

The Best Things Haven't Happened Yet.

The world is old, but the heart is young,
And its sweetest songs are yet unsung
Earth's richest treasures are yet unsought;
Earth's bravest battles are yet unfought.

As we slowly mount earth's heights sublime
We read these words, on the walls of time,
"No room in this age for the drone or shirk—
For the need of the world is honest work."

Down deep in the earth—in the blackened soil—
Shut out from the light does the miner toil.
But, see! at the sound of each ringing blow,
How the factories hum and the hearth-fires glow!

A black-browed man, in a humble room,
Sits patiently tending an ancient loom,
But see! from his hand what hues arise,
Of tapestry rich in eastern dyes.

The farmer wakes with earliest light
And toils in his field from morn till night.
No king could a worthier rice yield,
"For even the king is served by the field."

With a disc of glass in his careful hand,
As he fashions a lens, see the master stand!
His work is finished, and, mounted on high,
A mighty telescope sweeps the sky.

On a steel-clad ship, with a foe in sight,
Men stand—and their faces are set and white.
"General quarters!" rings out the cry,
And they spring to their places, to do or die.

Then, work and win! for the world is wide,
And its doors will open on every side.
Look not on the past with vain regret,
For "the best things haven't happened yet."

—Mrs. Annie E. Smiley, in Zion's Herald.

Christianity Always Aggressive.

We are not satisfied with what Christianity is undertaking and accomplishing to-day. We do not think that Christians—true Christians—are doing all that they might do, nor all that they ought to do for the advancement of the kingdom of God in the world. The old requirement, "Line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," is as needful now as in that older day. The purpose of God must have for its accomplishment the work of the Spirit in the hearts of his people, and the admonitions, as well as the incentives to sacrifice and labor, if Christianity shall attain to what is surely to be realized in the procession of the ages. We must have more of the "up and at it" spirit, if we would see the kingdom of God come with the power and great glory of which we sometimes dream and prophesy.

And yet we are not of those who defame Christians for their indifference, their restlessness, their indifference, their lethargy, their travesty upon the self-denial and conquering intrepidity of those of the first century, and the second, and the third. We do not believe that the contrast between the Christianity of to-day and that of the centuries named is what some would have us believe. On the other hand, we hold that the grace of God in a human soul the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, the new life begotten by the power of God, is no less active and efficient than it was in the first century.

There are those who love to tell us of "the early Christians," what they did, and what they suffered, and what they accomplished for the name and the cause of Christ. But a good deal of what is said on that point is purely imaginary. It is taken for granted; and no one cares to contradict or call to book the orator who makes the comparison so unfavorable to the Christianity of to-day. (And when we say "Christianity," we do not mean to include all who "profess and call themselves Christians," but those who have truly been born of God.) We believe that they are just as true, just as zealous, just as efficient, just as aggressive and just as successful as were those of the first century. We must not forget the letters of Paul. They do not tell much about what the "saints of his day" were doing in the way of evangelization. The Acts of the Apostles is, for the most part, an account of the acts of one man and his associates; and even that does not tell of such results as some would have us believe were achieved. The Christian communities in any of the many communities in which Paul and his associates preached were small. The letters show that they were far from idle communities. They were not over-zealous in the work of evangelization. They were speculative, prone to erroneous views of Christ and of the Gospel mode of salvation.

The letters give us little to build a theory of evangelization upon. We know some things about Paul's work in Iconium, in Lystra, in Antioch, in

Philippi, in Athens, in Corinth, in Ephesus in Rome; but, after all, it is very little. And we know less about what the converts who composed the churches were doing and achieving. The letters give us very little insight into the activities of the Christians of that day. That there were among them elders who had the oversight of them, and deacons who cared for the finances of the churches, and that there were some "evangelists," and some "prophets," and some "teachers," we were well persuaded; but that in any city where Paul preached there were thousands of converts during his life we are not compelled by the narrative to believe.

