

The Near Christ.

So far beyond the things of space—
So high above the things of time—
And yet, how human is Thy face,
How near, how neighborly, Thy claim!

Thou wast not born to fill our skies
With luster from some alien zone;
Thy light, Thy love, Thy sympathies,
Thy very essence, are our own.

Thy mission, Thy supreme estate,
Thy life among the pious poor,
Thy lofty language to the great,
Thy touch, so tender and so sure;

Thine eyes, whose looks are with us yet;
Thy voice, whose echoes do not die;
Thy words, which none who hear forget,
So piercing are they and so high:

Thy balanced nature, always true
And always dauntless and serene,
Which did the deeds none else could do,
And saw the sights none else had seen,

And ruled itself from first to last,
Without an effort or a pause,
By no traditions of the past—
By no thing save its own pure laws:

All this and thousand traits beside,
Unseen till these at least are known,
May serve to witness far and wide
That Thou art He, and Thou alone.

Ah, none shall see Thee as Thou art,
Or know Thee for himself at all,
Until he has Thee in his heart,
And heeds Thy whisper or Thy call,

And feels that in Thy sovereign will
Eternal Manhood grows not old,
But keeps its prime, that all may fill
Thy large, illimitable fold.

—Arthur Munby.

Songs in the Night.

The Christian has his afflictions of body and griefs of soul as well as others, but he does not sorrow even as others who have no hope. Out of the depths he cries unto God, and He delivers him. His cry is not merely a cry of distress, but rather a cry of joy. The Christian has joy in sorrow. The waters are never deep enough to overwhelm him. In the darkest hour he can sing. Songs which are born in broken hearts and rise from the abyss of darkness are the sweetest songs.

Miss Anna Steele, the gifted author of some of our best hymns, was a great sufferer. In childhood she met with an accident which rendered her a life-long invalid. To add to her disappointments, she was engaged to be married to a worthy young man whom she loved with all the tenderness of her ardent nature. All preparations for the wedding were made, the day arrived and the hour when the bridegroom was expected to appear, when a messenger came to the door with the appalling intelligence that he had just lost his life by drowning. Her life was broken and crushed. All the light of her earthly hope was quenched. She bore her grief with Christian fortitude, and consecrated her life to the service of God in works of charity and mercy.

Out of the depths of a wounded spirit, crushed by sorrow but comforted by grace, she wrote this beautiful and tender hymn:

"Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at Thy throne of grace,
Let this petition rise:

"Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessings of Thy grace impart,
And make me live to Thee.

"Let the sweet hope that Thou art mine
My life and death attend;
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end."

Can anyone except a Christian sing like that in time of sorrow? Can atheism, can paganism, can skeptical philosophy, can science, can worldly pleasure or worldly honor inspire such music in the depths? We may find polished literature, elegant poetry, classic music in other fields, but no God, no hope, no salvation, no consolation to inspire the song and tune the lyre.

Bunyan represents his pilgrim passing through a dark valley infested with goblins and demons, where he was frightened almost to death. When his faith and hope had well-nigh failed he heard a sweet voice not far away, and listening attentively he discovered that a man just before him was singing: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." The singer did not know that anyone was near. Unwittingly he was inspiring comfort and strength into a weary spirit almost ready to faint in the darkness. There is nothing like a spiritual song to drive away doubt and fear.

And when the spirit of care and worry comes in to hinder prayer and work and progress, there is nothing better than a Christian song to quiet the quivering nerves, to cool the fevered brain, and lift up the hands that hang down. It is Longfellow who sings:

"Such songs have power to quiet
The restless spirit of care;

And come like a benediction
That follows after prayer.
And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

One reason why saints sing in the night is, they see the morning beginning to dawn. "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "The morning cometh." The shadows soon flee away. We shall not always dwell in the depths. There is a better country. Better than Canaan in its palmiest days, when honey trickled from the rocks, when the hills were covered with vineyards, and flocks and herds lay down in green pastures. Better than our own country which we love so well. This is a good country. It is a broad, fertile, rich, beautiful land, inhabited by a brave, free, intelligent, and happy people, with the best government under the sun. But there is a better country. It is inhabited by a nobler people, who dwell together in greater peace and harmony under a better government. Compared with that heavenly country, this is not very desirable. It is often dark and dreary here. The best men often have darkness and sorrow. But they can sing:

"We are traveling home to God,
In the way our fathers trod;
They are happy now, and we
Soon their happiness shall see."

