

Consecration Prayer.

Take Lord, my heart, and make it all
Thine own,
Till I shall know Thee even as I am known;
Rule Thou my will, and keep it true to
Thee,
That all I love and choose may holy be.
Too long has self ruled thought and word
and deed,
God's precious seed been choked by briar
and weed,
His cleansing Spirit grieved by sin's con-
trol—
Christ knocking vainly at my close-barred
soul.

Take me, and Thy lost image now renew,
Make me to Thee and heaven ever true.
Quench Thou each earth-born, wayward
passion-dart,
Create in me, O God, a holy heart.

Then will each duty seem a deed of love,
Rendered in grateful praise to Christ a love;
Then will Thy mercies, great above all
price
Prompt me to yield my life a sacrifice.

Then will earth's wealth be consecrated to
Thee;
All that I am, and all I hope to be,
All that I have, will be no more my own—
Time, talents, wealth belong to Christ
alone.

Thus consecrate me, Saviour, unto Thee,
Until earth's shadows shall forever flee;
Then bear me hence to dwell with Thee
above,
Where every deed is prompted by Thy
love!

—The Christian Intelligencer.

Personal Work a Christian's
Habit of Life.

BY H. CLAY TRUMBULL, D. D.

"Personal work?" What other work is there to be done except personal work? And if a Christian realizes that there is always important work in the world waiting to be done by Christians, how can a man live on as a Christian, or suppose that he is faithful as a worker together with Christ, unless personal Christian work is his habit of life? So long as Christ works, and as he wants a follower of his to be a witness for him, and to represent him where he desires to be known among men, so long that follower must make personal work a habit of his life, and not merely an occasional exercise of his powers.

But there are different kinds of personal work, and it is important to know what sort of personal work is the most valuable and effective for an earnest Christian to engage in, if he would always use his time and powers to the highest advantage. Although all work of a Christian is in a very real sense personal work, when "personal work" is specially spoken of, it is ordinarily intended to designate the work of an individual for individuals. That kind of work is not a habit of life with earnest Christians generally, as it ought to be.

Preaching or proclaiming the good tidings of salvation for the sinner is the mission of the witness for Christ; but preaching or proclaiming is not by any means limited to a formal discourse to an assembled congregation. Henry Ward Beecher said, at one time, "The longer I live, the more I value those sermons where one man is the minister, and one man is the congregation; where there can be no doubt as to who is meant when the preacher says, 'Thou art the man!'"

Preaching to a large congregation is important in its way and place and time. So is the sounding of a fog-horn or a surf-bell on a rocky coast, to warn and guide approaching and passing mariners. But the stationed alarm signal can never take the place or do the work of the men of the watchful life-saving service who push out through the surf in a life-boat with a line, to rescue the poor fellows battling with the waves, or sinking with a wreck. The real heroes of the coast guard are the men who individually rescue imperiled individuals; and these heroes make such heroism the habit of their lives.

That was a pregnant truth which was enunciated by Dr. Joseph T. Duryea when he said, "What the sick soul needs is, not a lecture on medicine, but a prescription." The Great Physician sends out those whom he has healed to prescribe for those who need healing, whether they realize their need or are ignorant of it. There are many thus authorized who feel that their chief business is lecturing to large assemblies of the sick on spiritual medicine, describing spiritual disorders, and recommending approved spiritual remedies. They do not feel that they must themselves examine their patients one by one, learning their particular symptoms, and prescribing the proper special treatment, in the manner of a practicing physician rather than that of a medical professor. Yet even such men are always ready to treat individual patients separately, if the disordered one makes special application for treatment. As representatives of the Great Physician they can be found on occasions at the authorized public dispensary, in the

"inquiry room," or at the "after meeting," skillfully treating those who present themselves for treatment; and in such ways and places great good is being done by God's messengers of salvation.

But the Great Commission from the Great Physician to his representative is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." It is not a call to sinners, Come ye from all the world and hear the gospel. It is not a command to sinners, if you know you are sick, go to the hospital, or apply at the dispensary; but it is a command to the lovers of the sinner, Go out into the wide world, and show to careless men that they need medical treatment; and lovingly tell them what to take or to do.