This one thing can be said with a degree of confidence, namely, that to become a Christian in those days meant more than it does to-day, in most communities, and in many churches. The man or woman who became a Christian in Paul's day was marked by the heathen unbelievers and was cherished by the believing saints. Men, women and children (infants?) were not gathered in by scores to be put out by tens. We will not believe that Paul encouraged the churches to "open their doors" for the reception of any who might be persuaded to enter; nor was there in operation the machinery which is operative to-day, in so many cases. If Paul baptized ten believers, he counted ten, at his next meeting. We can not believe that he baptized three times as many as were found steadfast after three years. Paul differed from some preachers of to-day in this, that he was sent, "not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel" while they seem to think themselves sent not to preach the Gospel, but to baptize.

It might be assumed then that, in proportion to its numbers, an individual church was stronger in that early day than in our day. It had in it a smaller number of nominal members, and a larger proportion of actual believers, men and women who were ready to bear burdens, "hardness," crosses, for Christ's sake. There were not so many who attached themselves to a church for the sake of the respectability acquired thereby; who were looking about them to see what temporal profit socially or financially was acquired by church-membership, and who were ready to renounce allegiance to church, or pastor, to any cause connected with the church's life, if all concerned did not accede to their wishes and make their church relation a source of profit. In this respect the churches of to-day are not so loyal to their Master as were the churches of that early day. But, in our judgment, the true Christian of to-day is as truly a Christian, a "saint," as were any of those who believed in that earlier day. We do not take it altogether kindly when we hear it said that Christianity has declined in power and efficiency; that the Christian of to-day is not the equal of the Christian of the first century. We do believe that the power of God in a human soul is just as great as it ever was, and that he who has been born of God is just as truly a saint as was any of those whom Paul addressed as such. It is not for the good of the cause of Christ that it be represented as so weak, nor is it to the honor of our Lord that his saints—his brethren—are represented as mean, and low, and lifeless, and useless. Let that kind of talk be discontinued.—Journal and Messenger.

God's Requirements.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

Daniel Webster was once asked, "What is the most important thought you ever entertained?" The answer of the great orator and statesman was, "The thought of my individual responsibility to God."

Wisely indeed does the summary in Deuteronomy of God's requirements start out with the fear of Him. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is the beginning of the love of God also, and of obedience and service. If a child does not fear the just anger of his parent, he will soon come to care little for his approval and his love.

But it is possible for the fear to stop short of obedience. The devils tremble, but they do not obey.

Bishop Vincent tells about a farmer, whose house stood on a high hill, and was so provided with windows that every corner of the farm was under his immediate supervision. No idle workman on that domain!

It may be questioned whether that is true obedience. No man really obeys that does not obey behind his employer's back. God is seated on a very high hill. He knows our every act and thought. But we are not His obedient children if we would not serve Him as readily in case He were withdrawn to another universe.

And so obedience dares not stop

short of love. "But how can I love God?" it is objected. "I have not even seen Him."

Two men were riding together and talking about Bible-reading. "I get no benefit from my Bible-reading," declared one, at length, "because I do not love God." "Neither did I," replied his friend, "but God loves me." "That answer," said the man afterwards in relating his experience, "seemed to lift me right out of my saddle into the skies, and I learned from it the way into the love of God."

When this love has once entered the life, the fourth requirement named in Deuteronomy follows as a matter of course—service. And what a magnificent inspiration to our work it is when we do it for God and with His aid! "It is impossible," said old Jeremy Taylor, "for that man to despair who remembers that his helper is omnipotent." Payson once remarked, "Since I have begun to ask God's blessing on my studies, I have done more in one week than in a whole year before." As a practical aid to work the thought of God's nearness is the greatest labor-saver in the world. The toiler who attempts to get along without it is throwing away his best tool.

But finally, God's requirements are not met when they are met merely as requirements, still less when they are observed as conveniences and helps. They must be met in the spirit of joy. When God's law is our delight, the thought of God our highest pleasure, the consciousness of God's presence our noblest inspiration, then we are God's and our work is God's, and God's requirements of us cease to be requirements because they have become our one desire for ourselves.—Sabbath Reading.

