The Better Way.

Long since, in sore distress, I heard one pray,
"Lord, who prevailest with resistless might,
Ever from war and strife keep me away;
My battles fight!"

I know not if I play the Pharisee,
And if my brother, after all, be right;
But mine shall be the warrior's plea to thee,—
Strength for the fight.

I do not ask that thou shalt front the fray,
And drive the warring foeman from my sight:
I only ask, O Lord, by night, by day,
Strength for the fight!

When foes upon me press, let me not quail,
Nor think to turn me into coward flight.
I only ask, to make mine arms prevail,
Strength for the fight!

Still let mine eyes look ever on the foe,
Still let mine armor case me strong and bright;
And grant me, as I deal each righteous blow,
Strength for the fight.

And when, at eventide, the fray is done,
My soul to Death's bed-chamber do thou light,
And give me, be the field or lost or won,
Rest from the fight!

—New York Independent.

Renewals for 1900 are now due. Kindly send yours this week.

Paul's Conception of Christian Love.

BY THE REV. EDWARD JUDSON, D. D

Charity, or rather love, has seven component parts, just as in the rainbow a single white ray of light is divided into its seven prismatic colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

And first we have the Forgiving Spirit, "Love suffereth long and is kind." Some people have a perfect genius for speaking in such a way as to cause pain. They are like the old hunter who, when asked why he insisted on shooting Indians, answered that he liked to see them jump. It is hard to love people who like to prod us in our most sensitive places. Or, if they do not hurt our feelings, they damage our financial interests, and it is hard to love any one who touches your pocket-book or takes advantage of you in a trade. Or else they hurt your reputation. They turn their hose on your work, and hardly any reputation can survive a steady stream of depreciation. It is not strange that St. Paul puts the forgiving spirit as the first component part of love. This spirit has first its negative side. It suffers long. It does not strike back. It cherishes no resentment. And its positive side as well. It is kind. In forgiving, it is not enough for me to say to myself, "I will not retaliate." I must go to my brother who has done me wrong. I must not wait for him to come to me and ask for forgiveness. I must pursue him with aggressive and persistent kindness.

The second ray in this heavenly spectrum is the Unenvious Spirit. "Love envieth not." When we are making a failure of life it is hard to love people who are making a success of it. How mean is the feeling that makes us hate others and almost want to kill them because of their happiness, possessions, endowments, or success. It is said of Gladstone that in his darkest days he never spoke a discourteous word either to or of Palmerston or Beaconsfield.

The third component part of love is the Humble Spirit. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." Vanity is esteem for self, coupled with contempt for others. Envy is the vice of those that fail; vanity of those that succeed. Both vices let go of us reluctantly. They accompany our steps even to extreme old age. Vanity is a bar to love. It prevents our loving others, because self-love leaves no room in the heart for others. It prevents others loving us, not only because it is itself inherently unlovely, but because the display of our gifts and finery awakens the envy of others.

The fourth component part of love is the Courteous Spirit. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." This is closely connected with what goes before. A vain man instinctively treats others as inferior, and this is the very essence of impoliteness. He is so occupied with self that he does not think it worth his pains to be courteous. His consciousness of superiority makes him rude. The best test of courtesy is our behavior toward those less fortunate than we—those who struggle and suffer. It is difficult for love to exist without the observance of the minor courtesies of life. It will not do for me to say that under a rough, boorish exterior I have in reserve a warm heart. People have not got the time to dig around in search of hidden nobility. They will fight shy of us. We cannot do them good.

But St. Paul adds to this fair company of Christian graces Disinterestedness. "Love seeketh not her own." She does not stand upon her prerogatives. Self-renunciation is an important part of love. The eager thirst for recognition, so common in a large town, departs. One ceases vulgarly to push and elbow his way into places of comfort and power.

The sixth component part of love is Good Temper, which has two aspects First, "It is not easily provoked." A sweet tempered man is not quick to take offense. If we have the spirit of love we shall not carry a chip on our shoulder. We shall share the nature of the mastiff, not of the cur.

