

My Prayer.

Being perplexed I say,
"Lord, make it right.
Night is as day to Thee,
Darkness is light.
I am afraid to touch
Things that involve so much;
My trembling hand may shake,
Unskilful, it may break;
Thine can make no mistake."

Being in doubt I say,
"Lord, make it plain
Which is the true, safe way;
Which would be vain.
I am not wise to know,
Nor sure of foot to go;
My blind eyes cannot see
What is so clear to Thee.
Lord, make it clear to me."

The Claims of God Upon our Property.

No true Christian will for a moment think of denying that all which seems to possess belongs in reality, in a far profounder sense, to Him who has made and redeemed him. The only defensible position for him is that of a trustee under orders, or a steward put for a season in charge to carry out the Master's will. Every expenditure must be controlled not by our own selfish individual wishes or interests, but in accordance with His commands. To appropriate money contrary to His will, or even in utter indifference thereto, is misappropriation for the disciple of Christ, whether he has come to see it or not. This is a doctrine not to be gainsaid. If we belong to Jesus, being bought with His precious blood, and having moreover put ourselves wholly into His hand by a personal surrender—"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath he cannot be My disciple"—then it follows clearly that our possessions are not our own, but are a sacred trust to be used with a single eye to the promotion of God's glory and the extension of His kingdom.

The general principle is readily admitted, but when it comes to the practical details of administration there is far less unanimity. Nothing is easier than to evade the demands which God makes upon our pocket-books. If one is so disposed (such is the complexity and perversity of human nature), he can, while declaring that he is all the Lord's, find a hundred fairly plausible excuses for putting off the Almighty with a miserable pittance of his earnings. And even where there is the utmost honesty, it is not always altogether easy to ascertain precisely what is right. God's will does not seem to be revealed in the matter so explicitly as to leave no room for difference of opinion. Equally conscientious and intelligent men take varying views. In the old dispensation God treated His people as children, for they were in a low state of development, and laid down very precise rules as to their offerings. Then He prescribed the tithe. But in the new dispensation we are treated as adults and put on our honor. We are given an insight into the principle that should govern and then are expected to use our intelligence in working out rules for our own guidance. It is not any longer the letter of the law that binds us, but the spirit of the Gospel.

What follows from this? That we are at liberty to take advantage of this freedom from legal bondage to indulge our selfishness, to give little or nothing for the support of divine worship, the spread of divine truth, and the relief of suffering? That we can dismiss the whole subject from our thoughts, or treat it in the careless and indifferent way that is so common, giving when we feel like it or happen to have something in hand, doing out a dime on religion or charity while we lavish dollars on luxury? Nay, verily. It is not conceivable that such is God's plan for His people in these latter and better days. That would be a monstrous conclusion, a miserable perversion of privilege.

The truly Christian course, we venture to affirm, is for each man deliberately, thoughtfully, prayerfully, to settle for himself, in view of all the Scripture precedents and declarations, in view of the state of the world and the crying needs of so many good causes on every hand, what proportion of his income should be steadily, systematically, assigned to meeting these needs. "As God hath prospered him" read the Apostle's command to the members of his churches, "upon the first day of the week let every one lay by" what is fitting. The proportion should certainly be different with different persons. In the expenditure of the wealthy God should have the leading place. In the expenditure of all there should be self-denial. Comforts and gratifications, in themselves innocent, should be surrendered in order to do good. We have no right to wait till all our wants are supplied before giving to God's work. He should come first. His part should be scrupulously taken

out and set aside in the beginning, and then we should manage to live upon the rest.

Is there any better plan? We know of none. We certainly have no quarrel with those who have conscientiously concluded—reasoning from the analogy of God's dealings with His chosen people in the olden time and noting our larger opportunities in these days—that one-tenth of their income is the minimum which, under all ordinary conditions, it will be pleasing to the Lord that they devote specifically to His more immediate service. But we are vehemently opposed to any and all attempts to impose the tithing system upon the conscience as a Christian obligation. Sure we are that many should give much more than this. And it appears to us quite possible that some will be justified in giving less. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "To his own master he standeth or falleth. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" Only let us, while standing fast in this liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free guard against being entangled in the yoke of covetousness, and carefully remember the great principle, that which nothing is more fundamental to the Gospel: "None of us liveth to himself." Then will come as a natural result that systematic, bountiful beneficence which is the only safeguard against the growth of selfishness, the spontaneous dictation of true gratitude to God, the sure prompting of love for Christ and sympathy with His work—in short, the matchless measure of personal piety. —Zion's Herald.