That's What I'm Here For.

It was the uniformed young porter who said it, as he smiled pleasantly on the woman whose bundle he had started to carry for her. The station was full of travelers, hurrying to and from their trains, but the porter was not in the least hurried. He was quiet, ready helpful; and he found a seat for the woman in the right car, and repeated, as she thanked him for his trouble, "That's what I'm here for, madam, all day long; just to see that people get aboard all right." Then he went back to the gate, and promptly helped somebody else to another train. Cheery and pleasant, he carried babies, lifted heavy bags, reassured nervous people who were afraid the train would start and without them, and made himself generally helpful, hour after hour.

"That's what I'm here for," the cheerful words carried an unconscious message. The porter's lot was not a very pleasant one. Perhaps he, too, longed to travel away from the hot city to the sea or the woods, yet all the year round he was shut within the crowded station, with its tracks and platforms. Few thanked him for helping them and he could hardly have been blamed if he had been a trifle cross over his work. But he had no such thought; he was there to be helpful, and his heart was in his work.

The woman who had been helped to her seat by him thought it over as the train rolled away. She was one who had carried many burdens for other people, and had had few thanks. She seemed to herself to have spent her life in starting other people off where they wanted to go, and staying behind herself; and, lately, she had felt rebellious about it. But the young porter's words started a new line of thought. "That's what I'm here for," she said to herself, "and it isn't my business to complain or to question. If he can do his day's work in that hearty spirit, I guess I can, too," and she felt her heart lighter than for many a day. The porter did not know it, but he had preached a whole sermon in five words that afternoon.—Wellspring.

To Each His Work.

You have often sung, "Let the lower-lights be burning." I wonder whether you know the story that suggested it?

Some years ago a steamer in a terrific gale was trying to make the harbor at Cleveland, O. There are two lights at the entrance to the harbor, one the upper light on the bluffs of the shore, the other lower light on the bar at the other side of the entrance. The plot peered out anxiously to catch a glimpse of the friendly lights, and presently caught sight of the upper one. But that alone was not sufficient, he must also see the other to know just where to go. But for some reason it was not lighted on time. Beaten by wind and wave, the steamer staggered on as best she could, while the hearts of all on board trembled with fear. If she missed the entrance

there was little hope of her escaping the rocks. Suddenly the lower light appeared, but, alas! it was too late—the steamer had missed the entrance, and in the attempt to turn about went down with all on board!

You remember George Eliot's poem of the violin maker, who said if he did not make the very best violin possible for him to make, God would miss the music! If we are not each one of us faithfully doing our duty, be it great or small, there is silence or discord where there might have been music. More than that, our lives are bound together—we must needs lift up those about us, or drag them down. We are bidden to so our seed at all times, for we "know not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." The cobbler, as I once heard a minister say could not paint a picture, but he could tell Apelles that the shoe-tie was not right, and so might help towards making the beautiful picture perfect.

Keep Still.

Keep still. When trouble is brewing, keep still. When your feelings are hurt, keep still till you recover from your excitement at any rate. Things look differently through an unagitated eye. In a commotion, once, I wrote a letter, and sent it, and wished I had not. In my later years I had another commotion, and wrote a long letter; but life rubbed a little sense into me, and I kept that letter in my pocket against the day when I could look it over without agitation and without tears. I was glad I did. Less and less it seemed necessary to send it. I was not sure it would do any hurt, but in my doubtfulness I leaned to reticence, and eventually it was destroyed.

Time works wonders. Wait till you speak calmly, and then you will not need to speak, maybe. Silence is the most massive thing conceivable, sometimes. It is strength in very grandeur. It is like a regiment ordered to stand still in the mad fury of battle. To plunge were twice as easy. The tongue has unsettled more ministers than small salaries ever did, or lack of ability.—Dr. Burton's Lectures to Yale Divinity Students.