Good temper has a sound aspect. "It thinketh no evil." There are people who have too much self-control to lose their temper, but they cherish a vindictive spirit. The fire does not indeed burst into a flame of active resentment, but it smolders in the breast as vindictiveness. St. Paul safeguards good temper on both sides. Love is, on the one hand, slow to anger, and, on the other, does not keep an account of injuries, looking forward to a settlement at some future day.

We come now to the last delicate finishing touch which St. Paul gives to his delineation of Christian love. Love forgives; love is not envious; love is not vain; love is courteous; love is disinterested; and love is sweet-tempered. Its last component part—the seventh rich hue in this perfect rainbow—is charitableness, which, according to St. Peter, covers a multitude of sins. "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Censoriousness is the peculiar vice of the good. One can hardly help disliking the bad. If we make any peculiar attainment in holiness we are apt to look down on our fellow Christians as poor, miserable sinners, who we hope sometime or other may come up alongside of us. This is why Christ, toward the end of the sermon on the mount, in which he teaches his followers to be good, warns those who have made the most progress in virtue against their secret, besetting sin of censoriousness. "Judge not, that ye be not judged."—Morning Star.

How Many Loaves Have Ye?

We all know that when they learned how many loaves there were, they had to report that they were very few. They were so few indeed that the disciples thought it was only trifling with defeat even to discuss the question of making any use of them.

But the Master thought differently. To set five loaves and two fishes before five thousand men might seem a pitiful confession of poverty, but He required that these pitiful supplies should be devoted to Him. The supply was small, but Jesus wanted it, and that was enough. Now this bringing of the loaves was a test of faith, and it presented to the disciples their opportunity. The Master required that they show their faith by their works. What would have happened if the loaves and fishes had not been brought we do not know, although we may indulge in some interesting speculations.

What is important for us is that the faith of the disciples triumphed, and that the power of God thus proved what use might be made of scanty resources. To test faith by requiring His followers to lay their resources on His Altar, was the principle on which Jesus ever worked, and when the Spirit came and was shed upon them they were expected to act upon no other principle. We may then be clear in asserting that one of the permanent laws of the Kingdom is expressed in the Master's words, "Bring them hither to me."

What we wish just now to press is that at the present day each disciple of Jesus has what we may be permitted to call an unsuspected store of unappropriated wealth. The spirit of the time from which few of us escape is the spirit that sees the fair feathers in the far fowls, and is blind to the plumage of those that are already in our possession.

It is a very common thing for a Christian worker to hear followers of Jesus complain that their intellectual equipment is so meagre that it is simply folly for them to hope that God could make any use of it. If they had had better training they would according to their own statement, be instant in season and out of season. But having so little training they attempt nothing. The fate of such people throws an interesting light on our speculations as to what our Master would have done if the disciples had not brought the loaves and fishes to Him, for when a man will not devote what he has God generally chooses some one else, so that the power that might have increased so much and brought such blessing, degenerates into feebleness, and thus its owner loses even that which he had. Instead of looking wistfully at the gifts enjoyed by others, the true disciple who wishes to show his faith will turn his eyes in to his own undeveloped resources, and put into use what he has.

There are some people who have only a little influence—it may be over two or three people, but because it is so little they never use it at all, and their loaves and fishes grow stale and useless. On the other hand there are these who use what influence they have in a small sphere and thus find that each year enlarges that sphere. We are suffering from too great a supply of disciples who feel compelled to start as captains of hundreds or else to make no start at all.

It is a most common speculation amongst Christians as to what they would do if they had a million dollars. The answer that we gather from experience is that they will probably do proportionately a little less than they are doing at the present time. The fallacy that lies at the root of this attitude of mind is the belief that God is more concerned about the quantity of work that we do than he is about the fidelity and love with which we do our present duty. To that fallacy the story of the widow's two mites is an effective answer. Most people can do far more with their present means than they themselves imagine. Christ's law is not that we should dream about what we should do with what we have not, but that we should bring to Him that which we have.

But time would fail us to tell of all the other kinds of unappropriated wealth—of the man who has a little spiritual power and does not use it, of the man who has a few books and does not read them, of the teacher who has a few scholars and abandons them, of the man who has a little gift to speak in public and does not use it. All these die in doubt, not having received their heritage because the gifts that they have are in their opinion too small to be appropriated, and because they have never really heard the Master say 'Bring them hither to me.'—Can. Baptist.

