

The Loving-Kindness.

Not always the path is easy;
There are thickets hung with gloom,
There are rough and stony places,
Where never the roses bloom.
But oft when the way is hardest,
I am conscious of One at my side,
Whose hands and whose feet are wounded,
And I'm happy and safe with my Guide.

Better than friends and kindred,
Better than love and rest,
Dearest than hope and triumph,
Is the name I wear on my breast.
I feel my way through the shadows,
With a confident heart and brave,
I shall live in the light beyond them,
I shall conquer death and the grave.

Often when tried and tempted,
Often ashamed of sin,
That, strong as an armed invader,
Has made wreck of the peace within,
That wonderful loving-kindness,
Patient and full and free,
Has stooped for my consolation,
Has brought a blessing to me.

Therefore my lips shall praise thee,
Therefore let come what may,
To the height of a solemn gladness
My song shall arise to-day.
Not on the drooping willow
Shall I hang my harp in the land,
When the Lord himself has cheered me,
By the touch of his pierce hand.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

Think on These Things.

Some persons think they are too young, too weak, or too ignorant to do anything until they reach a time of life when they are too old, and then they suddenly realize that it is too late.

The minister who is given to change, and who is never quite satisfied that he is in the right place, does not believe in the guidance of an unerring Providence and an unerring Spirit. He may profess to believe, and think he believes, but really he is an unbeliever walking by sight, and not by faith.

The faith of Jesus in the power of truth was implicit and sublime. The task He set for Himself was nothing less than the moral reformation and regeneration of the whole world. He came into a world given over to superstition, atheism, and wickedness, and proposed to bring it back to the service of the true God and the practice of righteousness. How did He hope to accomplish so stupendous a task? He discarded the sword, the power of gold, the power of the throne, philosophy, and learning as instruments. He took His place among the poor and used the language of the common people. He relied on simple, naked truth. For His messengers He chose mortals encompassed with infirmities, and sent them out. He saw the scorn, the opposition, the cruelty of the world, but never troubled nor doubted. He said to His messengers, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Jesus was a young man, only thirty-three years of age, when He was put to death. Until He was thirty He pursued the vocation of a mechanic. He spent but three years in His public ministry. He was born in indigence and had no educational advantages. Other great teachers have devoted years to travel, study, investigation, and reflection before they were prepared to make public their opinions. They have sat at the feet of great masters and copied great models. They have dwelt long on the particular topics concerning which they proposed to teach. Jesus never traveled abroad, and called in no teachers to prepare Him for His great work. He spoke on the most sublime and important subjects, not in studied discourse, but in common conversation. He spoke without premeditation in answer to questions propounded by friends and foes alike. Yet His words, uttered on the spur of the moment, are so true, so just, so beautiful that they stand forever. This youth, teaching under circumstances most unfavorable, gave to the world moral precepts which for beauty, sublimity, force, and utility stand without a parallel in all the realms of literature.

It is not enough to invite sinners to accept salvation. The Church should compel them to come in. Our Lord foresaw the tendency of Christians and Christian churches to settle down into a state of indifference with regard to the unconverted. As a matter of fact, what is the prevailing attitude of Christians toward the unconverted? Do they not content themselves with simply inviting them to come to Christ? Do they not say: "There is ample room in our churches for all; and all are welcome. The pew is comfortable and free. If they do not come it is because they are not disposed to come." Yes, it is because they are not disposed to come. And for this very reason, "Compel them." Compel them by the power of the Gospel.

overcome their reluctance, compel them to surrender to God. Not by carnal weapons, but by prayer, by persuasion, by song, by united and persevering effort, and by love, compel them to come in.

Christians should diligently seek to bring their neighbors to Christ, because without Him they are lost. Say what we will and believe what we may about future punishment, we cannot escape the fact that sinners are being punished now. Whatever may be their lot in the world to come, they have a hard lot in this world. "The way of the transgressor is hard." Some dispute this proposition. They say: "There is no difference between the righteous and the wicked. It is a vain thing to serve the Lord. The righteous often suffer poverty and affliction, while the wicked are in great prosperity." This is true, but the end is not yet. A man was hanged the other day in a certain city, but it was not right living and good character that brought him to the gallows. Thousands of young men are in prison to-day, but they do not owe their downfall to a life of obedience to the laws of God. "The wages of sin is death." The wicked are lost even while they live. Let no one dream that they shall be better off after they die. If wicked men are in perdition even here on account of their evil ways, it is unreasonable to suppose that they shall escape by death. The fires that torment the wicked in this world are an admonition of the tendency of evil. If the way be dark and hard, what must the end to which it leads be? The same revelation which assures us that the reward of the righteous is life everlasting also assures us, in language quite as explicit, that the reward of sin is everlasting punishment. For this reason Christians should be diligent to save the lost. Pull them out of the fire. —Chris. Advocate.

A Present-Day Danger.

The dangerous tendency of the present day to which we are all of us more or less subject is that of subordinating the spiritual to the material. A glance at present conditions impresses this upon us, and a careful study of them is sure to confirm this impression.

