

An Old Man's Thoughts

The mists of age are round my path,
I tread this lonely height,
Below, behind me lies the gloom,
Above, the heavens are bright.

The pearly gate is open wide,
My Master leads the way,
"Fresh courage take! One struggle more!"
I seem to hear Him say.

What boots this passing weariness?
What boots this rugged road?
Why mind this silent loneliness,
So near the last abode?

For one by one, they enter in,
Who scale this sacred height,
There'll be a moment's darkness,
And then, eternal light!

N. Y. Observer.

The Secret of a Happy Life.

1. Don't worry. Do your best, and unanxiously leave the rest to God. It is not so much hard work as fret and worry that kill men. Let your troubles be turned from stumbling-blocks into stepping-stones on which to mount courageously to higher things. This universe is not left to the blind rule of fortuitous atoms. In all its vast machinery not one delicate screw is loose, and from microscopic mote to fixed star, and from faintest heart-throb to singing celestial sphere, God's tender, all-comprehensive thought sleeplessly moves and blessedly sustains. If God arrays the lily in more than imperial beauty and splendor, and no sparrow falls or grass blade goes unwatched by his careful eye, surely he will not leave your immortal nature unadorned or uncared for. Overregard for material blessings is the secret of carking care and bootless anxiety.

2. Forget your past mistakes and look forward hopefully into the future. Like Lot's ill-fated, backward-looking wife, peering back too wistfully means retrogression and harm. Don't brood too much over yesterday's failures and mistakes, but, like a Corinthian athlete, with eye, and nerve, and limb impetuously straining for the paraly-wreathed goal, so do you, with quenchless enthusiasm, press on to nobler achievements, inspired by loftier visions and holier ideas. Tardy laggards never clutch life's golden prizes. Let the years evermore lift you nearer divinity. To morbidly brood over bygone sins will not redeem and exalt to-day. Unavailing regrets not only unfit for action, but embitter the passing hours. Be not content with last week's perfumeless, wilted bouquets when the green earth is even now embossed with an army of sweet-eyed flowers. Don't sentimentally bemoan the past, but look upon every past distress as a reason for fronting to-morrow with harder nerve and more magnificent bravery.

3. Enjoy life as the days go by. If you reject the little and inconspicuous chances of happiness to-day, to-morrow you may vainly seek to catch the shy, fickle sylph of pleasure. The feast of life sinks into insipid dreariness if allowed to stand too long. Don't wait until your fresh, keen nerve of enjoyment has withered with age. The unsoiled freshness, and rainbow beauty, and unworn strength of youth are all too soon faded and gone. Every day has in it some golden hour that ought not to pass away unimproved.

4. Cultivate sunny-heartedness of temper, and you will find it a priceless charm for brightening existence and hushing troubled waters into happy peace. Form a habit of giving cheer and encouragement to others, never uttering needlessly a disheartening word. Don't quench hope, or throw cold water on reasonable enthusiasm, or chill ardor, or create an atmosphere of censure and fault finding, but make folks tingle to the finger-tips with the heartiness and spontaneity of your presence and greeting. Make others happy, and you cannot help but be benefited. Don't let the black pinioned raven's croak down the skylark's rosy note. Don't talk in a series of grunts and growls. Instead of reassembling a gruff and surly thunder-cloud, try to be a flood of captivating sunshine. Learn to reflect nature's bright moods when dewdrops, and liquid pearls of bird-song, and gorgeous pomps of sky and sea, and her thousand and one aspects of pure loveliness sweep the cobwebs out of the brain and make the heart sing. Let no wagging, or evil tongues, or barbed malice, or frozen sneer, or stroke of misfortune rob you of the cheerful faith that at the core of every hideous experience lies a heart of blessing and goodness.

5. Look on the Godward side of your troubles. The gardener's sharp pruning knife in the midst of the too luxuriant tendrils is not a sign of anger, but of love. It is the unchastened child that is spoiled. Just as grape clusters grow more luscious and richer flavored by the touch of the unsparring blade, so the bleeding heart develops the virtues of a saint by the keen shocks of suffering.

