

Not To Be Ministered To

BY MALTIE D. BARCOCK, D. D.

O Lord, I pray
That for this day
I may not swerve
By foot or hand
From Thy command,
Not to be served, but to serve.

This too I pray,
That from this day
No love of ease
Nor pride prevent
My good intent
Not to be pleased, but to please.

And if I may,
I'd have this day
Strength from above
To set my heart
In heavenly art
Not to be loved but to love.

The Most Human of the Twelve.

How singularly do the five writers who tell us of the Apostle Peter agree as to his character. The same qualities of mind and heart, the same ups and downs in his experiences, appear in their different accounts of him. This dramatic unity of character strengthens our confidence in the trustworthiness of the sacred writers. For a poet to attain this dramatic unity, as, for instance, Shakespeare in setting forth Iago, we account it a proof of the highest literary power. But the identity of Peter, as he appears in these various writers, is ascribable, we feel, not so much to consummate literary skill as to the writers' candid use of the same well-known facts.

Indeed Mark and Luke do not portray Peter; they rather let Peter draw his own image for us. He bodies himself forth in words, in actions, in events. You get a reflection of him in the effect which he produced on others. Luke does not list the qualities found in Peter. There is no subtle analysis, no diagnosis. All is concrete. Peter acts and speaks. Matthew's book is not a treatise, it is a transcript of life. And hence it is that we find ever new views and suggestions in studying these men and women in the Bible, just as each day in our own experience has in it something unexpected.

Though we know Peter so well, better by far than any of the apostles, yet only a spiritual portrait of him is given. The modern novelist describes persons by delineating the form and features, such as the height, color of the eyes and hair. How devoid of such physical delineations is Scripture! Here you find only spiritual portraits, a series of character-sketches. Who in all history is better known to us than Jesus, yet what can we tell of his size and personal appearance? Of these outward things nothing was so important as to be noted for us; but of his soul in its sorrow and wrath, in its love and aspiration, all these inner characteristics in minutest detail are preserved for us.

INTENSELY HUMAN WAS PETER,

a stumbling, repenting, loving, aspiring servant as we all are. In him was not the philosophic acumen of Paul nor the exalted love of John. While John is an ideal, Peter is a pattern for all to follow. He was a practical man, instant in season and out of season. He rebuked his Lord; drew his sword in the Garden; refused at first to be washed at all, then would have his girded Master wash not his feet only, but also his hands. Often did he "slop over." Further, he quaked with fear before a maid and even denied his Lord with cursing. Such is the halting career of this foremost of the apostles. The Bible shows all sides of a man. In it there is no hero-worship. We cannot tell the story of a distinguished man without magnifying his excellencies and minimizing his faults, perhaps omitting them altogether. See how Froide has even whitewashed that Blue-Beard of England, Henry VIII. In recalling Martin Luther we are fain to forget his violent temper, his harsh words, his squinting at the irregular marriage of his influential adherent, Philip of Hesse. Not so with the writers of the Bible. They hewed to the line. Good and bad just as in real life went down on the record. Enthusiasm is a quality most prominent in Peter. "What is a great life? A thought conceived in the enthusiasm of youth and executed with the strength of maturity." What is the nerve of Peter's being from the day that he left his nets to become a fisher of men, increasingly did he glow with enthusiastic devotion to Jesus, whom he came to know successively as friend, companion, teacher and Lord. At the first crisis in our Lord's ministry, when many turned back, it was Peter who declared his fidelity: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." At the second crisis, it was Peter who embodied in his confession the newly unfolding view of Jesus as Deity: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And such a foremost part did Peter's enthusiasm lead him to take at every critical turn in the history of this new spiritual movement.

