

Our Own.

If I had known in the morning
How weary 'll the day,
The words unkind
Would trouble my mind
I said when I went away,
I had been more careful, darling;
Nor given you needless pain;
But we vex "our own"
With look and tone
We may never take back again.

For though in the quiet evening
I may give you the kiss of peace,
Yet it might be
That never for me
The pain at the heart should cease.
How good for forth in the morning
That never come home at night!
And hearts have been broken
By harsh words spoken
That sorrow can never set right.

We have careful thought for the stranger
And smiles for the sometime guest,
But oft for "our own"
The bitter tone,
Though we love our own the best.
Ah! lips, with words impatient!
Ah! brow, with that look of scorn!
'Twere a cruel fate,
Were the night too late
To undo the work of the morn.

The Head And The Heart In Unison.

In an ideal state of the Christian Church this would be the normal condition of every member. Because of the instability of human nature, its eccentricities and its weakness, a minority of the visible Church even then might fluctuate, and the grooves of habit might fix a small proportion in one extreme or the other. But it is to be feared that in the present condition of the Church in only a minority are the intellect and the emotions harmoniously related.

Wherever such a believer exists he knows that he is a Christian, and is able to give a reason of the hope that is in him to everyone that asketh him. One stanza never expresses his spiritual condition:

"It is a point I long to know,
Oft it gives me anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord or not?
Am I His, or am I not?"

His understanding was first convinced of the truth of the word of God; he became convicted of sin. Seeing himself to be opposed to the law of God, he determined to seek peace through Jesus Christ, whom he clearly perceived to be such a Saviour as his diseased and guilty soul needed. Awake to the crisis in his life, he felt that those who spoke smooth words to him were physicians of no value, healing his hurt slightly, treating symptoms instead of the cause of the malady. He turned to the word of God and to those who drew their instruction from it; searching the Scriptures, reading spiritual books, conversing with pious men, listening with attention to the ministry, earnestly striving and hoping to obtain an answer to the question, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" At once he began to comply with every precept of the Gospel, and after a longer or shorter time, according to the earnestness of his search, the peculiarity of his temperament, and the will of God with reference to his future usefulness, he found true peace in believing, and genuine joy in the Holy Ghost.

It may be that he had been so well instructed, that on yielding to conviction he needed but to turn at once to the Lord; or, being touched by the Holy Spirit in early youth, he had since made himself acquainted with those saving truths. For there is not one stereotyped method. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." No human being ever yet foresaw his own experience in regeneration. Whatever his path from darkness to light, he whose heart and head are in unison in the divine life, knows why he is a Christian, and can answer any inquiry concerning every part of his experience of which the human mind can be conscious.

He has settled principles of action upon moral questions. Some things he believes to be right; others, wrong. His opinions are not formed by imitation, but upon grounds which convince his judgment. On the controverted questions which Christians have to decide with regard to the limits of propriety or morality, he has made up his mind or is engaged in seeking for further light. He is as conscientious as a servant, but as loving as a son; as earnest in good works as though salvation came by the law, and as hopeful and happy as though it came without regard to works at all. Being strictly conscientious, he will surely be charged by some with narrowness and fanaticism. It will be as impossible for him to escape this reputation as for his Saviour to avoid crucifixion. Many whose religion is all heart will charge him with stiffness and severity, and many who have only that of the head will consider him as verging

toward rhapsody. He will pass his life between two fires.

His conduct will be regular. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." But he is a single minded man; his head and heart agree, hence he is stable. However much he may be denounced as narrow, the world will soon say, "At any rate, you always know where to find him." He will never bring a reproach upon religion by his weakness or his passion. Though some of his acts may be disliked by the wicked and misunderstood by the unreasonable, no immorality will be successfully charged against him, and he will be a true witness of his Lord.

