

"Because I Live."

BY L. H. CRANE.

"Dead?" Say, he is not dead. Who calls him so?
That he still lives I know; the reason why,
Because the Master said long years ago,
Who lives and who believes shall never die.

"Gone?" Aye, perhaps, but not forever gone:
For, though the time be distant or be near,
This is declared in no uncertain tone,
When Christ appears they shall with Him appear.

"Far from us separated?" God forbid!
He is with Christ; and whether near or far,
The self-same Christ with whom our life is hid;
He there, we here, in Christ united are.

"But out of reach?" Yes, for a little while,
"And out of sight?" Yes, since our eyes are dim.
Called on ahead, the welcome of his smile
Shall greet us where we thought to welcome him.

"These empty hands!" They shall be more than filled
With blessings for another's starving heart.
"This clamoring pain!" It shall be stilled
With peace where with to heal another's smart.

"But still we weep!" Why not? since Jesus wept,
Though even then His eyes divine could see
That only for a season Lazarus slept,
And at this call awake again should be.

"But if these hearts, before peace cometh, break?"
The blow that broke the alabaster jar
Spilled, without waste, the nard for Christ's sweet sake,
And broadcast flung to all its fragrance rare.

—Chris. Advocate

God's Grapevines.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

The grapevine that is growing under my window this morning suggests to me a talk about the organic union between Jesus Christ and all healthy Christians. "I am the vine, and ye are the branches." The word vine here includes both the stock and the branches, because the vital sap that flows out to the furthest tendrils is drawn from the central trunk. Saving faith is the process of being united to Christ by a heart union; and obedience to Christ is the evidence that the union is genuine and strong.

There is such a thing as being tied to Jesus Christ, by an act of external profession, without being ingrafted into him. A little twig may be thrust into the incision in a tree, and tied fast there, and yet no incorporation follow. Spring may come singing and opening all the buds on the tree; summer may shed its sunshine, and autumn may shake down baskets of ripe fruit, but that poor ill-jointed branch yields neither bud nor flower nor fruitage. Held on by dead clay or rotting cord it is only a withered and unsightly thing. Such is every false professor; he or she has no heart-union with the Savior, and it is a very rare thing for such a self-satisfied formalist to be truly converted afterward. That is a very sharp and startling word which Christ spoke when he said that the sapless, fruitless withered stick should be "cast into the fire"; if not a true branch, then a burning!

The central truth which the Master impresses on all his genuine disciples, then and now, is the abiding in him. "Abide in me and I in you; he that abideth in me and I in him bringeth forth much fruit."

While the vital sap flows into the soul of the believer through prayer and communion with Christ, while he keeps in the sunshine of an approving conscience, and under the warm showers of the Holy Spirit, he brings in a constant revenue. Such a Christian is a bountiful bearer. I saw a famous old grapevine in the valley of the Jordan, whose branches—supported by props—covered a diameter of nearly a hundred feet; and its owner told me how many baskets of luscious grapes it yielded every summer. Paul enumerates the spiritual fruits of a well-laden Christian, and the first one is love. This is the essential principle. Whatever "profession of religion" we may make, yet it proves nothing and profits nothing if love does not flavor our whole character and conduct. A little more of this quality would make some otherwise good people less acrid to the taste; their conversation sometimes sets our teeth on edge. The more of Jesus in the soul the sweeter will be our flavor; and herein shall other people know that Jesus abideth in us because we have some good measure of his unselfish spirit. It is not to be demonstrated by the mere expressions of loyalty to him, or even by remembering him at the sacramental table only, but by

deeds of kindness to those who represent him in his humanity. The grapes on a Christian's branch ought to hang low enough for a poor child to pluck them.

Love, too, is the foundation of obedience. This is a test-grace. "If ye love me, keep my commandments; for he it is that loveth me." The child who only obeys his parents from the dread of the rod, or from the bribe of a promised gift, cannot be trusted. My friend, are you only held to the performance of your religious duties by self-interest, or by respect for public opinion, or by the frail withe of church membership? Then you are a slave and not a child; the Master cannot trust you and will not answer for you. Here lies the radical difference between the two sorts of Christian professors. The one class are mere eye-servants. They seem to be trying to discover how little they can do, and yet keep up a decent appearance, and squeeze through into Heaven at last. They are minimum Christians, and if saved at all they can only hope for a minimum heaven. Such branches are only tied on; or, if grafted into the Vine, the graft has not fairly "taken."

