

Blessing of the Merciful.

BY J. BYINGTON SMITH, D. D.

"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."—Matt. v. 7.

The merciful themselves receive
As they to others mercy give;
As God for each of us hath care,
So He commands that thou should'st be
To others as He is to thee
If thou would His rich mercy share.

Who give themselves for other's gain
The greater good shall they attain;
Who pity have for human woe,
Or healing balm for other's grief,
For other's comfort and relief,
Shall mercy reap as they bestow.

Compassion for another's woes
To them and us brings sweet repose;
When other's troubles begin
To bear, and care for these in need,
We find the pit from which they're freed
The grave our own are buried in.

It is in giving we receive,
By sacrifice we truly live;
Not much or little we attain,
But generous use of it we make
For others and the Master's sake
Attends for us our loss or gain.

God's rich abundant mercy flows
To whomsoever mercy shows,
And Christ the merciful makes known
That they who shall the needy give,
Or who for good of others live,
Shall share in blessing with His own.
—The Standard.

The Sin of Discouragement.

Is discouragement a sin? Yes, when it hamstrings a Christian and gives God the lie. He has never promised us that life would be a smooth sail before fair winds, or that we shall get to heaven before our time. Quite the opposite. He has so ordained that the best things shall be costly, and that the best life shall be one of conflict, oppositions, trials, and hard discipline. The promise is for strength equal to the day, even the darkest day.

There is a mighty difference between being distressed and being discouraged. After those border ruffians, the Amalekites, had burned up the town of Ziklag—which was David's private property, and had been his place of residence—we are told that "David was greatly distressed, but he encouraged himself in the Lord, his God." He asked God what he should do, and the divine answer came promptly: "Pursue them." He musters his gallant six hundred, pushes after the enemy, routs them, and recovers all the plunder they had carried off. Disaster did not discourage him; it drove him to God. He may have had this experience in his mind, among others, when he afterward rang out this cheering word: "Be of good courage, and God shall strengthen thy heart."

Our Christian lives are spent in continual conflicts with enemies, outside and in. Our Ziklages are often burned out. There are no end of "Amalekites," and some of them inside of our own hearts. Conversion does not end the battle with the besetting sins. In sight of my house lives a church member, who inherited an appetite for strong drink, and the sight of a decanter or the open door of a dram shop rouses the old appetite. Another friend of mine has a constant fight with an unruly temper, and his wife with a rather unruly tongue. If other people knew what a tough time that couple have with their "Amalekites," they would give them credit for a great triumph of grace.

Pride is the besetting sin of Brother A., and covetousness still makes it no easy thing for Brother B. to open his purse liberally when the missionary "offertory" is taken up. In fact, the standing order to every one of us, "I say unto you all, Watch!" and another order is, "Keep thy heart with all diligence." Heart-keeping is very much like housekeeping. There must be a continual sweeping out of dirt and cleaning out of rubbish, a daily washing of dishes, and a perpetual battle with all sorts of vermin. And then, too, ever and anon our beloved Ziklages, with their cherished treasures, are burned down. The question then is, Shall distress drive us to despair and thus disgrace us? or, Shall it drive us to God, who will give us the victory.

One of the most frequent temptations to discouragement arises from the apparent failure of our best efforts and undertakings. How often we ministers prepare a Gospel message from the fountain head of Scripture, and season the sermon with prayer, and persuade ourselves that such truths must convert some sinners and must conquer some hard hearts. No echo seems to follow our strokes; no response is made to our appeals; sermons seem to rebound like shotflung against a wall of adamant. Satan whispers in our ears the taunt, "Where is thy God?" The demon of discouragement lays his icy paw on us and sneers in our face, "D'nd't I tell you so?" These are some of the

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hardest trials that a faithful minister or a devoted Sunday school teacher has to face. Under such circumstances discouragement is just what the decanter is to the inebriate, or what the card table is to a gambler—it is an assailing sin. Under such assaults we must encourage ourselves in God, as David did; we must remember that it was His message we were uttering, and His children we were preaching to, and for His honor and glory. We were using His weapons, and He is responsible for results. All that you and I are responsible for is doing our duty. Ours is the seeding, and God alone beholds the end of what is sown. How do we know how much good we accomplish when we do any good thing or utter any truth in love? Eternity will be full of surprises to us. Wait and see.