Borrowed Religion.

BY REV. G. B. F. HALLOCK, D. D.

It was want of oil that prevented the five foolish virgins of Christ's parable from being able to enter the marriage feast. At the last minute they sought to borrow, but could not. The religiously unready can not be supplied by others. No one can borrow religion.

How closely the unprepared resembled the prepared for a time! They were alike invited, alike had lamps, alike came as far as the door. The difference between those who are Christians and those who are not is always easily distinguished. Outward appearance and actions do not always decide. The question lies within the heart. The gates of heaven may prove a sad test to many.

It is a noticeable fact, too, that the bridegroom came at the most difficult time for them to make up for their lack of preparation. It was at "midnight." At that hour there was poor opportunity for buying oil. The hour when that crisis comes is a poor time to prepare for death. It is, indeed, the most unfavorable time. There are the medical attendants, the hurried business to be attended to, the weakness, the weeping, the farewells, with little opportunity to attend to eternal things. No hour is so utterly unfavorable in all a man's life as the closing hour.

But the parable was a message to the living, and conveys an especial and definite warning against the folly of trying to borrow religion. The foolish virgins, unprepared, tried to borrow. "Give us of your oil." Trying to borrow religion is a common resort of many. There are people who try to borrow religion from their friends. A young man says he is safe because his mother is a Christian, a husband because his wife is, and others make like mistake. Men do sometimes hold property and conduct business "in the wife's name," but they can not have religion in that way.

Some people borrow religion from a past experience. They had some religious concern years back, and found on that their hope. But no "old experience" can take the presence of a present, vital relation to Christ. A man can not live to-day on the heart-beats of last month.

Some borrow religion from ritualism. They think they are safe because they have been baptized, or go to church, or go through certain religious forms; but they may, in fact, have no more real life than Barnum's moving waxwork figures. There is such a thing as wax-work Christians, "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

Some borrow religion from a false view of God's mercy. God is wondrously merciful; but He is holy and just, too. Mercy is boundless and free at the foot of the cross; but men who borrow religion do not seek it at the cross of Christ.

Be warned against the mistake of trying to borrow religion. It must be a vital possession of your own, sought and obtained from God.—Herald and Presbyter.

The Gospel and the Preacher.

Great, indeed, has been the influence of war, politics, commerce, law, science, and government, yet we must also confess that the pulpit has been one of the great forces in social progress. Be the reasons what they may, the moral teachers of yesterday are the social leaders of today.

To-morrow, Moses will re-enter his pulpit and pronounce judgment and control verdicts in every court of the city. To-morrow, as Germans, we shall utter the speech that Luther fashioned for us, or, as Saxons, use the idioms that Wyclif and Bunyan taught our fathers. To-morrow, the groom and bride will set up their altars and, kindling the sacred fires of affection, they will found their home upon Paul's principle, "The greatest of these is love." To-morrow, the citizen will exercise his privilege of free thought and speech, and recall Guizot's words, "Democracy crossed over into Europe in the little boat that brought Paul." To-morrow, educators will re-read the Sermon on the Mount and seek to make rich the schools for the little ones who bear God's image. To-morrow, we shall find that the great arts that enrich us were themselves made rich by teachers of the Christian religion. For great thoughts make great thinkers. Eloquent orators do not discuss petty themes. The woes of India lent eloquence to Burke, Paradise lent beauty to Dante and strength to Milton. It was the majesty of Him whom "the heaven of heavens cannot contain" that lent sublimity to the cathedral of Angelo and Bramante.

Christ's ideal of immortality lent sweetness to Handel and victory to his oratorio. It was the Golden Rule, also, that shotted the cannons of freedom against the citadel of slavery and servitude. "The economic and political struggles of modern society," says the great English economist, "are in the last analysis religious struggles—their sole solution, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ set forth through the human voice." In his celebrated argument in the Girard College case, Daniel Webster reviewed the upward progress of society, and asked this question, "Where have the life-giving waters of civilization ever sprung up save in the track of the Christian ministry?" Having expressed the hope that American scholars had done something for the honor of literature abroad; that our courts of justice had, to a little degree, exalted the law; that the orations in Congress had tended to extend and secure the character of human rights, the great statesman added these words: "But I contend that no literary effort, no adjudications, no constitutional discussions, nothing that has ever been done or said in favor of the great interests of universal man, has done this country more credit at home and abroad than our body of clergymen." Weightier or more unqualified testimony was never pronounced. Whatever the future may hold for the pulpit, the past, at least, is secure!—Dr. N. D. Hillis, in Saturday Evening Post.

