

All Saints.

I thank Thee for Thy written word, my God
For every sacred line;
But more I thank Thee for Thy humblest
saint,
Whose daily life doth shine
A living page, most true, most pure, most
sweet,
Fresh from Thy hand divine.

The patriarchs and the prophets all are
gone,
The psalmists are asleep,
Or in some country far beyond our ken
Their mighty lyres they sweep,
But God's dear saints still live to share
our joys,
Or weep with those who weep.

Our dear Lord Jesus left us ages since;
Our hearts would fainless grow
Did not His saints still prove His witnesses
And keep our love aglow.
O holy ones of old, because of these
Your record true we know!
—The Independent.

The Aimless Prayer Meeting.

An acute thinker in scientific lines has recently raised the question whether the church prayer meeting is not becoming a means less and less depended on for religious results. His impression was that these meetings are not attended by so large a proportion of church members as formerly, that the feeling of obligation to attend them has measurably passed, and that they are fast becoming, like the aborted members of the bodily frame, a suggestion of utilities long ago served but now useless by the process of natural evolution. We do not care to enter into the discussion of the question thus raised, but we assume still that the mid-week meeting for prayer affords the best indication of the vitality and force of the religious life in a church. It is the revelation of what Paul calls the might in the inner man without which there is no true accomplishment, however varied and engrossing our outward Christian activities. But when meetings for prayer become aimless and formal, when they are maintained chiefly because the maintenance of them is the "proper thing," when they are the outward body of a vital force long since vanished, it is reasonable to expect that men of a scientific habit of mind will raise the question whether it is not about time that the body be buried as no longer seemly or useful.

There is no better evidence that the church prayer meeting has lost its power than aimlessness. It is a sorry gathering, that of a number of professing Christians who have only the vaguest conceptions of what they have assembled for. The droning song, the scattered thought, the perfunctory exhortation, the declamatory praying, the oft-repeated experiences of the long ago are vastly incongruous with a true meeting for prayer, which above all things should be the place where the life of spirits in fellowship with God should manifest its power, its aims and its rapture. The only good reason for the continuance of these purely formal gatherings, apart from their social value, is that they may be in at least organic readiness for genuine work whenever God shall come, in the manifestation of power by outpouring of His Spirit.

Wherever the life of God is present in a brotherhood of Christians, several aims of a general nature will be constantly in thought and obviously pursued. And first of all will be the purpose to secure not only real praying but agreement in praying. God has given a special pledge to even the two who "shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask;" and we need not be surprised at this, for the perfect agreement of two hearts self-willed, impulsive, and vagrant as we are, may be accepted at once as the work of the Divine Spirit. Another constant aim will be to move the hand of God. Christians are not equipped for work till they have clothed themselves in the "power from on high." The unshaken conviction must fasten itself upon their spirits that achievement is not "by the wisdom of man, but in the power of God," and that this power is revealed in response to a confiding faith. Vagueness disappears when the soul is conscious of a hold on the divine hand. Another aim will be to edify the brotherhood—a great work. The church is strong when the members are built together like blocks of granite in a great temple. God always takes up his habitation in that kind of a temple, and the wise minister knows that success and blessing have come when he sees the entire brotherhood edified together as one man. Praying in such a church is always pointed, out of full hearts, and mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of the world's iniquities. Another present aim with a living people will be the conversion of sinners. There is one thing that a stout old sinner is not afraid of, and that is

preaching; he has learned to brace his hard heart successfully against that. But there is another thing before which he trembles and that is the prayer of a thoroughly compacted church; he does not know quite how to define his forebodings, but he is somehow conscious that in that kind of a church God has recorded his great name, and even such a one shrieks from openly fighting against God. Dr. Charles H. Richards is reported as having recently said that "it seems oftentimes as though conversion were a lost art." Many spiritual ministers have a similar feeling. But, if that is so, then another thing is obviously true; namely, that the church has lost the art of maintaining prayer meetings filled with unction, faith, and purpose.