One of the worst evils wrought by the sin of discouragement is that we are tempted to stop when we are just on the eve of realized success, and almost in sight of the richest blessings. Up near the summit of Mount Washington there is—or used to be—a cairn of stones to mark the spot where a poor girl perished of exposure and heart failure on a cold autumnal night. Her father and she had rashly essayed to ascend the mountain without a guide, had become lost, and had sat down bewildered in the chilling darkness. The next morning the distracted father discovered that a few rods more would have brought him in sight of the lights from the windows of the "Tip-top House!" Here is a bit of a parable to illustrate how those who are doing, not rash things, but wise things, may be tempted to lose heart, and relax their efforts when they are almost in sight of success. During my first ministry in the little church at Burlington, N. J., I became distressed at the difficulties to be encountered, and at the apparent failure of my efforts. I became sinfully discouraged, and began to think of fleeing away to some Tarshish or other. God was better to me than I was to Him. He "headed me off" with a wonderful outpouring of His Spirit on that little church which doubled its members, and taught me one of the most blessed lessons I have ever learned. The darkest hour was just before the dawn. I tremble to think how near I came to missing that glorious revival, which was worth more to me than any year in the seminary.

Noble old Dr. Adoniram Judson preached in Burmah for six years without the first visible convert; then came a great harvest. What an heroic story Father Paton told us of his struggles with hordes of "Amalekites" in those cannibal islands of the New Hebrides! In these days, when skepticism spread their malaria, and worldliness abounds more than conversions do, ministers and God's people in our churches may well imitate David and "encourage ourselves in the Lord God." If we, instead of betaking ourselves to all manner of new devices in our churches, go straight to God on our knees, and implore the "power from on high," we shall have the rich satisfaction of knowing that we are working on God's lines, and can rightfully claim His blessing. Two thirds of all the failures in this world come from the want of courage. In the next world we shall probably discover that discouragement has robbed many sinners of their souls and many Christians of their crowns.—The Rev. T. L. Cuyler, D. D.

Elements of Church Strength.

"Put on thy strength, O Zion!" is the appeal of the prophet to ancient Israel. It is a call to wakefulness and activity. It is a call to make use of the means, to comply with the conditions, which are essential to strength and usefulness. The church that is indifferent to its high mission and is in a state of lethargy is weak. Under right conditions it is strong—an agency of power and blessing in the conversion and reformation of individuals and of society. What are some of the elements in the successful church of our times? Let us note a few of them:

1. Loyalty to the truth of God's word. The Bible is the supreme creed of the church. Its teachings respecting character and life are the standard by which the church is to be governed in accomplishing its mission. If it lowers the standard of the Bible it becomes weak and useless. If it requires less of its members than God requires of them in his word, it lacks that vital power that is so essential to the salvation of sinful men. If it minimizes God's requirements of righteousness and purity—purity of heart and holiness of life—it comes short of the scriptural standard. Such a church comes short of the divine requirement, and so must lack power and fruitfulness. Its ministers will not magnify the great cardinal doctrines of con-

Sour tempers sweetened by the use of K. D. C.

version, of godly living, and complete separation from the world. A church thus disloyal to the teachings of the word of God will be filled with ungodly members who shed no helpful light or exercise no vital power to help and save this dark, lost world. The strong church is one loyal to the divine law, and whose pulpit fearlessly preaches it—the whole counsel of God.

2. The strong church is one in which there is intelligent Christian living. It is good to have and believe the truth, but it is better to live the truth. Christianity is not a mere creed; it is a life. The church exhibits its power and usefulness by holy living. A church that lives well will be a strong church. The world cannot gain a Christianity that is exemplified in everyday life.

3. Activity in service to Christ. The strong church is the working church. "The way to put on strength is to put out strength." The artist becomes skillful by practice; the violinist becomes strong by practice; so the Christian and the church become strong by practice, by doing the will of God. The highest conception of the Christian life is service. The church that serves God will honor. It is the working church that wins.