To his own denomination he is devoted, for he knows its doctrines and forms, and why he prefers them. But he is full of love for all, being aware that differences of judgment on religious subjects have always existed, and from the limitations of the human faculties and the vastness and delicacy of the themes involved, must ever continue. Hence, while a useful member of his own communion, he is a valuable adjunct to the whole Christian community. The truth he is ready to defend against its foes, and is equally prepared to guide inquirers. With satisfactory confidence his pastor may direct to him, for counsel, any soul who seeks a knowledge of God, being assured that he will not prove a blind guide. He makes an excellent adviser, for his mind operates clearly. He sees the truth and will adhere to it, but as he overflows with charity, where he cannot see "eye to eye" he desires to see heart to heart.

He is eminently qualified to train his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to teach in the Sabbath school. He is not, indeed, as popular as some who entertain the classes by humorous anecdotes; but it is noticed that a large proportion of those who are under his instruction become sober-minded, and are added to the Church. He is ever seeking to learn more, and to feel more, desiring to build himself up in his most holy faith, and to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. The driest sermon, if it be the truth of God, will instruct his mind, and the weakest, if it has any truth in it, will make him feel; but he always knows why he feels. He will not allow himself to become excited because others are, or because the preacher appears to feel, but because he sees the truth. To that he always gives himself up, whether it comes from stammering lips or a silver tongue; and to nothing else. Hence when the multitude are weeping under some flashy and excitable oration or commonplace anecdote, he is apparently unmoved; and at other times, when many are weary under what seems to them a dry exposition of Scripture, he can hardly repress the utterance of his joy. A general revival only lifts others up to the region where he lives and moves and has his religious being.

These are they who fulfill the ancient prophecy: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts," and not until his tribe greatly increase shall the rest of the covenant be fulfilled: "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."—Chris. Advocate.

Spiritual Poverty.

BY REV. C. H. WETTERBERG, IN TELESCOPE

Christ says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Only those who have personally experienced great poverty in spirit can understand these words. And it is safe to say that only true believers have a realizing sense of this poverty. It does not mean that they are destitute of the true riches; for Christ is their portion. They are rich in the possession of his love. But the poverty consists in one's feeling his own insufficiency and inefficiency. He feels that his own resources are nothing as compared with Christ's. In himself the Christian feels weak, ignorant, and incompetent to do what he often greatly longs to perform. It is true that not all Christians feel thus all of the time. Indeed, some allow themselves to become at times inflated with vain opinions of their ability, and with exalted ideas of their wisdom and official standing. They greatly overestimate their strength, as Peter once did. They are too self-confident. It is then that they need humbling, and Christ knows how to humble them. He makes them feel poor. He takes away the strength and wisdom in which they trusted and boasted.

But there are times when those who

are uniformly humble feel especially poor in spirit. There are preachers of this class. An awful vacuity of thought possesses them. They are utterly barren of fresh ideas. They feel totally unable to prepare the next necessary sermon. They look at various texts, but can see nothing in them. They are mightily tempted to think that God has deserted them. They fear that their working power has departed from them. They are in great agony of soul. They cry out for light. They beseech God to help them. These are good signs. They indicate a blessed poverty of spirit. It is then that the wealth of Christ's kingdom opens its deposits to them. The right text comes of force, and frankness, and freshness to the poor preacher. His eyes are opened to its indwelling truths and helpful lessons. How easy, then, it is to prepare a sermon! It almost makes itself. The preacher is astonished. He has come into glorious liberty. He is the "kingdom"—the kingdom of truth, of life, of exalted views of Christ. Then he thinks that he will never doubt again. He will nevermore fear that God will entirely neglect him.

And the experience of the editors of religious papers is much the same. Often they feel that their fund of knowledge is exhausted. Fresh ideas are discouragingly scarce. The inspiration which used to serve them delightfully is absent. The poor editor groans. He mourns. Then he prays with unusual urgency. He feels so poor in spirit that unless God shall help him speedily he will be left in a terrible plight. This is God's opportunity. He flashes light into the editor's heart and fills his mind with power. Plenty of fresh ideas troop in. Then he sings the "doxology." And is not this the experience, substantially, of other Christians? Undoubtedly. Blessed are they who feel poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of riches.