On the other hand, the obedience which is prompted by love never limits itself to the exact letter of the obligation. When you pay a note at the bank, you pay only the precise sum on its face; but when you make a gift of affection the larger you can make it the better. A hireling looks at his watch impatiently, and when the hand points to six o'clock he gladly flings down his tools and quits work. An artist becomes so enamored with his picture that he is willing to linger until midnight at his easel. The charm of the heroic Nansen's narrative of his brave battles with the ice monsters lies in his splendid enthusiasm to vindicate his geographic faith; that kept him warm through the darkness and biting cold of three arctic winters. The sheer love of scientific truth made him cheerfully endure all hardships. Jesus asks no service from you and me, and delights in nothing from us that is not rendered with the willing mind of grateful affection. Love never murmurs "Must I do this?" it rejoices to bear burdens for Him who bore the bitter agonies of the cross for our redemption.

The effectual calling of every healthy spiritual vine is to yield grapes. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." Jesus Christ, in the parable, represents his Heavenly Father as the husbandman who both owns and oversees the vineyard. The barren branches the Divine Owner "taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." This text flashed through my mind, the other day, as I saw a gardener busy with his knife on my grapevines. They needed pruning. And all through the coming season there will be some useless tendrils to be cut off and superfluous leaves to be clipped away. A sharp process but not a cruel one.

Has there not been just such a process with thy soul? I said to myself— and have I not seen many another friend under the pruning knife? Yes, and for the best of reason; whom God loveth he chasteneth. He knoweth just where to apply the knife, and when he purgeth his vines he knoweth what leaves to lop and what twigs to cut away. Why should you or I cry out in angry remonstrance? Either let us eliminate the supernatural entirely from our religion and turn blind agnostics, or else let us thoroughly and gladly believe that our loving Father is doing just what our Bible tells us when he chastens us with sharp afflictions. He does it sometimes to punish our sins; he does it sometimes to correct our faults; sometimes to humble our pride; sometimes to cut away what was absorbing our affections and give our souls a better chance to grow, and sometimes to bring us nearer to his ideal of what a Christian's disciple ought to be. God disciplines you, my brother, in order that you may "bring forth more fruits" of the Spirit—larger, riper, more drier clusters. Accept that just as firmly as you accept the law of gravitation, or else burn up this Gospel and turn skeptic outright! One of God's giant growers rejoiced in the pruning knife and says that it made him "yield afterward the fruit of righteousness." The great purpose of Christianity—both in redemption and in discipline—is to produce godly character; and that survives over into eternity. The vines to which Jesus Christ supplies the vital sap, and which a loving Father prunes, will yet be transplanted into the everlasting atmosphere of Heaven!—The Independent.

Every great reform which has been effected has consisted, not in doing something new, but in undoing something old.—Buckle.

Any one may do a casual act of good nature, but a continuation of them shows it is part of the temperament.—Sterne.

The Question of Questions.

The all-important question is not, how did a man die, but how did the man live? What had been his life, his daily walk and conversation, his devotedness to God, his self-denial, his zeal and activity in diffusing light, life, and salvation? The man who lives well, always dies well. It is natural to take a deep interest in the scenes of the dying chamber, and in the expressions of the departing saints, but little note is given to these in the Scriptures. The Bible, which contains a pretty full account of the lives of many saints, is, in almost every instance, silent on the subject of their deaths. One after another they appear on the stage to play their different parts; but the curtain usually drops as the last act begins, and the saint vanishes from sight with some such brief and simple record as "he died," or "he was gathered to his fathers," or "angels carried him to Abraham's bosom."

One cannot but be struck with the marked difference between God's lives of the saints and those which man writes—as their biographies bear witness. And may not the manner in which the Gospel drops a veil over the last scene warn us against attaching too great importance to dying frames and teach us this great lesson, that in all, but, perhaps, a few exceptional cases, our eternal destiny turns on the way we pass our life, and not on the way we close it. Who lives by faith, who lives to Christ, however he dies, shall find death to be gain. He who takes care of the nature of his life, need feel no anxiety whatever about the character or issues of his death. The great question we should ask respecting others, and which shall one day be asked respecting us, is not how did he die, but how did he live?