Pray for Your Pastor.

An eminent minister, congratulated upon his wonderful power in the pulpit, said: "I ought to speak with power. A half-hour before each service twenty-five of my most devoted young men gather in my study, and a volume of prayer goes up to God for me. Then I go into the pulpit and stand on the prayers of those twenty-five young men. No wonder you think I preach well."

"Did you have a good time last night, papa?" a little boy asked his father. "Yes, my son, the Lord wonderfully owned his word, and I felt as if I was standing in mid-air." "Ah, I knew you would. Nellie, and mamma, and I were praying for you."

One Sunday morning about nine o'clock, a lady was led to pray much for her pastor. At the weekly prayer-meeting she heard the pastor say, "I could not attend the nine-o'clock meeting last Sunday morning, for at that hour I tore up the sermon, previously written, and put it in the waste-basket, and prepared another."

Pray for your pastor. In the prayer-meeting, at the family altar, in your closet, just before you go to the service, while he preaches. Any preacher will feed and bless his people if they pray for him enough.—Word and Works.

It was because Sob devoted all his time to walking uprightly, that he succeeded so well.

It is a characteristic of great souls that they are easily advised. The greater the man the greater his willingness to learn, the greater his desire to know all the facts in the case and to come to a wise conclusion concerning them. Whenever you see a man who thinks he knows it all and is too wise to learn from any one, unless it is some one in a higher position than himself, you may be sure that, however great he may be in some ways, you have in that self-sufficient wisdom an indication of narrowness. We should always be ready and quick to learn from any source.—Preachers' Magazine.

The Preaching that Wins.

Where the gospel is vitally preached the people are as much interested in religion as they ever were. The preacher who is filled with the Holy Spirit, and has his gospel interpreted to him from above, tells the old story of the cross and the resurrection with all its ancient power.

The half-converted, unconsecrated preacher, with a smattering of higher criticism or orthodox traditionalism and dogmatism, and some knowledge of the imaginative literature of the day, who cannot stand on a dry-goods box in a village street and declare a full, free, and present salvation, would be wise to abandon the pulpit for a more congenial calling.

A brilliant man of letters recently said, "I think I like the "Come to Jesus' preacher best." Another said, "I truly love the sound of Scripture in a sermon." When the best-educated feel this way it may be easily inferred what the people at large are thinking. The gospel message is to-day, and will be to the end, the world's great need.

The Average Preacher.

The "average preacher" does not get a great deal of notice in the newspapers; he is not put forward on great occasions; even when he dies little is said of him. He goes on from one year to another doing the work that is assigned him as well as he can, and looking to God for his reward. Very often he suffers in his deepest soul from the lack of appreciation on the part of those to whom he proclaims the word of life. The fact that he is not learned, or eloquent, or even fascinating in social life is sometimes set down to his discredit. But he is clean and true. His daily walk is that of a man who is on good terms with God, and he brings no reproach by inconsistencies of conduct on the cause which he represents. In the run of years he turns many to righteousness. Here and there, as he moves along, the truth as it falls from his lips becomes a message of salvation to some perishing soul. His work, as a whole, will stand the test of critical examination, and will no doubt receive the approval of God.—Nashville Advocate.

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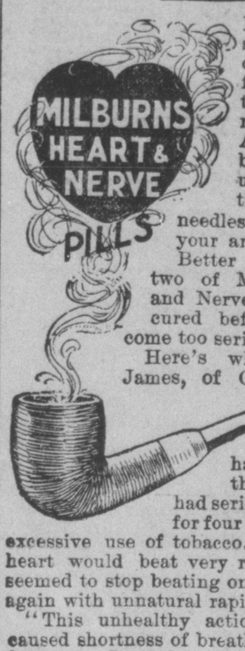

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