Brotherhood In Christ

I know how often it is hardest to speak about the most sacred things to those who are the nearest and dearest to us. I understand that shrinking which keeps the brother's lips closed from urging on his own brother the truth and the persuasion which he will urge freely enough on any other man. The glib and ready Sunday school teacher goes from his class to his home, and in the presence of his own children he is as silent as a stone. In that phenomenon, which is so familiar and often so perplexing, I think we can see the mixture of two feelings, one of which is bad, the other good. The bad feeling is the sense of shame which comes when we think of pressing the love of God and the service of Christ upon the minds and consciences of those who are always living with us, and who know what poor, weak, wicked, and unfaithful things our own lives are.

The good reason for our silence is more subtle. It is, I think, the feeling which comes to us almost everywhere, but comes to us most strongly in the presence of those whose hearts lie nearest to our own, that for the conveyance of the most sacred influences words are the most clumsy and unsatisfactory of means; that life is the only testimony by which the power of Christ in one man's heart can thoroughly bear its witness to the heart of any other man. It is natural enough that this consciousness should be most clear and strong just where the possibility of heart bearing direct testimony to heart becomes most evident, in the home, where hearts ought to lie nearest and openest to one another. I know how these two reasons, and perhaps some others, make it very hard sometimes for the father to talk to his child, or for the brother to talk to his brother, about the most sacred things. And yet I know how often just one word is needed to break through the obstruction and reserve, and let all the wealth of God's grace which has been gathering in one humbly consecrated heart, pour forth into another which is waiting empty and hungry all the time. — Phillips Brooks.

A Sweet, Sunshiny Old Age

What a blessing it is to come down to a ripe old age sweet-spirited full of sunshine, and cheered with the hope of a blissful immortality! The following letter is brimful and running over with evidences that its author is enjoying that great blessing.

Sometimes Satan tempts those who have toiled and sacrificed through many long years for the upbuilding of the church to believe that they are forgotten, and that the younger brethren who are now leading the church forward in its great work do not appreciate them. Then they become downcast in spirit, and morose, and complain that the former days were better than these.

We have great sympathy for all such. It is hard to become old and be "laid on the shelf," but it is the order of Providence. And, brethren, our time is coming too. How can the sorrow and anguish that come to some when that time arrives be mitigated?

First. By treating with due kindness and consideration, while we are yet young and efficient, the faithful veterans who, by reason of age and bodily infirmities, have become superannuated. Appreciate what they have done, and greet and treat them with the kindest and most cheerful consideration. In proportion as we lighten their sorrow now will others lighten our grief when in a few more years the same burden has to be borne by us. God bless the dear old fathers in Israel now retired?

Second. By cultivating for ourselves a cheerful, hopeful, sweet disposition. It is impossible to love and esteem sour, rasping, cynical old men. If we would be loved and esteemed when old, we must avoid becoming crabbed and snarly. Can we do it? Of course we can. How? By living near the Lord, looking on the bright side, and saying to "the blue devil," "Get thee behind me, Satan." Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice!" Why should we not rejoice as we grow old? Our names are written in heaven; Christ is preparing a mansion for us; the day of our redemption draweth nigh. It can be done.—Telescope.

The Minister's Prayer.

