the swearer profanely asks for the vengeance of God upon the object of that vengeance.

The third confession of the swearer, when the oath is used to intensify and emphasize assertion, is that God has knowledge. Profanity in this form concedes the existence and knowledge of God, and appeals to the latter in confirmation of what the swearer profanely says, and by implication, and sometimes in ex-

press language, invokes God's curse upon himself if what he says is not true. He sets the seal of profanity to his own language, and assumes to add strength to the assertion by appealing to God. He puts himself under oath, contrary to the teachings of the Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount, and calls God to witness to the truth of what he says. He does this as one of his habits of talking, when he wants to talk strongly, and give emphasis to the language of his lips. This is the way in which some men take the name of God "in vain." They profanely use the name to confirm their own assertions, not because they devoutly worship God or piously fear him, but because they wish to give intensity and positiveness to their own language.

The wonder, in view of what swearers confess in the very act of profanity, is that they swear at all. The creed involved in the language they use, rebukes their profanity. They are not atheists, and do not talk as if they were such. They admit the existence of God, and yet they profanely use his name. They concede that this God has power to inflict curses, and that he has knowledge, and that in both respects he is vastly superior to man; and yet they trifle with his sacred name, and vent their passions in the trifling. They sin against God in the very act of speaking his name. They blend with the sin a confession that rebukes the sin. They are confessors and sinners in the same breath. There is no other form of sin whose commission so distinctly carries with it a remonstrance against its own existence. Let the swearer soberly and seriously think of his own words, and of what is implied in those words, and he will preach to himself a sermon against profane swearing.

We are not speaking of the judicial oath, or discussing the question of its lawfulness, and are not speaking of such devout appeals to God as occasionally appear in the writings of Paul. But we are speaking of that vulgar and profane use of God that is so common on the swearer's lips, and that, in what it confesses, carries with it its own rebuke. No swearer can think of what he confesses without hearing this rebuke. He is a trifle with the great Being who made him, and whose existence, power and knowledge he admits in the very act itself. Let him turn his thoughts to his thoughts, and by these thoughts become a wiser and better man. Then he will not load the air with his profanities, or dishonor his own lips by taking God's name "in vain."

—Independent.

## Self-Made?

A wealthy business man not long ago made a short visit in his native town, a thriving little place and while there was asked to address the Sunday school on the general subject of success in life.

But I don't know that I have anything to say, except that industry and honesty win the race, he answered.

Your very example would be inspiring, if you would tell the story of your life, said the superintendent. Are you not a self-made man?

I don't know about that. Why, I've heard all about your early struggles! You went into Mr. Wheelwright's office when you were only ten—

So I did! So I did! But my mother got me the place, and while I was there she did all my washing and mending, saw that I had something to eat, and when I got discouraged told me to cheer up and remember tears were for babies.

While you were there you studied by yourself—

Oh, no, bless you, no! Not by myself! Mother heard my lessons every night, and made me spell long words while she beat up cakes for breakfast. I remember one night I got so discouraged I dashed my writing-book, ugly with pot-hooks and trammels, into the fire, and she burned her hand pulling it out.

Well, it was certainly true, wasn't it, that as soon as you had saved a little money you invested in fruit, and began to peddle it out on the evening train?

The rich man's eyes twinkled and then grew moist over the fun and pathos of some old recollection.

Yes, he said, slowly, and I should like to tell you a story connected with that time. Perhaps that might do the Sunday-school good. The second lot of apples I bought for peddling were speckled and wormy. I had been cheated by the man of whom I bought them, and I could not afford the loss. The night after I discovered they were unfit to eat, I crept down cellar and filled my basket as usual.

They look very well on the outside, I thought, and perhaps none of the people who buy them will ever come this way again. I'll sell them, and just as soon as they are gone I'll get some sound ones. Mother was singing about the kitchen as I came up the cellar stairs. I hoped to get out of the house without dis-

cussing the subject of unsound fruit but in the twinkling of an eye she had seen and was upon me.

Ned, said she, in her clear voice, what are you going to do with those speckled apples?

Sell them, stammered I, ashamed in advance.

Then you'll be a cheat, and I shall be ashamed to call you my son, she said, promptly. Oh, to think you could dream of such a sneaking thing as that! Then she cried and I cried, and—I've never been tempted to cheat since. No, sir, I haven't anything to say in public about my early struggles, but I wish you'd remind your boys and girlsevery Sunday that their mothers are probably doing far more for them than they do for themselves. Tell them, too, to pray that those dear women may live long enough to enjoy some of the prosperity they have won for their children—for mine didn't.—*Youth's Companion*.

## The Atlas and the Dictionary.

The habit of consulting these two books is invaluable, and the earlier it is formed in childhood the better. The atlases used in the grammar schools are sufficient for ordinary reference. To some children geography is a difficult study, but we think if at the beginning of the study and all the way along the atlas is made continual use of as a reference book, and the child taught to find on the map every place it knows anything about, all difficulty would vanish.

As one grows older the necessity for a continual use of the atlas becomes more and more imperative. We are reading every day of happenings here and there, at home and abroad, and unless we can materialize the points named and give them a local habitation, much of what we read will fail to profit us. With a good book of travels and an atlas one may, without moving from his own fireside, see a great deal of foreign life and escape all the discomfort of travellers. It is quite usual now to find in books of travels accurate and minute maps of the route gone over, and this is as it should be.