Great material triumphs are being achieved at this time and great material advances are being accomplished. The discoveries and inventions of the age are marvelous. The record of the last half century eclipses the old fairy tales. Manufactures, agriculture and transportation have been revolutionized. The cotton gin, the steam engine, the reaper and the threshing machine, the telegraph and the telephone, the sewing machine, the bicycle and the automobile, have entirely changed the conditions of modern life. The tallow dip has given way to the electric light, and even steam itself is being superseded by electricity. If we were to take this as our measurement, we would all have to grant that this is a great age, the greatest by far that the world has ever seen.

But we do not believe that this is the real test. The needs of the immortal soul remain the same. Sins and sorrows abound to-day just as they did in the days when the oceans were crossed in sailing vessels, and death is as certain and the judgment day as inevitable as in old times before flintlocks were superseded by Mauser rifles. There is no valid reason for believing that the conditions of salvation have been modified by the larger facilities for gold mining or that the necessity for repentance and faith has been done away with even in this day of submarine cables. Sin abounds. The old vices flourish. The world, the flesh and the devil still allure to destruction those who are not in covenant with God. Hearts are breaking and graves are multiplying, and even our triumphant modern surgery can not prevent it.

It would seem that we should not lose sight of the great truths of the Cross, and that we should not forget that the supreme need of the world is a saving interest in the blood of Jesus Christ. If we are wise we shall not. No current of world thought shall be strong enough to sweep us away from our mooring here. No attraction shall be sufficient to divert us from giving attention to the things which God himself rates as first and best. And yet there are contrary tendencies which we must carefully watch and resist.

We are constantly impressed by the fact that a foremost place is being demanded for business and pleasure. It has always been so, of course, but the demand to-day is exceedingly urgent. Young men find the attraction to the fields of the sciences and of applied forces, and of business, rather than to the work of the Gospel ministry. Great emphasis, too, is being put on recreation. The athletic field, the gymnasium, the links, the court, the

cinder path and the yachting course engross the thoughts of millions day by day, to the exclusion of a care for the kingdom of God. And yet is not the sound body as a home for the sound mind to be desired? Most certainly, if we shall cultivate the healthful spirit and save ourselves from the decadence of the athletic Greek and the corruption of the rugged Roman. Neither arts nor athletics can save from moral death the people who have lived for the material rather than for the spiritual.

Is there a possibility that we are doing our religious work with regard to the material rather than for the spiritual result? Are we paying undue attention to the architectural and aesthetic effects in our houses of worship rather than to efforts to promote revival and secure conversions? Are we more careful to report the exact number of additions to our churches than to promote the spirituality which keeps our membership close to Christ? Do we think more of buildings and furnishings and funds than we do of prayer and faith and love and the power of the Holy Spirit? Are we striving to produce material effects on the world and forgetting to agonize in prevailing prayer for the constraining influences of the divine grace? Do we emphasize the social rather than the prayer meeting, and do we preach for culture rather than for the salvation of souls?

It will not do for us to be carried away by any temporary, fleeting spirit of the age. We will become materialists if we permit ourselves to take materialistic views of life. Ever and everywhere that which is seen is temporal. Only that which is unseen is eternal. As we hope to escape disappointment in the future we shall deal to-day with that which is real and abiding. —Herald and Presbyterian.

To Make a Church Prosper.

Why should there be a decaying church in the world? There is a sure way of prosperity. It has never failed, and never can. A few simple rules observed by all the members of any church will insure good days. If the church is decaying, the decay will soon be arrested. If it is standing still, it will soon begin to grow. If it is already flourishing, it will grow more rapidly.

1. Attend all the services regularly.
2. If it rains or snows, make a special effort to go.
3. Never miss a prayer meeting needlessly.
4. Invite some one else to go every week.
5. Take part in the meetings. Be ready always to give a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, and to speak well of Christ and the Church.
6. Think of the services through the week, speak of them to others, and pray that they may be attended with the divine blessing.
7. Pray for each member so far as you may know them, especially for the sick and poor.
8. Pray for the pastor. His usefulness will be greatly increased by the daily prayers of all the people. His preaching will improve wonderfully under such conditions.
9. Note the absence of members, not to criticize or find fault, but to show them proper attention in case they are sick, to encourage them if they are cast down, to restore them if they are wandering.
10. Speak to strangers, and invite them to come again.
11. Accept gladly any work assigned you, but never show a spirit of envy when others are promoted in the church.
12. Never encourage strife, but be a peacemaker.
13. Never speak of the faults of others to your neighbors, and never to those who have made mistakes, unless it be for the purpose of correcting them, and then be sure to do it in love.
14. Give cheerfully, according to your ability.
15. If able, take a Church paper.
16. If the pastor or some one else is struggling under a heavy load, take hold and help.
17. Never insist on having your own way against the majority, and never insist on overriding a minority with careless indifference.
18. Make some unconverted soul a special subject of daily prayer. Persevere in prayer, together with judicious effort, until that one shall be brought to Christ. Then begin at once to bring another in the same way by prayer and personal effort.