But meetings may become vague and halting in the pursuit of generalities. Besides these general purposes each meeting should have its own specific aim. In wise spiritual administration there is always a next thing to do the doing of which is of more importance than the compassing of any other end. The leader of a meeting should find that end by the diligent study of his field, by comparing current conditions with the teachings of the Divine Word, and by constant and earnest prayer. Indeed, it is one of the triumphs of the faithful pastor that he has succeeded in keeping his mid-week meeting from drifting off into aimlessness and vagidity. He has quick discernment of the leadings of the Spirit, and he will not allow long and pointless prayers, prosy exhortations, or lifeless sentiment floated aloft on the dullness of song to swerve him from the one end of eager pursuit. And yet, as sometimes happens, if he shall mistake in the choice of his subject or in the thing he is trying to accomplish, he is quick to see the leading of the Spirit, suggested perhaps by the prayer or the remark of some one of God's faithful little ones, and to yield at once to the divine guidance as to a heavenly voice. The meeting is well saved from aimlessness which is surely guided by the Holy Ghost from God.—The Advance

The Soul-winner's Reward.

Soul-winning is a service which brings great benefit to the individual who consecrates himself to it. The man who has watched for a soul, prayed for it, laid his plans for it, spoken with much trembling, and endeavored to make an impression, has been educating himself by the effort. Having been disappointed, he has cried to God more earnestly, has tried again, has looked up the promise to meet the case of the convicted one, has turned to that point of the divine character which seems most likely to encourage trembling faith—he has in every step benefited himself. When he has gone over the old, old story of the cross to the weeping penitent, and has at last gripped the hand of one who can say, "I do believe, I will believe, that Jesus died for me!" I say, he has had a reward in the process through which his own mind has gone. It has reminded him of his own lost estate; it has shown him the struggle that the Spirit had in bringing him to repentance; it has reminded him of that precious moment when he first looked to Jesus; and it has strengthened him in his firm confidence that Christ will save men. When we see Jesus save another, and see that marvellous transfiguration which passes over the face of the saved one, our own faith is greatly confirmed.

Another precious recompense is found in the gratitude and affection of those you bring to Christ. This is a choice boon—the blessedness of joying in another's joy, the bliss of hearing that you have led a soul to Jesus. A mother feels great delight in her children, for an intense love comes with natural relationships; but there is a still deeper love connected with spiritual kinship, a love which lasts through life, and will continue in eternity, for even in heaven each servant of the Lord shall say, "Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me." They neither marry nor are given in marriage in the city of our God, but fatherhood and brotherhood in Christ shall survive. Those sweet and blessed bonds which grace has formed continue forever, and spiritual relationships are rather developed than dissolved by translation to the better land. If you are eager for real joy, such as you may think over and sleep upon, I am persuaded that no joy of growing wealthy, no joy of increasing knowledge, no joy of influence over your fellow-creatures, no joy of any sort, can ever be compared with the rapture of saving a soul from death and helping to restore our lost brethren to our great Father's house.

But the richest reward lies in pleasing God and causing the Redeemer to see of the travail of His soul. That

Jesus should have His reward is worthy of the eternal Father; but it is marvelous that we should be employed by the Father to give Christ the purchase of His agonies. This is a wonder of wonders! O my soul, this is an honor too great for thee! Listen, friends, and answer me. What would you give to cause a thrill of pleasure in the heart of the Well-beloved? Recollect the grief you cost Him and the pangs that shot through Him that He might deliver you from your sin and its consequences; do you not long to make Him glad? When you bring others to His feet you give Him joy, and no small joy either. Is not that a wonderful text: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth!" What does that mean? Does it mean that the angels have joy? We generally read it so, but it is not the intent of the verse. It says, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God—that is joy in the heart of God, around whose throne the angels stand. It is a joy which angels delight to behold—what is it? Is the blessed God capable of greater joy than his own boundless happiness? Wondrous language this! The infinite bliss of God is more eminently displayed, if it cannot be increased. Can we be the instruments of this? Can we do anything which will make the Ever-blessed glad? Yes, for we are told that the great Father rejoices above measure when His prodigal son that was dead is alive again and the lost one is found.—C. H. Spurgeon.

The Christ of To-day

Let us not deceive ourselves with the idea that we need a new Christ, as though the Christ of our day were not the Ancient of Days, the Christ of all the Ages, the Eternal Son of the ever-living God. He who was in the beginning with God and who was God; who became flesh and dwelt among us; who was and only Mediator between God and man that he has been to the saints of other days in all lands and during all the changing dispensations of his church. He in whom we believe and whom we serve is he whose day Abraham rejoiced to see, and he saw it and was glad; is he whose dominion the Psalmist exalted as a universal dominion; is he whom Isaiah, with prophetic foresight, saw despised and rejected of men, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and by whose stripes we are healed; is he who, in the visions of Daniel, was given a kingdom that all people, nations and languages should serve him.