The dictionary is another book we need to have near at hand all the time. New words are being added to our vocabulary, and old words are used with new shades of meaning. If we are reading after a writer who understands the definition and force of the words he uses we shall often be compelled to return to the dictionary in order to get the full value of the thoughts expressed. If we are reading a scientific work we need to refresh our memories, for scientific and technical terms slip easily from the memory, and though we may understand him thoroughly and exactly. The person who can locate in his mind on the map all the places he reads about, and readily define accurately all the words and terms he finds in his reading, or hears his sermons speeches and conversations, has made a good beginning toward an accumulation of accurate and valuable knowledge.—*N. Y. Christian Advocate*.

## Good at Review.

Simple, straightforward truth will usually stand any test, and well did the soldier in the following incident prove the truth of what he said. The instance occurred during the Revolutionary War, when the strictest order was enjoined, and each army was ever on the watch lest the enemy should get an advantage.

One night near the British camp, not far from the River Hudson, a Highland soldier was caught creeping stealthily back to his quarters from out the woods. He was taken before the commanding officer, and charged with holding communication with the enemy. The case of Major Andre was then recent, and no Briton was disposed to be merciful toward a suspected friend of the American.

The poor Highlander pleaded that he had only gone into the woods to pray by himself. This was his only defense.

The commanding officer was himself a Scotchman and Presbyterian, but he felt no tenderness for the culprit.

Have you been in the habit, sir, of spending hours in private prayer? he asked sternly.

Yes, sir.

Then down on your knees and pray now! thundered the officer; you never before had such need of it.

Expecting, perhaps, immediate death, the soldier knelt and poured out his soul in a prayer that for aptness and simple, expressive eloquence could have been inspired only by the piety of a Christian.

You may go said the officer when he had done. I believe your story. If you had not been often at drill, you couldn't have got on so well at review.

The poor soldier had saved his life by proving himself to have practiced habitual communication with God.—*Selected*.

## If I Were a Girl.

If I were a girl I would have an aim in life. I would set my mark high, and would not fall short of it. The adage, "Where there's a will there's a way," is as true as steel.

I would imitate the neatness and gentility of my mother.

I would keep good company or none at all.

I would read good books, such as would enlarge my mind and fit me for a higher life.

I would be truthful in my actions as well as in words.

I would keep a diary, for it might be useful, as well as a pleasure, in later years.

I would show people that being a girl did not keep me from possessing good common sense and a sound mind.

I would never let one of the opposite sex overreach me in climbing the "hill of science."

I would choose for a husband, if I chose any, a man of unblemished character.

I would learn the law of kindness.

I would continually seek the companionship of the three graces, perseverance, forbearance and endurance, until I became familiar with each of them; for a woman having these for an armor is well equipped for the journey of life.

I would wear the dress of modesty, with a neatly-fitting cap of discretion. I would lace shoes of caution upon my feet, so I might walk the "imperial highway" with womanly dignity. I would incase my hands in gloves of good works, sewed with threads of steadfastness. Over these I would throw a wray of fatherly protection.—*Woman's Work*.

## How to Improve the Prayer-Meeting.

1. Think about it all day, and anticipate it with pleasure.

2. Be sure to be in time, and take your seat close up in front.

3. Sing cheerfully; bright, joyous singing wonderfully helps to make a lively prayer-meeting.

4. When you pray be sure to be brief and believing, with thanks to God for every token of blessing he has given the church and Sunday-school.

5. When the meeting closes give a hearty shake of the hand to strangers, and speak a kindly word to your brethren. Try to make the prayer-meeting as much like a family gathering as possible.

6. When you mention the prayer-meeting during the week, tell how good and pleasant you found it to be.

7. Be more earnest in private prayer on behalf of the church, and resolve that whoever else may be absent, you will not neglect the opportunity of assembling with brethren, in earnest waiting on God, until he is pleased to command the blessing. Resolve, if the prayer-meeting be not in a healthy state, it shall not be your fault.

## Only one Day at a Time.

A certain lady had met with a very serious accident, which necessitated a very painful surgical operation and many months of confinement to her bed. When the physician had finished his work and was taking his leave, the patient asked:

Doctor, how long shall I have to lie here, helpless?

O, only one day at a time, was the cheery answer, and the poor sufferer was not only comforted for the moment, but many times during the succeeding weary weeks did the thought, Only one day at a time, come back with its quieting influence.

I think it was Sidney Smith who recommended taking short views as a safe-guard against needless worry; and one far wiser than he said: Take therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.—*Observer*.

## Study Unselfishness.

I remember having to advise a man who had fallen into a sad, because morose, life, and had put himself under my counsel; and I said, Suppose you begin by passing the butter at the table. He needed to be on the outlook, consciously, for little occasions to serve those around him. Take care in the least exercises that you care for others.

I do not like that man, said a sound observer to me; I saw him let his wife pick up her own handkerchief. This critic was right in that quick judgment.

I judge him by the way he treats his dog. That is a wise criticism; and if it is wise in criticism it is wise in life. Train yourself to unselfishness in what the world pleases to call little things.—*E. E. Hale*.

Don't hurry. Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

Sleep and rest abundantly. Sleep is nature's benediction.

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