6. Be Christlike, and live for the sole purpose of redeeming others from sin and guilt. If you seek enjoyment as a definite object in life, happiness will coyly elude your panting and breathless chase. Live above, the world working unselfishly for God and man, and you shall taste the bliss of Christ's serene and ineffable joy. Our age runs to minor strains, and the cup of nectar, instead of being unspeakably delicious, smacks of gall and worm-wood. Why? Because we hunt for pleasures too hotly, and, lo! the gay cup bubbles with ruin, because our mad chase after excitement at last jades and bitterly reacts, because we plunge too eagerly into secular pursuits, and incessant toil is apt to breed weariness and disgust. Imitate Christ, and every day will beget a sort of ecstasy and elevation in doing good to others. Without Christ no royal purple of sumptuous fare can escape being hopelessly pierced with sorrow and pain. With Christ a man walks in unperturbed calm above carplings of criticism, or arrows of slander, or the cold, brutal sneer of ostracism. Living like Christ makes life divinely beautiful and joyous. Under the touch of his transfiguring presence every dark path opens up glimpses of light somewhere, every throb of pain shall ultimately rise into a pulse of gladness, every sting of misery shall be transformed into a burst of praise, every tragic loss and tear of grief shall turn into a palmy triumph and an eternal gain, and every pit of sin and sorrow shall become a starting point from which to soar to heaven.—Herald and Presbyterian.

Jesus Only.

That was a strange vision the disciples had when Christ was transfigured before them. How grandly and beautiful the glories of heaven must have combined with the glories of earth at that moment, to declare once again, with unmistakable emphasis, that Jesus was the Christ! How graphically has the evangelist Matthew presented the transcendent scene! Raphael, with all his genius has not realized, in his celebrated painting, the vividness and power of this original pen picture, from which his conception was taken.

The chosen three, with their Master, had gone up upon a high mountain apart from the multitude. There Jesus "was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light." While his disciples were looking intently upon him two others suddenly appeared, talking with him. In their luminous presence and beneath the glory of the cloud, whence came that mysterious voice, "This is my beloved Son," they fell abashed upon their faces; and when, recovering from their fright they looked up, "they saw no man save Jesus only." Moses, the type of the Law, had disappeared; Elijah, the type of the Prophets, had gone; and Jesus only, the type of the new and living faith, remained.

That vision of the disciples has ever since been the wonder of the world. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "Jesus only" has glorified art, and has been the inspiration of heroes and martyrs, of preachers and missionaries, of statesmen and philanthropists. It has been the consolation of the sorrowing, the poor and the outcast. Jesus stands above the limitations of age and nation. He towers above all the world's great leaders. His words and example are suited to all peoples and to all times. The church on earth shall never cease to ascribe praise to his holy name, and John declares in the apocalyptic vision that it will be the song of saints and angels around the throne. All other leaders and types shall pass away, but the power and influence of Christ shall grow stronger and wider, until the gaze of all the nations, as was that of the disciples, shall be centered upon him.

In that sublime moment heaven and earth met to render to Christ the homage and adoration due him before he took upon him the nature of man and the disciples, kneeling at his feet, caught something of the radiance which streamed from him, and their countenances were illumined through their nearness to him, and because of the shining of the light that enveloped him. So, in this day, the follower of Christ who will go apart from the cares and perplexities of the world to the mountain of prayer and sweet communion with Jesus, may get some new glimpses of his character, new truths out of his Word, and new tokens of his love from the close fellowship, as did the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The forgiving spirit is "worth a fortune to any one."

The Art of Rebuke.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, gives this summary of the duties of the minister of the gospel: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." He further says, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." There is therefore, apostolic authority for rebuke in preaching.