4. Fidelity to the church. Where the members show their fidelity by a prompt and regular attendance upon its services, and by a cordial support of the pastor and his work, there will be a strong church. Church spirit, or what may be called church esprit de corps, will contribute to fidelity. Where this is lacking there is likely to be indifference to the services of the church, and consequently irregularity in attendance, with general unfaithfulness. Without fidelity no church can be strong or trustworthy.

5. Unity. A united church is strong for work and is invulnerable to foes without. A church with cliques, with parties and party spirit, in which there are back-biting and strife, is sure to be devoid of spiritual power. Such a church has not the spirit of Christ, and without his spirit must be weak; for he says, "Without me ye can do nothing." Where unity and brotherly love prevail there the church will be irresistible. It will have conquering power. God wants a united people—a people one in spirit and one with him. Such a church only has the strength needed to win souls and to build up souls in faith and righteousness.

6. Systematic and proportionate giving to God. When the church consecrates its money to God and his service then its interests will not lag for want of funds. A church that does this is likely to be strong spiritually and every other way. The gifts of the church are a good index of its inner spirituality and life. But this giving must not be spasmodic or haphazard, but systematic and as God has prospered. It is the regular giving that counts. This counts even more than occasional large giving. What is wanted in every church is regular and proportionate giving from all—the rich to give of their abundance, the poor to give of their little—all give something as they are able. Higher ideals in giving are needed. The church is getting them. It is gaining in working strength as it is dominated by these ideals. The giving is to be to God, not to the church, not to the boards, not to anything else but to God, who has given to every one all he has, with all his possibilities of usefulness. Giving should be an act of worship—as much so as praying or reading the Bible. When the church comes to realize this and responds to God's calls for money as readily as a millionaire's son would do in obedience to his father's commands, then will it be strong and fruitful.

These are a few of the elements to be found in a strong and successful church. Where they are lacking they should be diligently sought. They have spiritual objects in view—objects that are worthy of the supreme energy of every Christian.

Let, then, the church of our adorable Redeemer put on its strength—the strength of God. Let it be equipped with his presence and grace, and it has indestructible and conquering attributes. Such a church has revival power, and is capable of winning in the greatest battles that are ever fought in this world—the battles of the soul. Strength should be put on for this great work because the time is short for work, because the enemy is on the alert, the Master is worthy, and the crown and reward are sure.—TeleScope.

A Great Lesson Well Learned.

It was a lesson of contentment. There are so many annoying and trying things in our circumstances in this world that the lesson is a very difficult one for us imperfect creatures to learn. And the fact is, that the number of

The clergy have tested the K. D. C. and

those who do learn it, to any large extent, is comparatively quite small. Most of us are much like the Israelites in the wilderness, who murmured and rebelled whenever matters were not according to their liking. Probably the only member of the human family that has been contented in all circumstances was the Lord Jesus Christ.

And probably no other person ever came so near him in this regard as the Apostle Paul. He and he only probably could truthfully say: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." It was a grand thing for him to be able to say this, for probably no other person ever endured so many and so great afflictions as he did. Many and great were his trials for Christ's sake. And yet he made no complaint. He was even joyful in all his tribulations. Though sorrowful, he was always rejoicing. He was probably the most contented and happy person in all the world.

And when and where did he learn this important lesson? Not, certainly, before his conversion. It was not until he had become acquainted with Christ, and had become thoroughly changed in heart. It was not in any school of the world, but in the school of Christ. It was not until Christ had become his teacher and exemplar. None ever learn this lesson until then. Men may take a philosophical view of things and cherish and manifest a stoical indifference to whatever may happen, but this is a very different thing from Christian contentment. There is in all this no sweet submission to the divine will, no joyful submission in tribulation. It is nothing but brute-like stupidity. If we would learn true Christian contentment, such as becomes us under the government of an infinitely just and wise and benevolent God, we must sit at the feet of Jesus as our teacher, contemplate his blameless life, and seek his grace. Our oft-repeated and sincere prayer must be—

"Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessings of thy grace impart,
And make me live to thee."

A Missionary Buys a Slave.