Starving Sin.

Sin, like all other roots and vegetations, grows by what it feeds upon. If it were not nourished it would die. It draws its own increasing strength from a decadent human nature. Its life comes of death. Sin's soil is the soul. Therein it finds its ready nutriment; therein, plant-like, it spreads its roots in complete confidence of sympathetic support. More than this, sin is a banyan tree, which, discontent with what of nourishment it secures from the soil of any one soul, strikes its spreading branches down into other hearts too.

Sin must have its food. Like a treacherous beast it lieth at the door, sneaking at the portal of human life, ready to pounce upon any transient thought, to make its own wandering impulse; like a roaring lion it walketh up and down the earth seeking whom it may devour. Sin is the insatiable, inappetent thing. It is always hungry, always eager to construct its own fibre out of the fleshly follies of the sons of men. The problem of evil is, therefore, a complex one. The situation is most serious, absolutely hopeless, from the human point of view. For sin is not only an original deterioration of humanity, but a continual process of moral decay. It is a constant possibility, and except as divine grace retards the depraved development, arresting the evil activity, an incessant practice.

But if sin may be fed, it can also be starved. It is not a necessary evil. Human nature here below is indeed fallible and peccable, but it need not sin, it ought not to sin. There is nothing either rational or excusable about wrong-doing, which is simply the thing that most not be. The true way of dealing with evil, therefore, is to cut it off from its base of supplies, to destroy its commissariat. Starve sin. The human heart is a congenial seed garden of evil, a hot-house full of incipient wickedness, fecund with multitudes of possible depravities. If, then, the iniquities are to be diminished, the supply must be cut off at the fount. This may be accomplished not by the actual destruction of the human soul itself, which is impracticable and unthinkable, but by its regeneration. The old heart may, by the gracious divine processes of regeneration, be superseded by a new nature uncongenial to sin. The seeds of evil, ever floating about in the world seeking a lodgment, will then fall upon a soil fortified against their pernicious activities. The two principles will not agree, and sin will languish because it dries up at its roots and finds no hand outstretched to replant and revive it.

As the process of sanctification advances in the soul of the believer, sin finds less and less to live upon, until, on the admission of the spirit to the perfect glory of the heavenly state, no vestige of the formerly luxuriant growths of evil will remain. What Shelley called "the ineradicable taint of sin" will be known no more. Meanwhile it is the duty of every believer to make sure that he is not in his own heart-life providing sin with those congenial soils and supports which will assist its development and spread. The surest protection against evil is to live in an atmosphere of good. When the mind "thinketh no evil," much of evil,

in a sense, ceases to exist for that soul; when the imagination is chastened and restrained from perilous wanderings along forbidden paths of gross suggestion, purity becomes increasingly a realization; when the heart is possessed by an overmastering love for the Son of God, sin retreats before the expulsive power of such a divine affection; when the hand is occupied with good works little leisure is left for unrighteous doings, since Satan finds scarcely any work for busy hands to do. The evil in this case goes because there is little left to attract and support it. Sin is starved out. Where good fully occupies the ground, evil cannot come to stay. Where all is a wheat field, thickly sown with valuable grain, small room is left for the tares. Christian workers are successful both with themselves and others, when they proceed according to this method. Pluck up the evil and plant the good! may appear to be a sound principle. Plant the good and thus prevent the evil! is a better method. Preempt the heart with grace; starve sin out.—New York Observer.

Sacrificing to Save.