Then let the shadows lengthen. Let the night be ever so dark. We shall not cease our singing. Paul and Silas sang in the night. Those who sing amid the shadows of this world shall also sing amid the glories of the heavenly world. Let the night be filled with music, and the journey will soon end in a land of immortal symphonies of that better land.

Motives of Christian Service.

The coming of the summer season, with its opportunities for temporary release from the usual routine of life, seems to be seized upon by some Christians as a notification of release from the ordinary activities of the Christian life. They say that after months of faithful attendance upon the services of the church and the performances of every duty devolving upon them as members of the Church and of the Christian community, they think they are entitled to the release from these duties which they are under the impression they need. The impression is a mistaken one, and the ideal of Christian service which the impression illustrates is a faulty and dangerous one. Christian service is based upon and has its inspiration in allegiance with Jesus Christ, and this allegiance is conditioned upon the declaration, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy strength and with all thy mind," which is reinforced by the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It is, therefore, the blossom and fruit of a profound and overmastering affection manifested toward the divine Master on the one hand and toward humanity on the other.

True Christian service is absolutely free from selfishness. It yields rich and abundant reward, but the securement of this reward is not its primary and impelling motive. The service is rendered in response to the command uttered by the Master when He instituted the sacrament of the supper, "Do this in remembrance of Me." The example of Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," is constantly before the disciple, and his service, of whatever sort it may be, is the utterance of an instinctive, and generally unconscious desire to perpetuate among men the gracious and self-sacrificing spirit of devotion to humankind manifested so richly and wonderfully by the Lord Himself.

This being so, there is no justification whatever for the desire for release from the obligations which Christian service entails. The consecrated Christian, who desires above all things else to make this calling and election sure, as far as good works can bring about this result, and whose meat and drink it is to do the will of the divine Father, will not seek an escape from these responsibilities. He will rather rejoice that he has been found worthy to have a part in the working out of any of God's beneficent plans for the benefit of men. No greater honor can come to him than to be designated as a collaborator with God, and to be identified as such, and to be associated in the great work of human redemption with the disciples, apostles, saints, martyrs, reformers, and leaders who have, under the inspiration of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit, wrought so marvelously and successfully in the world.

A well-known English scientist, when asked to indicate some of the things that fashioned his character, said that chief among them was Nelson's thrilling message to the fleet under his command at Trafalgar,

"England expects every man to do his duty." Now, while there can be no doubt of the value of such a sentiment in inspiring men to fidelity and to heroic exertion, yet much depends upon the quickening motive back of the performance of duty. One may discharge his duty in an indifferent and perfunctory way, and yet meet all the legal and moral requirements of the situation. But when the impelling motive is a deep and abiding affection the act is glorified. The supreme test of love is sacrifice, and the Christian in whose heart the tender and all-pervading love of God has been shed abroad, will rejoice in every occasion that puts that love to the test.

With one's idea of Christian service based upon these high principles it will not be easy for the sincere follower of Jesus Christ to seek for release from the sweet and satisfying responsibilities of Christian service, for it will be contrary to the instincts of his spiritual nature to desire it. Rather, he will welcome the opportunities for service as intimations from God to give practical evidence of the work of grace in his own heart and life, and as tokens of his own personal acceptability in the sight of God. As to the rewards of his service he will not greatly concern himself, being assured that faithful performance on his part will win for him at last that supreme mark of divine approval, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" — N. Y. Advocate.