Not long ago the writer heard a pastor say that the art of rebuke in the Christian pulpit of to-day was well-nigh a lost art. There is no doubt much truth in this statement; and yet in many pulpits there is quite enough of the element of rebuke still remaining. There is, however, not much art about the rebuke that is nowadays most common. The rebuke that has New Testament sanction is the kind that is long-suffering, is made in love, and is free from censoriousness. There is no art about a cold, heartless, censorious rebuke. It chills, arouses antagonism, and defeats the very purpose intended.

Christ's teaching and preaching had in them the element of rebuke. But his rebuke was with tears, as when he wept over Jerusalem, and as when he was grieved at the hardness of the hearts of the people.

Paul did not fail to practice his own preaching. Those who turned away from the truth received his sharp rebuke in the letters which he wrote to the churches. Yet he was able to say, "I have not ceased to warn every one of you day and night with tears."

Rebuke for wrongdoing, if administered with gentleness, and out of a heart breaking with love for the wrongdoer, is an effective means of awakening and saving souls. Paul found it so. So have other preachers down through the ages since. But if the rebuke censorious, or of the nature of fault-finding, or degenerates into scolding, it repels, and does more harm than good. Many preachers fall into a habit of rebuking their people for their dullness and derelictions in a spirit that merits these characterizations. This is not the kind of rebuke which Christ and Paul used so efficaciously, and which every preacher to-day should be a master in. By no means. There is an art in wise rebuke. To learn and use that art one must learn the art of Jesus Christ in winning men. Every one going forth to rebuke the church for its blackslidings or sinners for their rebellion against God should go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and they will doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. Oh! for more of this heavenly, this divine, art of rebuke in the pulpit of these times! *Rel. Telescope.*

Be Patient with the Old.

Why should that old lady care, I heard a girl say the other day, whether or not her hair is turning gray? What possible difference can it make of what color is the hair of an old, old woman? Why, she must be almost eighty! In the case in question the lady criticized was on the borderland of seventy, but to sixteen she might as well have been a hundred. Age and youth are relative. To the very young, years count for more than they do to the older, who have lived longer, and have learned that the soul does not grow old with the body. I myself feel pity for the elderly people who are ashamed of their age, and are so weak as to try and hide it, but I don't quite like to see young girls unsympathetic. Try, if you can, to fancy yourself in the position of some of your elders—of women who remember, but do not look forward. As you go tripping on, with light steps, imagine what it would be to totter a little, to see dimly, to hear faintly, to feel worried at every little pain and mishap, to reach the day when the grasshopper is a burden.

All this should make you very patient and gentle with old people. There is nothing more beautiful in this world than to observe the tenderness of some girls toward their aged relatives. Dear grandmother cannot thread her needle so easily as she used to, and I sensitive on the subject; and does not like to be too obviously helped, to have attention called to her failing eyesight, which she so much regrets, and does not like to admit. There are two ways of meeting the difficulty. Mattie, a kind-hearted girl without much tact, will exclaim: "Oh, gran! what perfect nonsense for you to fuss over the needle! You know you cannot find the hole where the thread should go; your eyes are too old. Give me the thing; I'll thread your needle." The intention is most excellent, but the old lady is hurt and stiff. A girl, who had young eyes once, and she has the same independent spirit still. Edith, in the same circumstances, manages in another fashion. She simply threads a dozen needles, and leaves them all ready for

grandmother in her needle-book, saying, pleasantly, "It saves so much time, dear, in these busy days, to have one's needles all ready and waiting." *Harper's Round Table.*

Services and Service.

These words are much alike, but they represent things which greatly differ. On a bright morning, in a pleasant place of worship, hundreds were gathered for religious services. The songs were inspiring, and in them many a heart thrilled with enthusiasm and many tongues vowed allegiance to the Lord Jesus and the interests of His Kingdom. Tender prayers caused the tides of emotion to rise, and the earnest address of the leader roused many present to a half-awakened consciousness of possibilities they had never yet attained.

The services were delightful this morning, said one to his friend. Most inspiring. So helpful, so up-lifting, was the reply.