If a Christian waits until the sinner gives a sign of a desire for help, or until the Christian thinks that a loving word to the sinner will be most timely, he may not begin at all. The only safe rule for his guidance—if indeed a Christian needs a specific rule as a guide—is to speak lovingly of Christ and of Christ's love for the individual, whenever one has an opportunity of choosing his subject of conversation in an interview with an individual who may be in special need, yet who has given no special indication of it. This seems to have been Paul's idea in his counsel to young Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; bring to the proof, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." The most important of all themes of converse would seem to be worthy of prominence in comparison with others. But does it ordinarily have it among Christians?

On one occasion I heard testimony given of a student who was thus habitually faithful to his Master and to his fellow-students, which well illustrates the possibility and the value of such a habit of life. A number of clergymen in a New England city were criticizing the methods of a well-known evangelist. One of the number, who was rector of the principal Episcopal church in the city, said to the others, earnestly: "You will understand that the public methods of this man's work are not such as I should incline to; but I want to bear witness to his fidelity to his Master in all his life course. I was his fellow-student in college. I knew him well there. And this I can say of him: In all the four years of his college course, no student could be six weeks there without having to meet squarely the question of his personal relation to Christ, through the loving and earnest personal appeal of that follower of Christ. I know more than one who was thus influenced by him. In my own case, I was a skeptic when I entered college, yet I had little thought on the subject of religion anyway. But that man's appeals I had to meet and I could not resist. It is in consequence of his faithfulness that my life is in the Christian ministry. And now, whatever I think of that man's peculiar methods of public Christian work, I cannot but be grateful for his personal fidelity to his Master and ours."

This was having personal work for souls a habit of life. What if there were only ten such Christian men as that student in every college class? What if there were even one? Why should there not be more?

"Be Strong and of a Good
Courage."

The spiritual weakening and the fearing saint are always at a disadvantage when the battle for spiritual supremacy is being fought. They are also a hindrance to the achievement of the greatest success in the warfare against sin and Satan. Not having a clear comprehension of things of God, nor a firm hold upon His promises, nor a definite conception of their duty and privilege as members of the family of God, they are weak instead of strong, uncertain instead of positive, irresolute instead of fearless, and when the battle is joined, whether it be in their own hearts or in the wider field of the world, they are not to be counted upon as defenders of the faith. For their faith is a feeble affair, their spiritual convictions lack the strong support of profound and unmistakable experience, and they soon fall in the fight, or desert the field because, doubting God, they doubt themselves, their courage oozes out, and they become an easy prey of the enemy.

A essential element to the development of the spiritual life, the performance of Christian work, and the achievement of victory over the adversary of souls is strength of heart. Here is a force which, having its secret springs in the purpose and power of God, is simply irresistible, and should be the prized possession of every child of God. The exhortation and promise made to Joshua are vital today: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

The story of Joshua's leadership shows how marvelously courageous he was, how fully he depended upon the promise of God, and how careful he was to yield complete obedience to the commands of God as given by Moses.

Courage is the flower of confidence. When the Lord said to Joshua: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee," the new leader was panoplied with the strength of an unshakable conviction in the integrity of God, and he went forth to do valiant exploits in God's name. There cannot be much successful battling for the Lord, or advancement in the Christian life, or enjoyment of spiritual delights, unless there is a profound conviction of God's willingness and ability to fulfil His words of promise, and that He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." One reason why so many are weak in the faith is because they do not really believe in God with the full strength of the heart. A feeble faith never came from a stout heart, nor did it ever give man or woman courage to attempt or perform any great work for God. It takes courage to believe in God and in the things of God, as much as it does to stand amid the hostile elements of the world as the champion of truth and honor and right. Another reason is that while some believe, they are slow to obey. God gives men visions, enters into their hearts and lives, transforms them by His mighty power, not for their own spiritual delectation, but that they may become the messengers of salvation unto their fellows. Joshua was a courageous leader because he followed the commandments of the Lord, in whom his supreme confidence was placed. Forward he went, strong of heart, unswerving of purpose, unyielding to evil suggestion, an irresistible force for righteousness, a faithful servant of the Lord, and a valiant and successful leader of the people.