The Personal Factor.

Again and again we need to emphasize the fact that organizations are only the means through which vital force expresses itself, and that, for every kind of Christian work, the personal factor in the problem is of supreme importance. The method of Jesus with his friends is the great example of the manner in which the work of Christian people must be done. It is not by committees or by any of the machinery of the church. It is by putting two persons into living relations with each other as friends, where one gives his best to the other, that men are to be won to the kingdom of God.

The secret of success for every church lies in this matter of personal work, definite, persistent and prayerful, for others. The preacher can reach the audience that gathers in the public service but his message must be taken up by the members of the church, and carried in personal conversation and appeal to those who are outside the church, if it is to be finally effective. We need to work back to the simplicity and power of the method of Jesus with the Twelve. A church may have a perfect equipment, its members may be wealthy, its pastor may be an eloquent preacher, its past methods may all be of the best and newest sort; but unless there is a united body of members who are willing to work personally for the conversion of individuals, even such a church cannot make permanent gains. The personal factor is the most important of all. No church can do its work without the personal assistance of every member working for definite results with their friends who are outside the kingdom of God. — Zion's Herald.

Why Do We Hesitate?

A strange reluctance comes over many when they try to talk about the soul and its relation to God. It is felt by the converted and the unconverted. Very often the gay young girl, whose heart is running over with mirth and fun, and whose speech sparkles with wit and humor, has deep in her consciousness the feeling that she is unsatisfied—that she wants something better purer and higher. She wishes that the Christian woman who is talking with her would ask her a question, would give her a hint, would lead the conversation to the subject of personal religion. The other has no thought of the kind. She even has a faint, undefinable dread that any effort on her part would be received coldly or be the subject of ridicule.

So the opportunity passes. The souls have been within speaking distance but have failed to communicate with each other. Each goes on its way. The friend of Christ, who might have won a soul to him, has been silent, ashamed, afraid. What wonder if to that faithless friend there comes the sad experience that the Beloved has withdrawn himself and is gone; that, seeking the Spirit, it finds him not, and calling, there comes no answer. Can there be perfect serenity and the full sense of communion with God to one who refuses or neglects so important a duty? — Margaret E. Sangster.

The fleeting smile of the world may be purchased at the price of eternal tears.

Readiness to do Good.

If we spend our time proposing to do something and never do it, it will be time lost. The claims of the Church and of the world are on us. We cannot be all our lifetime getting ready, but must stand ready to put our hand to any good work within our reach. A comparatively little effort done at once may be better for the cause of religion than ten times as much labor ten years afterward. If one soul is saved and set on the road to heaven, it is better than to wait in uncertainty for an opportunity to save ten. The condition of sinners is desperate; and what is done for them must be done promptly. Like shipwrecked men, they must be rescued soon, or it will be too late. When the first alarm is given the life-savers on the coast haste to the rescue. The world of unconverted men is sinking in the waves of sin, in jeopardy every hour. What is done for the present generation must be done now. A boy called to a passer-by that a man had fallen into a swamp, and to make haste, or he would die. "How deep is he in?" "In to his waist," was the answer. "O, well, there's plenty of time to get him out." "Yes, but he is in head first." This case was desperate, and did not admit of delay. So opportunities must be seized on, or lost forever. In almost any case, what is done must be done quickly, if success is to be attained. — The Presbyterian.

How Not to Grow Weary.

The way to enjoy Christian service and not tire of it is to be diligent in spirit. The hard workers never become weary in well-doing. The more we do for Christ the more eager we become in his service. We tire most when we do the least. The idlers are the weary ones. Those who do the most enjoy it best, and complain the least. Those who keep growing in grace never weary of the race. Faithfulness in prayer and diligence in the study of God's Word make the soul proof against weariness in God's service.