His aggressiveness followed naturally. He was the first of the twelve who caught a glimpse of the universality of the new religion, that it was made good for the Gentile no less than for the Jew. That vision of his on the house-top at Joppa marks

AN EVOLUTION IN HUMAN THOUGHT AND FEELING

beyond our power to conceive. God placed him in "the look-out" when the early church set sail. The progressive unfolding in Peter's character which we find in tracing his life is what we might expect from his enthusiasm and aggressiveness. His origin was probably low; he was unlettered; his character at first was perhaps, to the ordinary eye, unpromising, so impulsive and jerky was he; his discipleship was, it is true, passionate, but also faulty and stumbling. In spite of all, however, the Saviour saw in him splendid material and in the very breath in which he told Peter of his base fall, he assured him of his ultimately righting up, and then added most expressively: "When once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren." This last prediction has been no whit less fulfilled than the prophecy of Peter's betrayal. It was no doubt a knowledge of this double-sided character in him, a knowledge of his strength as well as his weakness, that caused the Lord to love him and trust him as he did. How unspeakably tender is that incident told us by Matthew, in which we hear the bitter words of Peter's denial and then see the Lord turning to look at him. In that look, we fancy, was no expression of wrath, much less of scorn. Rather was it a look of love, infinite pity mingled with an unshakable trust. That look broke Peter's heart. The Lord had known as much. Thus this intensely human apostle is fulfilling go-day the command of his Master to establish his brethren; for by his very inconsistencies no less than by his loving devotion does he strengthen each one of us. As our own shortcomings make us mindful of Peter's halting course, so let us pray that by reason of his final victory in faithful discipleship we may be led to show the same spirit of firmness and zeal, that this courageous apostle evinced in his answer to the persecuting Jewish rulers: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."—Baptist Argus.

Winning Souls.

Every Christian should study the art of winning souls. It is a great thing to be able to preach well, to expound the Scriptures correctly, and to maintain the doctrines of Christianity against its enemies with sound arguments. To write Christian hymns, to write powerful books on the subject of religion, and to scatter abroad a high order of Christian literature is a great work. But winning souls is greater. "He that winneth souls is wise."

Christian ministers and churches sometimes lose the art of soul-winning. The early Church possessed this power in a high degree, but it gradually departed. The early Methodist Church was noted for its ability to win souls more than for anything else. The early Methodist ministers did not think they were making a success of their ministry if they failed in this thing. The time is not long past when the announcement of a protracted meeting in a Methodist church in one of our large cities would bring together a multitude of people, many of them unconverted, and some of them scoffers. Before the meeting closed those who came to scoff were happy in Christ.

Now, however, the announcement of a series of meetings for the promotion of a religious revival does not always attract a crowd. When the meeting is over the report is often made that the members of the church have been greatly quickened, but that no sinners were present in the congregation, and hence there were no conversions. Scoffers do not come to our churches. Lewd fellows of the baser sort, who used to give us trouble, never trouble us now. They prefer to go to the police court or to the station house rather than the church, and many Christians agree with them in this choice. That is, they had rather the very wicked people and scoffers would go to the station house than to the church. The church does not attract or win them.

One reason why ministers are not equal to their predecessors in soul-winning power is: the minister of to-day is not a man of one work. The early Methodist ministers were emphatically men of one work. They had nothing to do but to save souls.

While some of them were powerful preachers, they did not spend much time in the study. Some of the great preachers of the past generation could not write sermons. They left no literary heritage. They preached mightily to the consciences of men, but spent little time on the work of polishing sentences and rounding periods. They gave all their thought, all their energy, all their time, to the one work of saving souls.

The Methodist preacher of to-day has many irons in the fire. He must be a good preacher, a good pastor, a good student, a good financier, a good organizer. He must study sociology, science, art, literature, and languages. He must be an author, an editor, and sometimes an ecclesiastical politician. He must know how to handle the difficult questions of church life, that come up for solution. Often in his effort to master all the arts which the Church has put in his charge he forgets the art of winning souls.

Preachers and churches in this day have been misled in many cases by the frantic effort to reach the masses which has characterized our times. A few years ago a great fury was created by certain evangelists about reaching the masses. Preachers tried to reach the masses, and churches made strong bids for the masses. Many things were introduced into the pulpit to attract the masses. In this wild chase after the masses the more important matter of reaching the individual has been to some extent overlooked. In winning souls we're called on to look after the masses, but the individuals. We may err by seeking to win two within specified time, but we can not err in seeking to win one soul to-day.

