

Better Days.

Better to smell the violets cool than to sip
the glowing wine;
Better to bark a hidden brook than to watch
a diamond shine.

Better the love of gentle hearts than
beauty's favors proud;
The roses' living seed than roses in a
crowd.

Better to love in loneliness than bask in
love all day;
Better the fountain in the heart than the
fountain by the way.

Better to be fed by another's hands than eat
alone at will;
Better to trust in God than say, My goods
my storehouse fill.

Better to be a little wiser than in knowledge
to abound;
Better to teach a child to love than fill
perfection's round.

Better to sit at a master's feet than thrill at
listening state;
Better suspect that thou art proud than be
sure that thou art great.

Better to walk in the realm unseen than
watch the hour's event;
Better the "well done" at the last than the
air with shouting rent.

Better to have a quiet grief than a hurrying
delight;
Better the twilight of the dawn than the
noonday burning bright.

Better a death when work is done than
earth's most favored birth;
Better a child in God's great house than a
king of all the earth.

—George MacDonald.

Some Who Fall Away.

Many Christians run well for a season, but only for a season. They do not endure to the end. There are various degrees of backsliding. One may, after having enjoyed the blessedness of religion and walked with God for a season, go very far away from Him. Complete apostasy is possible. We have an example in Judas. He was a disciple and a chosen apostle. He walked with the disciples and shared the blessedness of communion with the Lord. He was empowered to do many mighty works in the name of Christ. He was the first church treasurer of whom we have any account in the annals of Christianity. Perhaps the little sum of which he was custodian and disbursing agent became a temptation and served to develop his avarice. It does not require millions to allure human souls. Pennies will answer for that. The end is known to all the world. Thief, traitor, suicide, devil—these are the terms used to describe him at the last.

Now a few church officials have gone the same road. Almost every considerable Christian community has produced one Judas. We shudder as we remember him. He stood high in the esteem of his brethren. He had the confidence of the people. He took part in the devotional services of the church. His voice was often heard in prayer. He pointed sinners to the Lamb of God. He spoke of his religious experience with deep feeling and apparent sincerity. His life was above reproach. He made great sacrifices for the cause of Christ. The uniform testimony of his neighbors was that he was a good man, and who shall say that they were not right? But he was tempted. He used in speculation money which he held in trust. He lost. Hoping to recover himself, he ventured again, and failed. The rest of the story is a familiar tale. Being discovered in his wrongdoing, he did not have courage to face his record and his friends, but went out and took his life.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." It is a terrible thing for one who has tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come to fall away. He crucifies the Son of God afresh, and counts the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing. He gives occasion to the enemies of Christ to blaspheme. He brings a reproach on the cause of God, and makes the saints blush for shame. It were better for that man never to have been born.

Some backsliders do not go so far. The Bible speaks of "the backslider in heart." Many belong to this class. They do not backslide outwardly, but inwardly. Perhaps little change takes place in their outward life. They continue to deal honestly, to speak truth, to walk in their integrity. They may even continue to keep the Sabbath, to read the Bible, to go to church. They may still take part in the religious services of the sanctuary, and discharge the duties of their official stations. But they have met with a change of heart.

A change of heart is a good thing if it is the right sort of a change. But a change of heart in the wrong direction is a sad thing. Here is a heart which once loved God now taken from Him and fixed on the world. It is an awful change. The warm heart has become cold, the tender heart has

become hard, the pure heart has become tarnished, the meek and lowly heart has become proud and vain, the unselfish heart has become selfish, the loyal heart has become disloyal. What are all outward religious exercises in such a case? No light is found in the Bible when it is read by one whose heart is far from God; no answer comes when he prays; no joy springs up in that heart when he bends to the easy yoke of the Master. He is dead while he liveth.

"How oft this wretched heart
Has wandered from the Lord!
How oft my roving thoughts depart,
Forgetful of His word!"

If one will escape this dark experience, he must needs be vigilant. The world is ready to lead the Christians away, and there is danger at every turn. No one is more surprised than the backslider to discover that he has wandered so far. He did not plan this departure, he did not intend it, he did not fear it. An opiate put him to sleep; he awoke and found himself in Doubting Castle. Again and again did our Saviour sound the alarm in the ears of His disciples, saying, "Watch."