By the way, are you ready to take that class in the Sunday school which needs a teacher so much? I have been waiting ever since last Sunday to hear from you.

How can I? I dislike to bind myself to a class every week in the year. I am willing to be a substitute once in a while, but not to be obliged to teach every Sunday.

Are you not in good health? Perfectly so. Do you work hard all the week? No; I have a good deal of time to myself, although, like almost everyone else, I am busy here and there.

Well, you will excuse me, if I say you must be mistaken about the services this morning. You said they were helpful and inspiring. If they had been truly so, I think, they would have helped you to see your opportunity, and would have inspired you to undertake some real service for Christ. It is not a sign of loyalty to Him that we enjoy "services." The real test is readiness for service.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Pondering on these true words, the one to whom they were addressed mused thus within himself: I thought I was in perfect tune with all goodness this morning during the hour of worship. I did truly mean it when I sang with the rest,

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

But it seems different when I am brought to the test of an opportunity to do something for the Master which does not suit my ease or convenience. I wonder is my pleasure in a good prayer meeting only the excitement which comes from good singing and good fellowship? I wonder is my worship hollow in the eyes of the Lord whose praises I sing with so much enthusiasm? What my friend said is true. Services should fit me for service, or else they are mere sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. I will take that class, and I will prove that I mean it when I sing.

Where He leads I'll follow,
Follow all the way.
N. Y. Advocate.

Studying One's Hearers

Considering the person to be addressed is even more important than considering the main thought in an address. It is not enough for a preacher to have God's truth as the basis of his message, and to know that the subject of his message is intrinsically of the highest importance. He must know enough of his hearers to be sure that they are capable of comprehending that subject, and then he must see to it that his form of presenting that subject, and the illustrations he uses in order to make it clear, are adapted to their special understanding and needs. College boys and factory girls have different peculiar requirements which a preacher must recognize if he would give them, severally, a word in due season. Young children and old sailors are not to be addressed in just the same way. As Paul suggests, some have need of milk, and some of strong meat. Yet not all preachers or teachers or talkers bear this truth in mind as they prepare themselves for an address. They have their own estimate of the relative value of the sincere milk of the word, the strong meat of doctrine, and the hard bones of theology, and they select from their stock according to their personal interest in it, without a thought of its special fitness to those who are to be hearers. A loss of power, a waste of effort, and a lack of good to needy listeners, are the result. The most earnest and thoughtful and eloquent preacher in the world would be of little service on a desert island with not a soul to hear him. Many a preacher with a large congregation is of little more service, even though full of his subject, because he knows little of his hearers, and fails to bring them

just the message they need in just the way they need it. It is a great mistake to be thinking more of one's message than of those who need a message, when preparing for one's service as a preacher or as a teacher. *S. S. Times.*

The Church that Wins.

By the church that wins is not meant the church that exists, but the church that exists to a purpose. Such a church is—

1. The organized church.
2. The united church.
3. The church that recognizes the power of money and is willing to use it in promoting the cause of Christ at home and abroad.
4. The church that has intelligence—is informed in reference to the progress and needs of Christ's kingdom in the world.
5. The church that keeps its spiritual work always at the front.
6. The church that emphasizes practical Christian living and service.

Such a church is bound to win. *Telescope.*

A Finished Education

One of the poorest things that can be said of a man, or that he can say of himself, is that he has education. It is equivalent to saying that he has ceased to grow and to gain; that he will never make any more progress. A child was born into a home of wealth and refinement. It was a bright child, and there was hope for it on the part of parents and friends. It continued to grow and to learn until it was ten months old, and then all growth and learning stopped, except in faint signs of added months in the lines of the face, and in a little fullness of flesh. That child lived on to nearly forty years of age, but it never knew any more than at ten months. It was called a case of arrested development, but it might have been called a case of finished education. God pity us if we cease to gain and to grow through this life and beyond! *S. S. Times.*

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