It is not necessary to wait till the Church shall come to a better spiritual condition to begin to win souls. Many a man complains that the Church is cold and dead, when he is the cold and dead one himself, and does not know it. If he wants a revival of soul-winning power, let him begin at home. Has he the power to speak to a sinner in such a way as to win him? If so, the revival is already begun. If not, he needs that power at once. The revival must be an individual matter. The great lack of the Church to-day is men and women who can speak the winning word to the wandering sinner. Where is the church in which there are two such soul-winners? If there is one, the work will spread and grow mightily. If there is one, with this divine art, then let no one utter a word of reproach concerning the coldness of the Church; but let each go before God for himself, and wait on the Lord till his strength shall be renewed.—Christian Advocate.

The Value of One Conversion.

BY THE REV. C. P. DITMARS.

The Apostle James says it is great, because "it saves a soul from death and covers a multitude of sins." That is a glorious fact which is true of every one who is turned from the error of his way unto God. But there still remains the fact that some conversions mean so much more than others. The life we may bring to the power of Christ and the truth may be led to a service for God and our fellow men tenfold greater than our own. What joy, then, to help set such a life in motion. We may become the humble instrument of leading out into the Kingdom one who fills a large place and does a world-wide work.

What a vacancy there would have been in the band of the Apostles without Peter. How many lessons that just fit many of us to-day does Christ teach us through Peter. How much poorer would the New Testament be without those Epistles which still burn before us with the fervent, mellowed love of this zealous disciple? Who would have preached as he, on the day of Pentecost? Who would have first opened the door to the Gentiles? Of course, God would have called someone else to these things. Yet, we must remember that Peter was brought to Jesus by Andrew, a much more humble and quiet follower of the Lord than himself.

Stephon Paxton was for years a great Sunday school missionary. For years he went up and down the Western States, far ahead of the Churches, away out on the frontiers, where many would have soon buried their religion in worldly toil and prosperity, had he not come to them. He established Sunday schools in almost every hamlet, until hundreds of churches to-day are monuments of the seed he had so zealously sown. But Paxton was first led to Sunday school himself by his little daughter Mary, and through that she led him to Christ. And so what fruit of joy must come to those who helped lead Whitfield, or Finney, or Moody, or Spurgeon, or any such noble workmen to God? In these cases the one conversion had a

world-wide sweep in the Kingdom, and led to thousands and tens of thousands being saved. So it may be, the friend or neighbor, whom we seek for Christ, may be a new force which under the blessing of God may do great things.

That young man or woman for whom you pray, may grow up to be the first of a multitude, an ever increasing ratio of saved ones year after year. Those children gathered about you each Sunday in the Sunday school class are to be the fathers and mothers of another generation, and each one converted means a new household for Christ, a new center of influence for the Church.

It is then a blessed privilege, a glorious responsibility, to which God calls us. We may, if we give up ourselves to be used by Him, become the instruments of turning souls from death to life. And we should remember that the most humble but steadfast believer, who quietly lives and prays for the saving of others, may have a crown at last, gleaming with precious stars. Though unknown himself and filling a small sphere, the ones he helps to save may become God's great workmen.—Chris. Intelligencer.

Begin To-Day.

Is there nothing which Christ, as your friend, your Lord, your Saviour, wants you to do that you are leaving undone to-day?

Do you doubt one instant, with his high and deep love for your soul, that he wants you to pray? And do you pray? Do you doubt for one instant that it is his will that you should honor and help and bless all men about you who are his brethren? Are you doing anything like that? Do you doubt one instant that his will is that you should make life serious and lofty? Do you one instant doubt that he wants you to be pure in deed and word and thought? And are you pure? Do you doubt one instant that his command is for you to openly own him and declare that you are his servant before all the world? And have you done it?