The follower of Jesus needs to be strong and very courageous. There is no life so sheltered from the antagonisms of the world as not to need the help that comes from strength of heart. It is needed in the sweet quietude of the domestic life and amid the turmoil and contentions of business. It is needed to bear the burdens of life as well as to enjoy its pleasures; to face the responsibilities of life as well as to receive its honors; to meet the disappointment of life as well as to welcome its satisfactions; to sustain the defeats of life as well as to rejoice over its triumphs. To every man life has its difficulties and its disappointments, but the true Christian, who has learned his philosophy of life from Jesus, meets these elements of life with a sweet serenity of spirit and with a calm courage such as in greater measure characterized the earthly career of the bravest soul that ever mingled with men.—Chris. Advocate.

The Passing of Family
Prayers.

One who had taken pains to inquire as he went around through the quarterly conferences of two presiding elders' districts in one of the New England Conferences recently made the public statement that, of the limited number who attended the class meetings of those two districts, less than one third had prayers in their families. If this be the case among those presumably the most devout and faithful, if only one third even of such have family prayers, how small must be the proportion of our members generally! Shall we call it one-tenth? It certainly cannot be more than one-fifth. Every testing of the matter, whether in official boards, quarterly conferences, public congregations, class-meetings, or private intercourse, confirms the conclusion that this good old practice has largely passed away. There seems to be but very little conscience in regard to the subject. Heads of households content themselves with the lame excuse that it is difficult to get the family together, that there is no convenient time, that the pressure of work makes it impossible, that they do not like to pray before others. All of which simply goes to show, it seems to us, that either the importance of the practice is not appreciated, or else that there is a sad lack of willingness to face unpleasant duty.

In the latter aspect it is a very alarming symptom, though perhaps not a new one, and is closely allied with the very general reluctance on the part of church members to take part in the public means of grace, or even to attend them with any regularity, and also with the common neglect of Bible study and private supplication. As to the other point, it is difficult to see how any thought-

ful person can regard the habit in question as of little consequence. It surely has most intimate relation with the religious tone or atmosphere of the home. Of itself alone it will not create such an atmosphere. But it is one element tending that way, and its absence will certainly be felt. What parent can help feeling, if his children do not grow up as they should, that they might have done otherwise had he himself brought them to God morning by morning or evening by evening in stated devotions to which they at least sometimes listened, if they did not actively join therein?

God has in numberless instances blessed this exercise to the good of the young, as well as of the old. That father (or mother) is not doing all he might for those committed to his care who allows them to grow up without this hallowed experience to help them in the battles of life. It aids in bringing the members of the household together. Sacred impressions can thus be made that in no other way are possible. If this be neglected, there is little likelihood that the harder task of personal pleading will be attempted. While if this duty be done, it makes all others easier.

No time for it in our busy life? How extremely rare the case in which at least five minutes cannot be secured for this purpose at some period of the day. And five minutes is certainly better than nothing. But of course ten is better still, and ten can be managed by a little planning, in nine cases out of ten, where the heart is at all set upon it. It will really pay. Of that we are firmly convinced. Let young couples who are setting up a home start aright; and let the homes where its hallowing influence has fallen into abeyance take on anew its blessing if they would have the rolling months bring them the largest amount of true prosperity.—Zion's Herald.

Benefits of Affliction.

Most men see nothing in affliction but loss. They never think of benefits in connection with this painful experience. Affliction is always unwelcome. The heart and flesh shrink from pain, and instinctively cry out for deliverance from it. No one can fully explain the mystery of affliction. After we have read all we can, thought all we can, learned all we can about affliction, it is still surrounded by deep mystery. There are many problems connected with it and many questions suggested by it which cannot be solved. But some men have derived great benefit from deep affliction.

If the paralytic whom Jesus healed had never been afflicted he would not have known the value of the four friends who carried him on his couch into the presence of the great Physician. It requires affliction to teach us the value of friendship and sympathy. The paralytic was introduced to Jesus by his affliction. We have no reason to suppose that he would have sought the presence, the acquaintance, and the help of the Lord if he had not known trouble. Perhaps he would have been among the enemies and persecutors of Jesus if his health had been sound. His paralysis drove him to the Saviour, in whom he found not only health of body, but the forgiveness of sins also.