"Who calleth thee, Heart? World's Strife,
With a golden bait to his knife:
World's Mirth, with a finger fine
That draws on a board in wine
Her blood red plans of life:
World's Gain, with a brow knit down;
World's Fame, with a laurel crown,
Which rustles most as the leaves turn brown.

Heart, wilt thou go?

—No, no!

Calm hearts are wiser so."

Chris Advocate.

Peacemakers.

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the sons of God." The Makers of Peace! What a calling, and what a captain they have, for Jesus is the Prince of Peace. What is the peace that is to be promoted? Who are the promoters of it? And by what means is it advanced? An answer to these questions ought to lead us into the heart of this "blessedness."

There is a false appearance of peace which exists among men, which ought to be broken up. It is the quietness of stagnation or the hush of corruption or the cringing of slavery under the heel of oppression, or the silence of ignorant and avoidable suffering. These conditions may have the appearance of peace. There is a kind of money called "hush money." Its purpose and effect is well known. It makes affairs appear quiet on the surface when there is injustice and corruption and every condition antagonistic to true peace beneath the surface. These conditions must be broken up. Hence Christ says; "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword."

The peace to be promoted is Christ's peace, or God's peace, or Nature's peace. It is not a quietness of stagnation, but a well-balanced and harmonious working of beneficent forces. Well-balanced but mighty forces produce peace in nature, so well-directed and mighty moral forces upheaving wrong and establishing right will make peace in the spiritual world. To proceed on Christ's method men must first be "at peace" with God in order to establish the centre of all moral force aright. The true way to promote peace is for all men to become disciples of Jesus in spirit and practice, to have "the mind of Christ" as the apostles had it.

If we look into the conditions of society at home and abroad to see where and how these principles are to have present application, we find that Canon Gore, in a very brief paragraph suggests three points of application:

(1) The maker of peace has a work to do in the Christian Church in its present divided condition—a condition at least of non-confidence and non-intercourse between sections of the same "body of Christ." The "unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace," and the fellowship and co-operation of branches in the Vine, must at least be established and made strong. There is a great work here.

(2) The maker of peace has a work to do for the "nations nominally Christian," who are grievously oppressed under the burden of great preparations for war. Hugh Price Hughes, in dealing with the text in Isaiah ii. 4, states the gist of the whole matter thus: "The day is coming when Jesus Christ will substitute arbitration for war; and when, under His influence, human society, so long organized on a military system, will be reconstructed on an industrial basis." The nations shall "learn war no more," and the implements of peaceful husbandry shall fill the factories with work and the fields with healthy and joyful employments. The growth of the British Empire, and of the United States, is a wonderful growth of industrialism.

(3) The maker of peace has a great

work to do in the industrial world, where "fierce and relentless competition" produces unjust and unbearable conditions, and where co-operation in the general interest must come in the place of individual gain.

(4) The maker of peace has many opportunities in society—domestic, civil or ecclesiastical—where jealousy and evil-speaking and misunderstanding and malice are always destructive of peace. Every disciple of Christ can find a field here. A missionary in Jamaica was questioning the little black boys on Matt. v., and asked, "Who are the meek?" A boy answered, "Those who give soft answers to rough questions."—Chris. Guardian.

Jealousy and Self-Seeking.

The emotion of jealousy is so little, mean and contemptible, as to condemn itself in every manly soul, and it does seem that it should have been banished from every human breast long ago. And yet we see signs of its power and work every day, and we hear sad laments concerning its ravages from many sources. The "Herald" and "Presbyter" for instance, speak thus concerning it and its twin sister, self-seeking:

"There is too much of this petty spirit of jealousy and self-seeking and disparagement of others. There are too many who are more anxious to have glory than to deserve it; more ready to detract from the honor due to others than to demand that they themselves have only their rightful share. There are too many who are anxious to sit on the highest seat, for the distinction of so doing rather than from any special fitness for the position. All of this is wrong and unworthy. Nothing good can come from it. It is the spirit which Christ was compelled to rebuke even in two of his most beloved disciples when he told them that they were to seek fitness for service rather than mere prominence of position."

Those are well spoken words, and should have some influence in driving this petty but powerful little demon from every soul where it has found any lodgment. Such a spirit, while it may be common, should not be entertained by any one for a moment. There is no element or semblance of manliness in it or connected with it. It is cowardly, narrow, little, and will convert every life into littleness and nothing but littleness, where it is allowed a place. Jealousy and self-seeking belong to an order of beings with whom men should have no relation. They are foreign elements, brought into this world by the lowest order of beings, and are calculated to produce only anarchy in character, society, business, government, church and everywhere.