Come Out of Yourself.

So long as we dwell within ourselves we are exposed on all sides, by reason of the sensitiveness of our passions, and jealousy of our pride. No peace is to be looked for within when one lives at the mercy of a crowd of greedy and insatiable desires, and when he can never satisfy this "me" which is so keen and so touchy as to whatever concerns it. The only remedy is to come out of one's self in order to find peace. The more perfect is our self-surrender, the more perfect is our peace. God's peace can only be found when all self-seeking and all self-will are utterly thrown aside. When you cease to be eager for anything save the glory of God and the fulfillment of his good pleasure, your peace will be as deep as the ocean, and flow with the strength of a flood.—Fenelon.

COUGHING ALL NIGHT.

It's this night coughing that breaks us down, keeping us awake most of the time, and annoying everybody in the house. Lots of people don't begin to cough until they go to bed. It gets to be so that retiring for the night is an empty form, for they cannot rest. Adamson's Botanic Cough Balsam makes life worth living to such people by its soothing effect on the throat. The "tickling sensation" promptly disappears when the use of the Balsam is begun, and irritation goes with it. This medicine for cough hasn't a disagreeable thing about it, and it does efficient service in breaking up coughs of long standing. It is prepared from barks and roots and gums of trees, and is a true specific for throat troubles.

Handling coughs is a science that every one should learn. Not knowing how to treat them has cost many lives. In Adamson's Balsam there are the elements which not only heal inflammation, but which protect the inflamed parts from further irritation. The result of this is that the tendency to cough does not manifest itself, and you are surprised at it. Afterward you would not be without Adamson's Balsam at hand. This remedy can be tested. 25 cents at any druggist's.

Prayer and Power.

The worldling may succeed in life by carefulness, by skill, by intelligence, and by force; but in the work of God no man can succeed without prayer. No human power can effect the changes and accomplish the work required in the service of God. There is a super-human work to be done, and a super-human energy is required for its accomplishment. To be prayerless is to be powerless.

Multitudes of men and ministers may trace their failure to their prayerlessness. They are eloquent, but they do not pray. They are enterprising, but they do not frequent the mercy seat.

They belong to secret societies and clans, but they do not know the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear him. They may have education, and all that learning can give them, but without prayer they will be like sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. They may be abundant in labor, fervid in speech, and zealous in good works, but all this will not avail unless they have that power and that presence which comes only in answer to prayer.

Let Christians learn the lesson, and as they desire to be useful and to do effective work for God, let them see to it that they watch and pray, that they continue instant in prayer, and thus draw from heaven that power and help without which they can do nothing and without which, all they undertake to do will amount to nothing in the end.—Horace L. Hastings.

Religion a Life Process.

There are some who think of religion chiefly as a passport which insures for them entrance into a Heaven of blessedness. Conversion is to them an exalted experience, a gracious deliverance, which lifts them over some bar at the mouth of the river of life, having passed which they are safe. They apprehend but faintly the fact that conversion is only the beginning of a life-long process, the first stage in a life-long career of enlargement and transforming, whose goal is perfected character. It involves the reshaping of the inward and outward life in the likeness of Christ.

This is not the work of a day. Perfection is not wrought at a stroke. It is a growth. There are habits to be overcome, tendencies to be repressed, graces to be cultivated and a new spirit to be developed until it becomes regnant over the whole life. The call of the Gospel is not simply "Come!" but also "Come up higher and yet higher!" No man ever fully attains or reaches the limits of possible growth. The best, with all their attainments, are still pressing toward the mark.—London Sunday-School Times.

In his Vegetable Pills, Dr. Parmelee has given to the world the fruits of long scientific research in the whole realm of medical science, combined with new and valuable discoveries never before known to man. For Delicate and Debilitated Constitutions Parmelee's Pills act like a charm. Taken in small doses, the effect is both a tonic and a stimulant, mildly exciting the secretions of the body, giving tone and vigor.

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