These are the questions which make the whole matter clear. No, not in quiet lanes, nor in the bright temple courts, as once he spake, and not from blazing heavens, as men sometimes seem to expect—not so does Christ speak to us. And yet he speaks! I know what he—there is all in his glory—he, here in my heart—wants me to do to-day, and I know that I am not mistaken in my knowledge. It is no guess of mine. It is his voice that tells me.—Phillips Brooks.

A Sensible Idea.

A converted cowboy once gave this very sensible idea of what religion is:—"Lots of folks that would really like to do right, think that serving the Lord means shoutin' themselves hoarse praisin' His name. Now, I'll tell you how I look at that. I'm workin' here for Jim. Now, if I'd sit around the house here, tellin' what a good fellow Jim is, and singin' songs to him, and gettin' up in the night to serenade him, I'd be doin' like what lots of Christians do; but I wouldn't suit Jim, and I'd get fixed mighty quick. But when I buckle on my straps, and hustle among the hills and see that Jim's herd is all right, and not sufferin' for water or food, or not been off the ranch and branded by cattle thieves, then I'm servin' Jim as he wants to be served."

IF YOU CATCH COLD.

Many things may happen when you catch cold, but the thing that usually happens first is a cough. An inflammation starts up in the bronchial tubes or in the throat, and the discharge of mucus from the head constantly poisons this. Then the very contraction of the throat muscles in the act of coughing helps to irritate so that the more you cough the more you have to cough. It is, of course, beyond question that in many cases the irritation started in this way results in lung troubles that are called by serious names. It is in this irritated bronchial tube that the germ of consumption finds lodgment and breeds. Great numbers of people disregard cough at first, and pay the penalty of neglect. Cough never did any one any good. It should be dispersed promptly. Adamson's Botanic Cough Balsam is a well known remedy, and it is the surest and quickest cough cure known to-day. It does not deceive by drugging the throat. It soothes the irritated parts and heals them, then the cough stops of its own accord. The action of this medicine is so simple that it seems like nature's own provision for curing a cough. Every druggist has it. 25 cents. Be sure to get the genuine, which has "F. W. Kinsman & Co." blown in the bottle.

Helping a Revival.

One may help on a revival of religion by removing the things which stand in the way of it. A man may even pray for it, and yet himself

be a hindrance to it. He who is unconvinced by his brother, who hinders on to his worldly amusements, who will not perfectly surrender himself to the Lord and to God's way of working, is hindering the answer to his prayers and preventing the reviving of his own heart and the hearts of others. If we really want to be made ready for a work of grace in our own souls and in the church to which we belong, we will first get low before God, and seek his grace, and then go out to remove whatever obstacles we may find in ourselves and in others to the copious and general visitation of the Holy Ghost.—Presbyterian.

"I Liked It, But

Praise with a sting in it is not worthy of the name. It is of small comfort to a pastor when a member of his congregation takes pains to praise his sermon, and winds up with that depressing little word "but." What comes after that word may be only a look, a shrug of the shoulders. The sting is keen, and the attempt at praise falls flat. "I liked it, but"—had better be left unsaid, if praise is intended.—S. S. Times.

WHEN TO TRUST GOD.—It is one thing to feel that God is a helper in times of trial and danger; it is another thing to feel that at all times God is better than all else. He has read God's Word aright who says, "It is well to say, 'What time I am afraid I will trust in thee,' but it is still better to say, 'I will trust, and not be afraid.'"—S. S. Times.

It is sometimes only by the lesser that we can climb up to the greater; it is sometimes by touching only on a little human love that we can rise to the Infinite love; sometimes only by making a little earthly sacrifice that we get a glimpse of the eternal Heavenly Sacrifice.—Rev. R. F. Horton.

A sinner must not only cease to do evil, but he must learn to do good. The Gospel does not contemplate a mere life of negation, it requires the most positive and active forms of right-doing as well as right being.

It is well to be always prompt in the performance of that which is clearly our duty.

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