Why should men, real men we mean, be jealous of each other, or contend for self-preference? There is room for every true soul that is in the world, and good room. There is enough work, and good, honorable work, for every one to do. There is a place for every one, a noble, high minded, unselfish place, one's own place; and that place is to be won, not by self-seeking and jealous manoeuvring, but by doing the duties of life as they come and like a man.

Men may gain places in life by pushing themselves forward, but they go to them with little or no qualification for them, and hence gain only the disgrace of failure and the debasing effects on their own character. This is one great reason why we have so many small men, and why there is so much of life failure. There are so many who are seeking place rather than fitness for place, who are more anxious to have glory than to deserve it, who would rather wear a royal crown than possess a royal spirit. That disposition debases politics whenever it touches political matters and it will debase everything else it touches. Above all else it should be kept out of the church. A jealous, self-seeking preacher would be a monster, ignominious to be avoided on every side. Such a preacher, if there could be such, or such a member of the church is hardly worthy of consideration.—Selected.

The Appeal of the Gospel to Common Sense.

All who pride themselves on being governed by good sense rather than by sentiment, influence, or even example, ought especially to be Christians. If ever any appeal was made directly and forcibly to common sense, it is that of Christianity. Leaving out of account at present all considerations of gratitude or affection, and taking merely the lower ground of expediency, has not the Gospel a right to everyone's serious attention, and to his acceptance?

It appeals to every man in his own behalf. It tells him that whatever he may do, he has himself to look after and provide for. This is as true

in religion as in business, and more true. Others indeed may concern themselves and may be helpful. But if he does not make any effort for himself to take advantage of the divine offers, no other person's zeal can do the work in his behalf. The Gospel reminds him of this, and points out to him the risk of not looking personally after his own interests.

It deals with simple, plain, undeniable facts, from which there is no escape. He is here to-day. He may be gone next year, next month, perhaps even to-morrow. Whether he does or does not believe all which he hears about a future life, his good sense tells him to live so that, if there be one, he may be prepared for it in the best manner. The same sound sense insists that whoever lives the most pure, noble, unselfish, useful life here of course is best fitted for whatever may be coming hereafter. And it declares that this is just the life that Jesus Christ did live and which His Gospel insists upon.

The Gospel does not try to deceive anyone or to beguile him. It does not pretend that to be a Christian always is easy, and his observation teaches him better than to believe that. Nor does it hold out to him the prospect of immediate perfect happiness, or of any other kind of reward, as a bait, although it does assure him that in the end he will rejoice in being a Christian. It treats him fairly and frankly, as a man deserves to be treated. It tells him that he ought to be a Christian. Let him do his duty, and let happiness take care of itself. It tells him that he will have a hard fight against evil as long as he lives, but that it is more sensible to accept this fact and to make his fight manfully, with the heavenly aid which he will have, than to shrink from it or refuse to consider it.

In a word, in spirit, in fact, and in method the Gospel appeals to common sense upon its own ground.—The Congregationalist.

Livingstone's Reply to Stanley.

When Stanley found Livingstone in the heart of Africa, he begged the old hero to go home. There seemed to be every reason why he should go back to England. His wife was dead, his children lived in England, the weight of years was pressing upon him, the shortest march would lead him to his grave. He was compelled to halt many days to recover strength after his frequent attacks of prostrating illness. Moreover, he was destitute of men and means to enable him to make practical progress. But, like Paul, none of these things moved him; nor counted he his life dear to himself. "No, no," he said to Stanley; "to be knighted, as you say, by the Queen, welcomed by thousands of admirers, yes—but impossible. It must not, can not, will not be. I must finish my task." This should be the motto of all Christians. God has given each of us a work to do, and we should not let anything interfere with that and then only shall we finish our course with joy.

Fault-Finding.

Some people seem to know altogether too much. At least, they know so much that they feel under obligation to criticize everything that any other one says or does. Their knowledge makes them vain and self-conceited. In their relations with others they are arrogant, critical, intolerant.