Upon the mind of a thoughtful listener Dr. Kidder made the impression that he was a deeply religious preacher. He was willing to undertake the sermon only with the assurance that he was divinely aided. Among his private papers are some prayers written out by himself for his own particular profit and guidance. There is one entitled "Prayer for aid in selecting subjects and in preaching the Gospel." A few extracts will show his spirit in approaching this solemn duty: "O God, I thank Thee that, unworthy as I am, Thou hast not only called me from darkness to light and made me a partaker of the grace of salvation, but hast commissioned me to preach to my fellow-men the unsearchable riches of Christ. Once more the duty devolves upon me of standing before the people to proclaim Thy word of truth. O forbid that with languid indifference I should content myself with the mere formality of preaching; rather may I rise to the highest conception of the greatness of the responsibility and of the eternal interests which ever depend upon the right and faithful discharge of so momentous a duty. O give felicity and power of thought, readiness and force of utterance, convincing speech and the demonstration of the influence of the Holy Ghost. Deliver me, O Lord, from wanderings of thoughts, from the intrusion of worldly interests or cares or influences, but especially from all vanity of mind or the slightest disposition to seek the applause of men. When I enter the sacred desk let Thine overshadowing presence be round about me, and let me and the people feel that God is there."—From the Biography of D. P. Kidder, D. D.

Experimental Knowledge of God.

The knowledge of God is gained, as the knowledge of man is gained, by living much with Him. If we only come across a man occasionally and in public, and we see nothing of him in his private and domestic life, we cannot be said to know him. All the knowledge of God many professing Christians have is derived from a formal salute which they make to Him in their prayers, when they rise up in the morning and when they lie down at night. While this state of things lasts no great progress in the Christian life can possibly be made. No progress would be made, even if they were to offer stated prayer seven times a day instead of twice. But try to draw down God into your daily work; consult Him about it; offer it to Him as a contribution to His service; ask Him to help you in it; ask Him to bless it; do it as to the Lord, and not unto men; refer to Him in your temptations; seek a refuge under the shadow of His wings until the tyranny of temptation is overpast; go back at once to His bosom when you are conscious of a departure from Him, not waiting until night to confess it, lest meanwhile the night of death should overtake you, or at best you should lose time in your spiritual course. In short, walk hand in hand with God through life (as a little child walks hand in hand with its father over some dangerous and thorny road) dreading above all things to quit His side, and assured that, as soon as you do so, you will fall into mischief and trouble; seek not so much to pray as to live in an atmosphere of prayer, lifting up

your heart momentarily to Him in varied expressions of devotion as the various occasions of life may prompt, adoring Him, thanking Him, resigning your will to Him many times a day, and more or less all day; and you shall thus, as you advance in this practice, as it becomes more and more habitual to you, increase in that knowledge of God which fully contents and satisfies the soul.—E. M. Goulburn, D. D.

Truth and Belief.

Truth is truth, whether we believe it or not. The Bible declares that men reap what they sow. All men recognize and admit the truth of this statement when applied to the vegetable kingdom. No one expects to reap wheat if he sows barley. But the statement is just as true when applied to spiritual things, whether we believe it or not. A righteous life brings as its fruit the peace and joy of righteousness. A wicked life brings ultimately the anguish of ruin and despair. It requires no heaven to make him happy who lives righteously; for he is already happy. It requires no hell to render him miserable who gives himself up to a life of villainous; for he is already miserable. Heaven and hell are only places prepared as the fit abode of the righteous and the wicked, respectively, and each naturally gravitates to and finally lands in his own place, whether men believe it or not.—S. S. Times.

BISHOP HEDDING stated at a missionary meeting a circumstance related to him by a missionary from the West Indies. A minister gave out for his text these words: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." A poor negro in the congregation who had but recently felt the power of religion, was so affected by the text that he requested the minister to read it again. The minister did so. "Be so good, massa, read the text again." He read it once more. "Do," says the negro, "massa, read it again; it makes my soul feel so good." Faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance! It is just the one for the ignorant and simple; they can understand it as well as any one.

PERSONAL OPINIONS AS INFLUENCED BY SELF-INTEREST.—Inclination has much to do with one's personal opinions. A man is pretty sure to see the full strength of an argument to a course that he is set on pursuing. A man is certainly not predisposed to a course which is contrary to his longings and apparent interests. It has been said that "a man comes to his convictions oftener through his passions than his intellect." A man need not be thus influenced, but it is well to bear in mind one's liability to be. We have reasons to challenge a change of opinions on our part which is in the line of our personal interest.—S. S. Times.

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