The close of the successive seasons often furnishes a criterion of their character. Subtle fields where the sheaves stand thick and tall, farm yards and barns swollen with the fruits of a lavish harvest, speak of an early spring and a genial summer—of long days bright with sunshine and soft with fruitifying showers. The close of a voyage often reveals its character. As we watch from the pier-head a homeward bound ship entering the harbor, we almost instinctively gather from her condition what weather she had encountered on distant seas—sails blown to tatters, bulwarks gone by the board, the stump of a mast rising ragged from the deck, are all eloquent of the story of the voyage, and are so many tongues to tell us how the weather-beaten crew, who now congratulate each other as she floats into the dock, had battled with the giant waves, and nearly perished in the blasts of the fierce tempest. But the close of man's life affords no such means of judging of his character. That can only be judged by the life itself.

To go up to Mount Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; to travel the dark valley with the shout and step of a conqueror, trampling the last enemy under our feet; to expire with Christ's dear name trembling on our lips—that dear name the "last word on earth, as it shall be the first we speak in heaven, is not granted to all who close, at death, a life of true love and obedience to God and saving faith in his beloved Son. Some of God's precious saints have died despairing and full of fears, and not a few in deep despondency—their cry an echo of the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," their faith fading in the disease with which they were afflicted, what the sun finds in the cloud-bank behind which he sinks, a veil to obscure his light and conceal his glorious form. No child of God is ever forsaken of Him, especially in that last trying hour; it is the mortal part of their compounded nature that thus doubts and trembles, while the soul itself, sustained and strengthened by the indwelling spirit, rests calmly in security and peace.

They who live for Christ have no need to worry in regard to their dying. Christ has conquered death for them and taken away its sting.—Christian Work.

Life a School.

Sooner or later we find out that life is not a holiday, but a discipline. Earlier or later we all discover that the world is not a playground. It is quite clear God means it for a school. The moment we forget that, the puzzle of life begins. We try to play in school; the Master does not mind that so much for his own sake, for He likes to see His children happy, but in our playing we neglect our lessons. We do not see how much there is to learn, and we do not care. But our Master cares. He has a perfectly overpowering and inexplicable solicitude for our education; and because He loves us He comes sometimes into the school and

speaks to us. He may speak very softly and gently, or very loudly. Sometimes a look is enough, and we understand it, like Peter, and go out at once and weep bitterly. Sometimes the voice is like a thunderclap startling a summer night. But one thing we may be sure of, the task He sets us to is never measured by our delinquency. The discipline may seem far less than our desert, or even to our eye ten times more. But it is not measured by these, it is measured by God's solicitude for our progress; measured solely by God's love: measured solely that the scholar may be better educated when he arrives at his Father's house. When we arrive there to behold His beauty, we must have the educated eye; and that must be trained here. We must become so pure in heart—and it needs much practice—that we shall see God. That explains life, why God puts man in the crucible and makes him pure by fire.

When we see Him we must speak to Him. We have that language to learn. And that is perhaps why God makes us pray so much. Then we are to walk with Him in white. Our sanctification is a putting on this white. But there has to be much disrobing first, much putting off filthy rags. That is why God makes man's beauty to consume away like the moth. He takes away the moth's wings and gives the angel's, and man goes the quicker and the lovelier to the Father.

It is quite true, indeed, besides all this, that sometimes the shadow falls more directly from definite sin. But even then its explanation is the same. We lose our way, perhaps, on the way to the Father. The road is rough, and we choose the way with the flowers beside it, instead of the path of thorns. Often and often thus, purposely or carelessly, we lose the way. So the Lord Jesus has to come and look for us. And He may have to lead us through desert and danger before we regain the road—before we are as we were—and the voice says to us sadly once more, "This is the way to the Father."—Henry Drummond.

The Reality of Christianity.

Mr. W. T. Stead, referring to Mr. Grant Allen's skepticism as to the existence of Jesus Christ, in the "Review of Reviews" says: "We travel in railway trains do not care to argue concerning the existence of George Stevenson or of James Watt, and Christendom does not need to embarrass itself at this time of day discussing whether or not Christ ever existed. He either did or he did not; if he did not, the miracle of Christendom is even greater than if he did. The triumph of Christianity is indeed a great miracle even if the whole of the gospel story be accepted as gospel truth; but if there be nothing behind it excepting chance, or 'the play of purely casual circumstances,' then, indeed, we are face to face with a still more marvelous miracle than anything which staggers the faith in the scripture record. The story of Jonah and his fish is more easily credible than the assumption that a handful of obscure fanatics in an insignificant province of Syria were able to achieve that which all the great, and wise, and gifted had failed to accomplish."

