

Forgive!

When real or fancied wrong has stung
The hearts that should in love abide,
When hate is galling taunt has flung
Till anger in revenge has cried,
The surest power to break the spell
And waken love where love should live,
Or ring revenge its funeral knell,
Is the entreating word, "Forgive."

"Forgive!" it is the bravest word
That human lips can ever speak,
And nature's heights and depths are stirred
When men of men forgive, nesc seek.
Legions of angels hover near
To bear the tidings up to Heaven
When to the plea, "Forgive," they hear
The generous answer, "All's forgiven."

"Forgive!" Oh, if we would forgive
As oft we pray to be forgiven,
We then would prove it sweet to live
And make our earth another heaven.
Anger and malice, pride and hate,
And every sin o'er which we pray,
Would at the contrite word, "Forgive,"
In dire confusion haste away.

—Selected.

The Pastor As Overseer.

By Divine appointment the pastor is the overseer of the church. It is required of him that he be not only "apt to teach," but able also to "take care of the church of God." He must be a student, a thinker, and a preacher; he must also be a man of affairs, and able to bring things to pass. It was once said of a certain Scotch preacher that from Monday till Saturday he was invisible, and then on the Sabbath he was incomprehensible. If there ever was a day for such a minister his sun has set, never to rise again. If a church is strong enough to require and to maintain a plurality of elders, it may have both a preacher and a pastor, but ordinarily one man must combine in himself both the office of teacher and that of administrator. Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers." The New Testament word which, in our common version, is rendered "bishop," means primarily an instructor, overseer, or guardian. This word is very suggestive, and implies that the pastor is to have his eye upon all that concerns the flock; he is to look after all the affairs of the church. And the word "elder" denotes one who by reason of his age and experience is able to take a leading part in the management of public affairs. The elders, in the apostolic days, were entrusted with the general oversight of the churches. What the Superintendent is to the Sunday-School the Pastor is to the church. It is not his business to do all that is to be done, but he is responsible for seeing that the proper work is done, and he must supervise and inspect its doing. He cannot relegate the oversight of the church to the deacons, or to anyone else. He must stand in his own place. His usefulness and success, nay, his very life as a pastor, depends in very large measure upon his ability and skill as an organizer and leader. And if such ability is not his naturally, he must, by careful effort, seek to acquire and cultivate it.

The pastor must at the same time remember that he is the minister and not the master of the church. And he must take the oversight of the flock not as lording it over the charge allotted to him, but making himself an example to the flock. The pastor's oversight should extend to every corner of the field in which the church is at work. He must superintend the discipline of the church, direct its missionary and evangelistic activities, and pass under review all its business methods and transactions. We do not say that he should in all cases attend finance meetings, but he must regard himself as primarily responsible for the financial standing of the church. He should keep in touch with the Young People's work, and thereby make it impossible for anyone to say that the Young People's movement is working division in the church. The pastor should be at the head of all evangelistic work in the church. Why should he temporarily resign his pastoral office in favor of a transient evangelist? A mature and saintly brother was wont to affectionately offer his pastor this sage advice: "Keep the reins in your own hands. You are the pastor of this church. We hold you responsible for everything that is done here."

Sometimes a pastor is heard uttering severe strictures on the church he is serving. It is unspiritual and worldly, it is not evangelistic, it is not missionary, its methods are altogether bad. The pastor who allows himself to make open complaint against his church ought to have the sense to see that he is publicly announcing his own faults and deficiencies. He is the professed and actual teacher and leader of the church. He is there to shape its course, mould its methods, and call forth its activities. It is his duty to instruct his people in Christian doctrine, and in the best methods of

church work. It is his business to inform them respecting all missionary movements, and to lead them out in evangelistic efforts. If they are not instructed the pastor is at fault. If they do not labor to evangelize, the pastor must be deficient as a leader. If they do not contribute to missions it is because the pastor has failed to instruct them, and to inspire them by his own example. If their business and other methods are faulty, the pastor himself should study to set them right. If the pastor proves himself a wise and capable leader, his people will follow him; they may follow at a distance, but they will follow. And if at first they appear laggard and unwilling he must be strong enough, and patient enough, to constrain them to fulfil their mission.

And the church should recognize the pastor's responsibility as its overseer, and should readily acknowledge his leadership. His personal judgment should carry weight in the settlement of all questions. No church sociable, concert or other entertainment should be projected without his knowledge and approval. No new movement should be initiated, and no important step taken in any direction without his concurrence. In the eyes of the denomination, and before the world, the pastor is responsible for everything done by the church. He should therefore be accorded his proper authority. The pastor is Christ's own appointed leader, guide, and overseer of the church. He labors among, and presides over the people, as one who must give account, and as long as he teaches and rules according to the terms of his commission, the church should recognize his divine right to lead and guide, and should cheerfully and harmoniously labor under his oversight.—Canadian Baptist.