Our Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and forever. That which he was the first disciples in the environment of Judaism, he is to the peoples of the Gentile world to-day. What he was to Mary Magdalene out of whom he cast seven devils, he is to every woman who is a sinner among us. What he was to Saul of Tarsus in his mad persecution of the early saints, he is to every one who repents and turns to God doing works worthy of repentance. What he was to Luther when he opened the Bible in the library at Erfurt and found peace in giving himself to the Saviour, he is now to each soul who trusts wholly in his atoning work.

He makes known one way of salvation for all the world. He makes manifest one God who is the Father of all them that believe, who is the Redeemer of all who sincerely repent, who is the sanctifier of all who yield to his divine work in their hearts. He is the Leader of one host, marshalled under many banners, speaking in many tongues, working in many methods. Converts from among the heathen find him to the joy of their rescued souls. Converts in enlightened lands can find no other all-sufficient Saviour.

His doctrine is the same to the wise and the ignorant. His words are old new words; they are as old as the Old Testament; they are not newer than the New Testament; they have the same power to save, to comfort, to inspire, that they always have had. The story of the Prodigal Son unfolds the necessary truth for all mankind, assuring the repenting and returning prodigal of ever, and that the welcome and the gladness of the Father's house are for him.

We need no other Christ. The one gospel of our Lord and Saviour is full and all-sufficient. Days may change, but Christ does not change. Man may adopt new errors and seek for new modes of entering the kingdom; evermore there is the one strait gate, the one narrow way. The voice of the companionate Christ reaches our troubled souls. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." His pathetic lament over fated Jerusalem, his utterings for any among us who reject his love, if thou hadst known in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes!

To-day, as of old, he calls for repent-

ance and faith as the conditions of salvation for all who have sinned. To-day, as of old, he gives the same full pardon to the humble penitent that he gave to her who anointed his feet with the precious ointment, when he said, "Her sins which are many are forgiven her." To-day, as ever and evermore, he is the one and only and perfect Saviour that our burdened and guilty souls must have. We need to look for no other. We can find no other. The Christ of to-day is the Christ of other days, of all days. In him alone we can obtain the forgiveness and peace that will give us eternal blessedness.—N. V. Observer.

Paying Our Debts.

Some people talk a great deal about perfection. They really mean a life free from positive and wilful sins. They do not think of that whole hemisphere of life which in them is almost empty. Love is more than not doing others harm: it is doing them all the good it is in our power to do. We are taught to pray not "Forgive us our crimes," but "Forgive us our debts." Debts are what we owe. It is not supposed that respectable people will commit crimes against their neighbors; but when we look into the matter closely we shall find that most of our days leave unpaid debts—debts of love kindnesses, or services due but not paid—certainly not paid in full. The priest and the Levite did not hurt the wounded man; but they failed to pay him the debt they owed him. What they owed and did not pay was the difference between their passing by in harmless neglect and the noblest service that the good Samaritan rendered.

It is well to press the application of the lesson very closely. All along life's dusty wayside lie wounded men and women, robbed and left to die. We are continually passing by them. Which role are we playing—the priest's and Levite's or the good Samaritan's? Take a single day's life and see how many times we pass by some one on the other side. You learned of a neighbor in trouble. It was in your thought to go to him to offer him help. But you did not do it. The day closed, and there was that brotherly kindness that you ought to have done left undone. Yonder, at the ending of the day, your neighbor is still bowing in the darkness beneath his burdens. He might have been rejoicing that it had not been for your sin of omission.

Here is one who has failed and fallen in the dust. There he lies, wounded in his soul, unable to rise. You know of him; he is an old neighbor of yours—a schoolmate perhaps. You have a vision of the possibilities that are in your old friend's soul, under sin's ruin, and you feel impelled to go to him in Christ's name. But you do not follow the good impulse—you pass by on the other side and let him lie where he fell.

But, whatever the cost, we should never fail in a duty of love. We do grievous wrong to others by withholding from them what we owe them. There is a sin of not doing. We shall be judged not alone by what we do, but also by what we leave undone. We cannot cut ourselves off from our brothers. It is not enough to think of getting on in the world; we dare not seek to get on paying no heed to those who are journeying with us.—Rev. J. R. Miller, D. D.

This Life And That.