We have known some who are equally indebted to their sorrows. Before they were afflicted they went astray. But when tribulation came down on them like a whirlwind, like Manasseh, they turned to the Lord. It is true that some men seek the Lord in trouble, and forget Him so soon as the clouds roll away. But this is not true of all. Thousands have sought the Lord in trouble, and continued to serve Him to the end.

It is a sad thing for one to endure sore affliction for a long series of years and derive no benefit therefrom. If this fire does not melt the heart it produces hardness. Those who are not made better by their sufferings are usually made worse. Those who draw near to God in the fires will have reason to praise Him forever for sore trials.

Behind Time.

The man who is always behind time will never overtake success. Young man, just stick a pin right there.

The behind-time preacher reaches his appointment too late to preach a good sermon. He is flustered, and the red looks of his people embarrass him.

The behind-time farmer plows too late, plants too late, cultivates too late, and of course, his crops are not a success.

The behind-time mechanic enters his shop ten minutes too late to catch the approving, cheering smile of his employer, and works in a self-condemned, too late mood all day. Of course he fails to overtake success.

The behind-time Sunday-school superintendent wearies his teachers and scholars, dampens their ardor, and, in turn, causes them to be late the next Sunday. Of course his school can never overtake success.

The behind-time business man wears out the patience of his customers and creditors and drives them from him. Then when the success train comes along he is just a little too late to get on board, and is left.

Time is better than money. To be behind time is to squander what is better than money; and success does not come to the door or the squanderer.

The folly of the foolish virgins consisted in their being behind time. They were not up to time in providing the necessary oil, and when they discovered their folly, then they fell behind time in repairing their mistake. "The door was shut," and they were left out.

To be behind time in matters that pertain to this life is bad enough; but to be behind time in making preparation for death is an overwhelming disaster. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—The Telescope.

Retaining The Power.

When a lecturer on electricity wants to show an example of the human body surcharged with fire, he places a person on a stool with glass legs. The glass serves to isolate him from the earth, because it will not conduct the fire—the electric fluid. Were it not for this, however much might be poured into his frame, it would be carried away by the earth; but when thus isolated from it, he retains all that enters him.

If thou, then, wouldst have thy soul surcharged with the fire of God, so that those who come nigh to thee shall feel some mysterious influence proceeding out from thee, thou must draw nigh to the source of that fire. Enter into thy closet, and shut to thy door, and there, isolated, "before the throne," await the baptism. Then the fire shall fill thee, and when thou comest forth, holy power will attend thee, and thou shalt labor, not in thine own strength, but "with the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power."—Rev. William Arthur.

BIRDS.—Mr. C. E. Linney gives the following weather proverbs referring to song-birds and storms: "When birds cease to sing rain and thunder will follow. If birds in general pick their feathers, wash themselves, and fly to their nests, expect rain. Parrots and canaries dress their feathers and are wakeful the evening before a storm. If the peacock cries when he goes to roost, and, indeed, much at any time, it is a sign of rain. Long and loud singing of robins in the morning denotes rain. Robins will perch on the topmost branches of trees and whistle when a storm is coming on."

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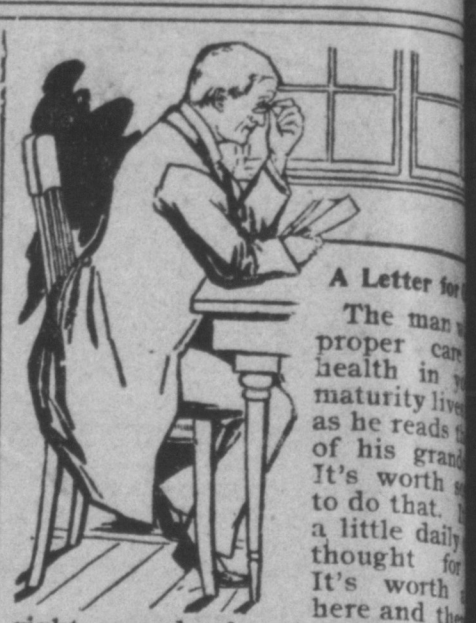
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