Criticism is unloving. It discourages, and too often does permanent harm. Life is not easy for any one, while to many persons it is very hard. They are carrying every ounce of burden they can possibly carry. Sometimes they almost totter under their heavy load. Then, when instead of saying cheering, encouraging words, which will put new hope into their spirit, we do nothing but find fault with them, criticize or blame them, who can tell the hurt our words may do? If they do not make the load heavier for them, such words certainly make their courage less, and thus add to the hardness of their lives.—Dr. J. R. Miller.

Living Sweetly Under Trials.

"Many of us find life hard and full of pain," says Rev. J. R. Miller. "The world uses us rudely and roughly. We suffer wrongs and injuries. Other people's clumsy feet tread upon our tender spirits. We must endure misfortunes, trials, disappointments. We cannot avoid these things, but we should not allow the harsh experiences to deaden our sensibilities or make us stoical or sour. The true problem of living is to keep our hearts sweet and gentle in the hardest conditions and experiences."

"If you remove the snow from the hillside in the late winter, you will find sweet flowers growing there beneath the cold drifts, unharmed by the

storm and by the snowy blankets that have covered them. So should we keep our hearts tender and sensitive beneath life's fiercest winter blasts, and through the longest years of suffering, and even of injustice and wrong treatment. That is true, victorious living."

Men Cast in Different Molds.

There is room in the world for many kinds of people, and God meant that this should be so. He has not made all men after the same model, any more than he has made the leaves on the trees to match each other. He loves and delights in variety. It is only men who are so intolerant of difference in temperament and make-up as to insist that their neighbor shall measure his corn in their bushel, and shape life after their ideas. We are like the English squire, who inherited a fine library of books, but found they were not all of the same height; so he sent for the village carpenter, and had him saw down to a proper average those which were too tall for the rest. That this increased either the beauty or the usefulness of the collection was not to be expected. Nor will humanity be made either better or fairer by our efforts to replace the variety that God loves by the uniformity that short-sighted man would have.—S. S. Times.

Feeling for the Pillars.

When Luther was at Coburg he wrote to a friend, "I was lately looking out of my window at night, and I saw the stars in the heavens, and God's great, beautiful arch over my head, but I could not see any pillars on which the great Builder had fixed this arch, and yet the heavens fell not, and the great arch stood firmly. There are some who are always feeling for the pillars, and longing to touch them. And, because they cannot touch them, they stand trembling and fearing lest the heavens should fall. If they could only grasp the pillars, then the heavens would stand fast." Thus Luther illustrated the faith of his own soul, and wished to inspire others with the same strong confidence in God.

A Woman who had many sorrows and heavy burdens to bear, but who was noted for her cheerful spirits, once said in explanation: "You know I have had no money. I had nothing to give but myself; and so I made the resolution that I would never sadden any one else with my troubles. I have laughed and told jokes when I could have wept. I have always smiled in the face of every misfortune. I have tried never to let any one go from my presence without a happy word or a bright thought to carry with him. And happiness makes happiness. I myself am happier than I would have been had I sat down and bemoaned my fate."—Wellspring.

A Substantial Gain.

"I was very weak and hardly able to walk. My blood was thin and I was as pale as death. Being told about Hood's Sarsaparilla I began taking it and in a few months I had gained twenty pounds in weight. I kept on with it until I was as well as ever." ARTHUR MILLS, Dresden, Ontario.

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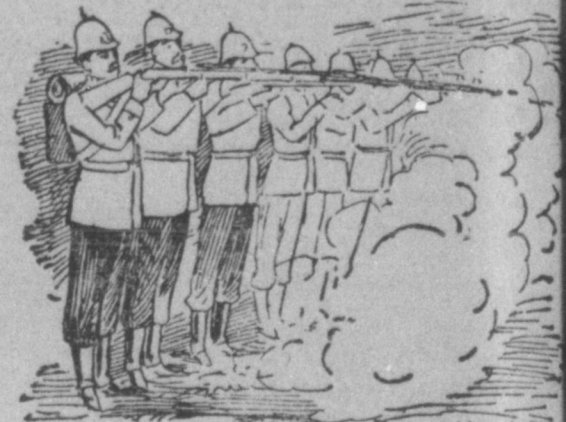
Mrs. Will Varner, New Canada, N. S., writes:—"I have used Burdock Blood Bitters for Headache and Impure Blood. One bottle made a cure, I think there is no better medicine made."

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