Redoubled diligence is the remedy for discouragement. The trouble with discouraged ones is that they always feel like quitting, when to quit is the worst thing they can do. Discouragement lets go the moment that a man sets his face against it with grim determination not to give up, but to press forward with renewed diligence. There is no misery like the misery of spiritual despondency of a man who has been in close touch with God and in the front ranks of hope and heavenly aspiration and godly influence among men. To know how to avoid such a state or how to escape from it, is a matter of grave importance. The outcome involves the honor of God and the destiny of a man. — Evangelical Messenger.

Hard, Hacking Coughs.

Barring accidents, the person who gets along with the least amount of cough will live the longest. Of course, the right time to attack a cough is at the commencement, when it is a simple thing for the right treatment to drive the cough quickly away. As a general thing, however, people spend so much time experimenting with various remedies that the cough is well under way before they know it. Then comes the long siege. You feel the hard, racking all through your system, and get relief from nothing. You fill your stomach with nauseating mixtures to no purpose. Then you use compounds containing narcotic, which deceive temporarily, and leave you slightly worse. Some coughs of this kind hang on for weeks or even months, and, of course, they frequently develop into serious lung troubles. A true specific for all coughs is Adams' Botanic Cough Balsam, and it should be kept in the house against any emergency. With a cough that has become chronic the first effect of this remedy is a lessening of the dull sensation of pain which usually is felt with such a cough. Then you are conscious that the soreness is leaving you, and presently the desire to cough grows less frequent. All this process is brought about by the healing properties of the Balsam. It is a compound of barks and gums. You can test it. 25 cents at any druggist. Get the genuine with "F. W. Kinsman & Co." blown in the bottle.

Keeping Young

A sore temptation to the aged is a tendency to querulousness and pessimism. Losses are unduly magnified and gains are not rightly appreciated. While we cherish and cling to many of the things that are old, and are all the better for having been well tested, let us not seek to put our eyes in the back of our heads and live only in the past.

Keep step with the times; keep sympathy with young hearts; keep in touch with every new born enterprise of charity and in line with the marchings of God's providence. A ten minutes of chat or play with a grand child may freshen you more than an hour spent with an old companion or over an old book.

Above all, keep your hearts in the love of God and walk in the sunshine of Christ's countenance. Our "Indian Summer" ought to be about the most golden period of a life consecrated to him who bought us with his precious blood.

Eye hath not seen, tongue hath not told

And ear hath not heard it sung,
How buoyant and fresh, though it seem to grow old,
Is a heart forever young.

—Rev. T. L. Cayler.

Gloomy Christians

Faith and grace stand for good cheer, courage, and contentment. Despondency is a contradiction of blessed assurance and the lively hope of a true follower of the Lord. Satan has many ways of duping the children of light. One of his most successful methods is to hold up the dark side of things. If he can get a Christian under a spell of gloominess and keep him there, and then induce him to go about sowing seeds of discontent and discouragement among others, he has a good emissary. Gloomy Christians cannot grow until they get out into the sunlight of God's grace and shine for Christ, instead of exhibiting a long, cheerless, hopeless face in the name of religion. Wake up, cheer up, and be a light-bearer, a comfort to others, and not a vexation to the faithful to the Lord.

Prayer and personal activity in the Lord's work will chase away gloom, and tend to cultivate a cheerful, hopeful disposition of heart and mind. To think of God and to talk with Him, and to study His will and His purposes concerning the redemption of the world, inspires faith and hope and courage, and brings joy and gladness, leaving no room for morbid sadness. — Evangelical Messenger.

To be willing is a rarer grace than to be doing the will of God. For he who is willing may sometimes have nothing to do, and must only be willing to wait. — Henry Drummond.

HAD LA GRIPE.—Mr. A. Nickerson, Farmer, Dutton, writes: "Last winter I had La Grippe and it left me with a severe pain in the small of my back and hip that used to catch me whenever I tried to climb a fence. This lasted for about two months when I bought a bottle of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil and used it both internally and externally, morning and evening, for three days, at the expiration of which time I was completely cured."

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