If we knew that such simple rules as these would give us a good harvest, or insure physical health, or make us rich, as well as we know that they will make the church prosper, would we not all begin at once to observe them? These things we can all do. No special talent is required. By so doing we shall bear much fruit. —N. Y. Advocate.

Theater-Going.

Don't go—because the atmosphere is essentially materialistic and sensual, and indisposes for prayer and faith.

Don't go—because you will contract a habit that will lead you to slide by almost insensible degrees from the purer plays with which you begin to the grosser ones towards which every theater tends.

Don't go—because the majority of theater-goers are not Christians, and it cannot be expected that those finer shades of morality will be observed with which Christ familiarized us; to sit as a silent spectator is to acquiesce in the standard of morals presented on the stage. It is one thing to be obliged to meet such things in daily life; quite another to go to see them as a pastime, and to pay for their performance.

Don't go—because you have no right to support a system which is inimical to the virtue of the actors. Not that every actor is necessarily immoral, but that the almost universal confession of those actors and actresses who have become Christians is that life on the stage is not friendly to virtue, but strongly the reverse. You have no right to help to put stumbling-blocks on other people's paths by contributing your money to support such a system.

Don't go—because, even if you do not suffer moral taint, your influence and example may lead others to follow in your steps who will not be able to resist the evil influences of the average theater-goer's life, but will drift into the love of the sensational and sensual to the ruin of the nobler qualities of the soul. —Rev. F. B. Meyer.

Laid Up in Heaven.

After all, the best satisfaction in life arises from what you are able to do for the happiness and welfare of other people. That is the great advantage of wealth. It is not that it gives you the opportunity of leading a more luxurious and self-indulgent life; it is not that you can have a fine house and garden, books and pictures, travel and society, but it is that you have it in your power to help others, to lift them over hard places, and to give them the substantial encouragements that are so useful. But this power does not reside merely in the possession of money; it also goes with good health, a cheerful disposition, knowledge, skill, or any advantage that you have over those less favored. All these things are trusts, and we make the noblest and most satisfying use of them when we use them as trusts, not for ourselves but to promote the welfare of others. What a significant thing it is that our Saviour, who treated the suggestion that He should use His miraculous power to change a stone into bread as a temptation of Satan, a few days later should have wrought His first miracle by turning water into wine, to promote the pleasure and comfort of others! The more we see of life the firmer is apt to be our persuasion that we get the best of any power or advantage we may happen to have by using it for the welfare of others. By that use we transmute it into a permanent spiritual value. The riches that we can amass in that way are truly laid up in heaven. —The Watchman.

Friends.

Having carefully chosen a few friends, we should never let them go out of our lives if we can by any possibility retain them. Friendship is too rare and sacred a treasure to be lightly thrown away, and yet many persons are not careful to hold their friends once they have secured them. Some lose them through inattention, failing to maintain those little amenities, courtesies, and kindnesses which cost so little yet are hooks of steel to grapple and hold our friends. Some drop old friends for new ones; some take offense easily at imagined slights or neglects, and ruthlessly cut the most sacred ties.

Some become impatient of little faults, and discard even truest friendships. Some are incapable of any deep or permanent affection, and fly from friendship to friendship, like birds from bough to bough, but make no nests for their hearts in any. There are a great many ways of losing friends. But when we have once taken them into our lives, we should cherish them as rarest jewels. If slights are given let them be overlooked. If misunderstandings arise, let them be quickly set right. It is hard to lose a friend, but the loss is not utterly irreparable.

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Responsible for What we Have Not for What we Have Not.

Every man has his own lot, his own power, his own opportunity, his own responsibility. God asks no man to use what is another man's but only what is his. It is enough for a man to account for what has been given him, and about the ownership of which there is no room for doubt or question. A young Christian, seeing evidence of the strong faith of a friend of his, said, as if half envious of the other's gift, "I wish I had your faith." "You have no right to my faith," said the other; it does not belong to you any more than does my size or weight or special training. You'd find it wasn't suited to you if you had it." "Well, at all events, I wish I had more faith than I have." "What do you want more faith for than you have? You are not using the faith you have. If you'd use the faith you have, you'd have more. If you had more faith now, you'd have just so much more unused possessions to account for." Let us thank God that he will not call us to account for what he has not given us. But let us remember that we must give account for the use of all that we have. —S. S. Times.

Duty.

There are occasions when God's servants shrink from duty. But what is the consequence? They lose the presence and comfortable enjoyment of God's love. When we obey our Lord Jesus as believers should, our God is with us; and though we have the whole world against us, if we have God with us, what does it matter. But the moment we start back, and seek our own inventions, we are at sea without a pilot. Then may we bitterly lament and groan out, "O my God, where hast thou gone? How could I have been so foolish as to lose all the bright shinnings of thy face? This is a price too high. Let me return to my allegiance, that I may rejoice in thy presence." —Spurgeon.

He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace. And the men who have this life in them, are the true lords or kings of the earth—they, and they only. —John Ruskin.

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