This life is the childhood of which yonder life is the manhood. As the childhood is, so shall the manhood be. We are making heaven now. By building into ourselves principles, by creating in our souls holy tastes, we are rearing the walls of jasper and paving the streets of gold and beautifying the eternal mansions. I believe heaven to be just this: a new setting of the principles we are mastering, and working into our personalities, and embodying in our works and characters here and now. By doing well our fragmentary duties day by day we are getting ready to sing the new song of heaven.

This story is told in connection with a celebrated musician who had a large number of pupils. It was his purpose at the end of a specified time to give a grand concert at which his favorite pupil was to be the conspicuous figure. There was one among the others to whom was given fragmentary work. No part of his instruction seemed to have the least connection with any other part. It was dull work, but he practiced upon the dull fragments and fought discouragement. He did his best and forced the whole man into the work. When the day of celebration came he was chosen as the favorite pupil. He felt that he did not know a single complete piece of music. Tremblingly he took his place at the instrument; but when the score which he was to play

was placed before him he throbbed and thrilled with delight to find that the completed work was made up of the fragments which he had mastered, and which were now perfectly arranged. This gave him courage, and so he performed in such a way as deservedly to win the plaudits of the great audience. We are like that musician. When we go hence we shall find that the fragmentary Christian earth-life, with its principles and its loves and its Christ-spirit, is that out of which heaven is made. Heaven is the holy life of earth glorified and perfectly arranged and grandly transfigured. David Gregg, D. D.

Two Types Of Christian Womanhood.

There are two Christian women. We know them both. They are good, true, and faithful, each in her sphere. One attends conventions, makes missionary addresses, manages societies, and collects a vast amount of money for missionary and Church enterprises. She is doing a great work and humanity, and many heathen homes are transformed through her labors. I saw another woman timid and shrinking from public gaze. You never see her name among the delegates to religious conventions, nor see an account of an able paper that she has read before some religious body, for the simple reason that she hasn't read any papers; but I have met her many a time by the sick bed of the poor and destitute, sitting up with the sick who had no friends, night after night, and out of her own slender means providing food for the hungry, medicine for the sick, clothing for half-naked children. No one except her pastor knew anything of it, yet she also was doing a great work for God and for humanity.—Alabama Adv.

The One Way.

A man dreamed that he stood beside the guarded gates of heaven when the spirit of a rich man came and sought admittance on the ground of his wealth and local fame. He was reminded that such things belong to time only, and turned away in despair. Another sought entrance on the ground of his integrity, but was repulsed by the angel saying, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." A third pleaded his denominational zeal, fervent prayers, and deep feeling, but was refused with the remark, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus." At last a spirit came winging its way through the air, chanting, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanse me from all sin." To him the gates of heaven flew open wide, and the angel said, "An abundant entrance is ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

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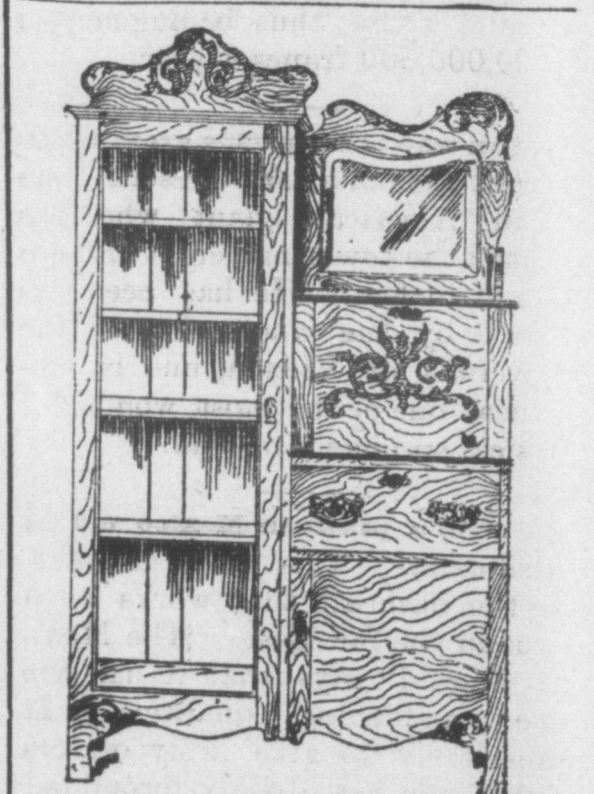
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