Dr. Wenyon, a Wesleyan medical missionary, who has been laboring a number of years in China, stated to a Liverpool audience how he came to buy a slave. He told them there was a baby market in Canton where baby girls could be bought at from two shillings to a pound each. Sometimes they were bought by parents as wives for their boys, and at other times as slaves. One day a man brought a blind girl to the hospital to be surgically treated, to have a diseased bone removed from the foot. She had been very cruelly treated by her master, and began to cry after he had left. On being asked the reason why, she said that she preferred to die rather than be cured. The owner called the next day, and the doctor told him to take her away; but he replied that he had given two hundred dollars for her, and that no one would buy her with her diseased foot. The doctor offered him five dollars, which was at first refused, but afterwards accepted. A regular deed of sale was made out and signed. The operation was successfully performed. The girl was brought under Christian teaching and developed a wonderful memory, so that within twelve months she could repeat a large portion of the Gospel. After a period of probation she was baptized, and became an exemplary Christian, and was married to a respectable farmer.

The Lost Boy.

One Sunday, Mr. D. L. Moody was preaching in the big circus-tent near the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, from the text, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." After he had finished, a little boy, with handsome face and form, was brought to the platform by an officer, who said he had found him wandering in the crowd, evidently lost.

Mr. Moody took the little fellow in his arms, and, standing before the great throng, asked the people to look at the lost child. "This boy has a father who is no doubt at this moment looking for him with an anxious heart," said the preacher. "The father is more anxious to find his boy than the boy is to be found. It is just so with our heavenly Father. He is seeking us to day—seeking us with unspeakable solicitude. For long years he has been following you, O sinner! He is following you still. He is calling you to day."

At this instant a man with blanched face and excited eye was seen elbowing his way toward the platform. As he reached it, the little boy saw him, and, running quickly over the platform, threw himself into his father's outstretched arms. The multitude witnessed the scene with breathless attention.

K. D. C. tones and regulates

tion, and then broke out into a mighty cheer. "Thus," said Mr. Moody, "will God receive you, if you will only run to him to-day. 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.'—Christian Intelligencer.

Wait.

Be not swift to judge others. Whenever the supposed errors or weaknesses of others are brought to our notice, let us hesitate—let us postpone reflecting upon them. Possibly some slight prejudice may mislead us, and thus innocent persons may suffer. Wait. In our cooler moments, when an opportunity is given us to know their early training, their present surroundings, and their secret motives, we may be constrained to modify our first unfavorable impressions. We all need just such leniency from others. Our best efforts, those that are most productive of good, are sometimes the occasion of present adverse criticism. If only hasty judgment is suspended for a season, time will cause such a reversal that our cause may be justified before all men. That which may have seemed positively wrong at the first, subsequently is acknowledged to be an evidence of our integrity! "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." To be kind to all men, considerate of them in their struggles, slow to convict them of wrongdoing, silent when the cause of righteousness will not suffer by delay—this is Christian nobility. Wait. Choose the more excellent way. If our charity for others "suffereth long" we shall be enriched by a divine reaction of love in our own hearts, a blessing that is beyond all price.

A Large Mite.

The *Morning Star* tells this story to show that it will not do to jest about the widow's mite unless you are prepared to stand by the consequences:

"A gentleman once called upon a rich friend for some charity.

"'Yes, I must give you my mite,' said the rich man.

"Do you mean the widow's mite?" asked the solicitor.

"Certainly" was the answer.

"I shall be satisfied with half as much as she gave," said his friend.

"How much are you worth?"

"Seventy thousand."

"Give me, then, your check for thirty-five thousand dollars; that will be half as much as she gave; for she, you know, gave her all."

The rich man was conquered. Covetous people often try to shelter themselves behind the widow's mite.

Poor Digestion

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No man will ever be converted right until he is willing to be converted in God's way.

Severe colds are easily cured by the use of Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup, a medicine of extraordinary penetrating and healing properties. It is acknowledged by those who have used it as being the best medicine sold for coughs, colds, inflammation of the lungs, and all affections of the throat and chest. Its agreeableness to the taste makes it a favorite with ladies and children.

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A fatal attack of croup is a frequent occurrence among children. Every household should be guarded by keeping Hagar's Yellow Pectoral Balm at hand. It breaks up colds, coughs, croup, asthma and bronchitis in a remarkable manner.

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