A fundamental law of salvation is sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Jesus died that men might live. The law of redemption, perfectly wrought out on Calvary, extends throughout the Christian institution and to the end of time. Paul says, "I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ," and "suffer all things lest I should hinder the gospel of Christ." Believers must not seek to please themselves if they are to help their fellowmen. All the glorious victories of the militant church were bought by self-denial and personal sacrifice. Without the mind of Christ his disciples are impotent. But this mind led our Lord, though "in the form of God," to "count it not a prize to be on an equality with God," so that he "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man and being fashioned as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross," and all this to rescue mankind from sin.

If we are to carry out the will of our glorified Saviour, his example of condescension and self-denial must be constantly presented from the pulpit, and carried forward through the activities of the church. A pleasure-loving church is a soul-destroying church. When ministers and other disciples condescend to men of low estate, go out of their way to rescue the erring and to do good to the fallen, the kingdom of heaven will be increased on the earth. The secret of successful evangelism is in this law of personal sacrifice for the sake of others. Nearly any congregation might be doubled in a year if the spirit of Christ and of the early disciples was in the hearts of its members. The hundred thousand conversions coveted for the Jubilee Year of the American Christian Missionary Society will be a light task if we are willing to share in the sacrifice of Calvary.

A constant tendency is to mistake the meaning of increased prosperity, advanced culture, and the higher spiritual life. While these are personal blessings, they are also sacred trusts laid upon the strong to benefit the weak. Our Lord exalts and endows his disciples that they may stoop to lift up and encourage their less fortunate fellowmen. Our present high privileges will condemn us in the judgment, unless they are coupled here with lowly ministrations for those whom Christ died to save. The Pharisee is a perpetual warning to every religious man who, wrapped about with his own concerns and lifted up with pride in his personal elevation, falls into the condemnation of the devil.

We need disagreeable tasks to save us from spiritual selfishness. Contact with superstition, ignorance, physical squalor, and worldlyness, is a divine call upon us to grapple with and vanquish evil. Our touch must have the virtue of sympathy, and our zeal burn without abatement, to rescue and to save.

The current evangelistic year will witness a campaign of unparalleled victories if Christian brethren fix their thoughts on and shape their activities by the mind of the Master. Let us welcome losses if they secure gains for our King, and personal discomfort and weariness if thereby other men find rest for their souls. By prayers, by gifts, in labors abundant, and through joyful sacrifices, let us find the way to the hearts of misguided men, and with the loving wisdom of Christ secure them for God's everlasting kingdom. —Chris. Standard.

The moment a man says that his Christianity does not require him to give the gospel to the world, then he hasn't Christianity at all. . . . The work of evangelizing this world for every man is a matter of personal obligation.—Robert E. Speer.

The Fellowship of Faith.

True fellowship depends more upon common belief than upon anything else. Circumstances may compel people to act alike for a time, and thus cause an appearance of fellowship. As soon, however, as this external pressure is withdrawn they begin to pursue different lines of effort and reveal their inherent dissimilarity of purpose and motive. But they who think alike possess and illustrate true fellowship because the impelling convictions within them are the same. Their endeavors at first may move along distinct lines, but these lines converge and sooner or later come together.

This is especially true in regard to Christian faith and fellowship. A man's religion is the most vital fact in his life's record. Its supreme importance is conceded by most, and appreciated more or less thoroughly by all. What he believes about God and duty touches the deepest needs of his soul alike for the present and the hereafter. It therefore is of much greater consequence for him to know what other people believe about these supreme topics than about others, and of much more significance to him to find in other people sympathy and cooperation in regard to them. That many seem indifferent on the subject need not mislead us. Underneath the appearance of indifference some recognition of the gravity of the subject rarely fails to be found.

The fellowship of faith, therefore, possesses tremendous power and is rich in blessing. It supplies protection, comfort, enlightenment, inspiration. It renders cooperation in service easy and effectual. All possible emphasis should be put upon it. We may not limit it to the circle of the fellow-believers whom we know. We ought to include the great multitude of all upon earth who love our Lord. Nor may we omit the far larger host of the redeemed in glory, or the untold throng who populate heaven itself. For, if we are Christ's, they all are one with us in the fellowship of faith. The knowledge of their intelligent sympathy should fortify us against the assaults of evil and enlarge our powers of service and our joy in our common Lord.—The Congregationalist.