The Guest Chamber.

The preparation of the guest chamber should be the special care of the hostess. However good her servants may be, she should be sure to look in before the visitor arrives, and see that everything is as it should be. The spare room should always be prettily got up for there can be no possible excuse for not having the freshest chintzes in a room that is only used occasionally. Even if the guest is only staying for two or three days, there should always be some drawers or shelves cleared out for her use; nothing gives a visitor a sense of such discomfort as finding every available place filled with her hostess's things. In town a good deal of magnificence is often used in the furniture of bedrooms, and Persian carpets, old mirrors and satin hangings are by no means unknown; but in the country a simpler style is in better taste. Plain white dimity hangings, or chintz with a tiny pink rosebud straying over it, a white tiled hearth and rushed bottom chairs, are the natural accompaniments of a country bedroom, and look more suitable than finer things. But however simple the apartment may be, you should be careful to have it in good taste, and ruthlessly put aside anything that interferes with the scheme of color.—Christian Work.

A Bad Habit.

The common habit of crossing the legs at the knees when sitting is earnestly protested against by a writer quoted in The Heal Magazine. It is claimed that this habit is at least one cause of cold feet, headache, vari-

cose veins, ulcers, and other troubles due to poor circulation in the lower limbs. The reason of this lies in the fact that just under the knee, where the greatest pressure comes in this position, there are large veins, arteries, and nerves, whose walls are pressed together, thus interfering more or less with the circulation and the sensation. It is said that women are more liable to acquire the habit than men, and it may be added that doubtless one reason for this is the height of ordinary chair seats. Will not some one please invent a chair—a common chair—with an adjustable seat so that, whatever the height of the person, the chair can be made comfortable? For what is more uncomfortable than to be obliged to sit for an hour or more in a straight backed chair with a seat so high that the toes can barely touch the floor? Small wonder that some relief is sought by crossing the legs. It is noticeable that when low chairs, adapted to the height of the person, are furnished, the legs usually remain straight and the feet firmly on the floor.

Love and Faith.

Love and faith are inseparable. We trust before we love. We love and find it easy to trust. Faith is the open channel down which God's love passes into our nature, and love in its passage hollows out the channel down which it came. Like burnished mirrors that face each other, they flash the sunbeams to and fro. And thus as we live near God, we are filled with love, not ours—but His—His love reflected back on Himself—His love flung forward to men. It is when there is perfect love between us and our fellow-believers that the grace of God can pass easily from one to another, through every busy point of supply, and through the working in due measure of every part. If we are out of fellowship with any, to that extent we cannot impart to them, nor they to us. But when love pervades the body as the genial spring warms the woodlands, there is an upbuilding and outflow ending in love. Each gives us another, and gets as he gives.—F. B. Meyer.

Slighting a Duty.

You haven't made things look very neat and orderly here in the back shop, said a merchant to a young clerk.

Well, I thought it was good enough for back there, where things cannot be seen very plainly, and where customers seldom go.

That won't do, said the merchant, sharply; and then added in a kinder tone: "You must get ideas of that kind out of your head, my boy, if you hope to succeed in life. That kind of 'good enough' isn't much better than 'bad enough.'"

And the merchant made the boy go and do all the cleaning over again. The girls who do not sweep in the corners or dust under things, and the boys that dispose of things as quickly as possible, saying that things will do if they are not well done, are the boys and girls who will not turn out to be great men and useful women.—Exchange.

What else is chance but the rude stone which receives its life from the sculptor's hand? Providence gives us chance, and man must mould it to his own designs.—Schiller.

Baby Brightness.

Soon fades when Diarrhoea seizes on the little form. Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry has saved many infants as well as adults' lives. Mrs. W. Walters, Richmond Street, Hamilton, Ont., says:—"I cured my baby of a bad attack of Cholera by using Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry. Nothing else did any good, but the baby improved from the first dose of the Wild Strawberry."

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