A Loss.

Suppose that by some divine providence or judgment all trace of our Lord Christ and His gospel were erased from history, the whole thing gone like the Megalosaurus, but unlike it leaving no sign after it, what a loss would that be! Gone forever, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbor as thyself; gone, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; gone, Suffer the little children to come unto me; gone, the prodigal son and the good Samaritan, and the Sermon on the Mount; no one had ever laid his hand on the blind man's eyes, or touched the deaf man's ears; no one had ever looked love into John's eyes, or said, Feed my sheep, to forgiven Simon Peter, or startled the woman at the well with the sight of her own heart—and where is there more startling vision than that? No one had ever been transfigured with outshining of his own beauty of holiness; no one had ever agonized in the garden; no one had ever hung upon the cross; no one had ever risen from the dead, talked with John and James and put the finger of Thomas in the print of the nail; no one had ascended to heaven and commissioned his disciples to tell his story to the world. Instead of all this there is simple vacancy—all lost and gone.

Who has the arithmetic to compute how much poorer the world would be by this great loss?—Church Union.

The First Duty.

Forget not that your first and principal business as a disciple of Christ is to give the gospel to those who have it not. He who is not a missionary Christian will be a missing Christian when the great day comes for bestowing the reward of service. Therefore:

Ask yourselves daily what the Lord would have you do in connection with the work of carrying the news of salvation to the perishing millions. Search carefully whether he would have you go yourself to the heathen if you have the youth and fitness required for the work. Or, if you cannot go in person,

Inquire diligently what blood mortgage there is upon your property in the interest of foreign missions—how much you owe to the heathen, because of what you owe to Christ for redeeming you with his precious blood. I warn you that it will go hard with you when your Lord comes to reckon with you if he finds your wealth invested in superfluous luxuries or hoarded up in needless accumulations, instead of being sacrificially devoted to giving the gospel to the lost.

But remember that consecrated giving will be impossible unless there be first a consecrated giver. Therefore I counsel you to seek the special grace and anointing of the Holy Spirit, that he may work in you that consecration of heart and life on which so much depends.—Dr. A. J. Gordon.

Example of the Missionary Spirit.

They say that when William Carey was repeatedly and wickedly thwarted in his plans to set sail for the East, he boldly asserted that he would walk to India, if no ship would take him. He had his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and neither foes, nor time, nor space, nor seas, nor streams, nor deserts, nor mountains could wear him out, till he had delivered the good news to Burmah. Fortunately, a little Danish ship agreed to bear him to his longed for labor. Yet, in the mind's eye, I can see the noble man of God setting out afoot, over desert and plain, finally placing his feet on the tops of the very Himalayas; and as he descends their rugged slopes towards Burmah, the redeemed of all ages, a mighty cloud of witnesses, look on with admiring gaze and chant, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." No obstacle can stay the feet of him to whom the Gospel is ever new, supremely true, the world's eternal hope.—[E. B. Pollard, Foreign Mission Journal.

The Holy Spirit a Sovereign.

We are prone to think of the Holy Spirit too much as simply an indwelling presence, and too little as a leading sovereign. Subject to the ordering of the Spirit should be the attitude of all Christians. He has come into the world to be the leader of men. It is really his prerogative to be authoritative. He comes as the other advocate, as Jesus said: "I will send you another comforter." Christians often think more of the personal conditions into which the Holy Spirit may bring them than of the service into which he may lead them. They are too apt to forget the mind of the Spirit, and resist his will and work. The weakness of churches often lies in this fact, that they are full of their own plans, desiring their own ways, and culturing their own endowments instead of following the leading and seeking the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The early successes of the Gospel were marked by the manifest presence and supremacy of the Holy Spirit.—N. Y. Examiner.

About Catarrh.

It is caused by a cold or succession of colds combined with impure blood. Its symptoms are pain in the head, discharge from the nose, ringing noises in the ears. It is cured by Hood's Sarsaparilla which purifies and enriches the blood, soothes and rebuilds the tissues and relieves all the disagreeable sensations.

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