Christ's Love.

BY REV. R. F. SAMPLE, D. D.

Once we saw men standing on a distant shore, looking through their field-glasses at a vessel in the offing. At length they recognized the "Ironclad," and a moment later telegraph wires and sea-cables flashed the intelligence around the world that the remains of the Imperial Prince of France had arrived from Zululand. Then came the burial. Crowned heads were there, princes and princesses, dukes and duchesses, put on the weeds of mourning. Funeral bells tolled their mournful requiem, and an imposing cortege followed the remains, thoughtfully and sadly, to their final rest. Thus was honored shown to the son of the disenthroned Napoleon, whose greater ancestor sleeps by the Seine.

On that day another funeral procession passed unobserved to a simple church-yard, and a worn out body was deposited by sun burnt hands in a grave which no marble shaft, gleaming among the trees, will ever mark. And yet had our eyes been opened we would have seen a procession of angels in the air, and a cloud of witnesses, every one of whom was crowned, and as the pine coffin was lowered to its place, there came a voice from heaven saying: "Them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him."

Christ's love is from everlasting to everlasting. Human language cannot express it. Human thought cannot compass it. In an eternity past the Twentieth century was present to our Savior's view. His eternity is a great pavilion, every part of which is known to him. In our attempts to realize the past we are at most confined to our own recollections. You call to mind your childhood, you think of a mother's tears because of your waywardness, and a father's prayers that you might be saved, and the message of grace, solemn and tender, that came to you from the old pulpit, before which your fathers sat, and the still voice that spoke within you of the cross and of Him who, for your sake, died upon it; and you think of your own strange concern about your soul, which led you in tearful entreaty to the mercy seat, and of the sweet peace which stole into your heart as the morning comes after the night, and your gratitude expresses itself in hosannas as you think that through all those memorable hours Jesus of Nazareth, in his measureless love, was present, near to you as he was to Bartimeus at the gate, or to Mary when she sat at his feet. He loved you!

The thought is passing strange, and strangely sweet! And then he loved you when you were his enemy. We do not wonder at the mother who dispatched a messenger to seek for her prodigal son, saying: "Tell him his mother loves him still, and longs for his return, and if you find him on the street, or in want, or in prison, minister to him kindly for my sake, and I will reward you for it." Ah! who can measure a mother's love! But that Christ should have loved us when we turned our backs on him, is won-

derful indeed. And yet one word of St. John draws the veil a little that we may understand; for it speaks of us as his own. He is an infinite mother, and his love exceeds the human mother's by the altitude of the heavens, and the circumference of both eternities—"Having loved his own."

Then I think of Ruth cleaving unto Naomi, and following her into a strange land, saying, "whither thou goest I will go, and where thou diest I will die." I think of David in the chamber over the gate, looking through his tears toward the wood of Ephraim and the grave over which rough stones are piled, and forgetting the filial impiety that drove him from his throne, he cries aloud, and repeats the lament, "O Abalom my son! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" I think of Rachel whose feet have worn a path to the grave, and when her form is bent with age, and the deep channels once graven in her face for tears are dry, still gropes her way to the home of the dead, and refuses to be comforted because her children are not. And as I look on all these exhibitions of love, the truest, the strongest and the best, I yet discover that it is a lofty ascent by which I go up, and a measureless journey by which I go on, to the love of Christ, which is higher than the highest heavens and never ends.

Self-Denial.

Self-denial is the denial of self in the very form in which self most delights. A man who likes power or preeminence or adulation may endure toil, weariness, and even persecution with secret satisfaction if thereby he wins admiration and influence. There is no self denial in all that toil or weariness or persecution. There is such a thing as spiritual pride. A person may even be proud of being extraordinarily and peculiarly devoted to God. When such a person spends much time in reading the Bible or religious books, or keeps in seclusion as if lost in meditation about holy things, or talks sweetly about the presence of God and communion with Him in public and in private, there may be a deep and unseen satisfaction in all this apparent consecration because people look on and admire such devotedness. And if such is the case there is no self-denial, there is only spiritual pride and gratification because self in its favored taste is pleased. A stream of thoughts sometimes passes through the mind while we are at prayer in our secret devotions; thoughts about our duties in the church, in the Sunday school, in the mission and its work; thoughts about our brethren in Christ, how we ought to act differently toward them, be more kind and loving or patient and humble; and before we know it we are away off in remote parts of the earth from our prayers, the heart has been silent from its communion with God, while thoughts which we did not recognize to be at all sinful have swept a veil between us and the mercy seat. Sometimes thoughts are injected by Satan who hates above all things to see a Christian praying; but sometimes they are also traceable to a form of selfishness; the center of the thought is in some way or another a perfume in the nostrils of self. As a rule, it may be set down to be a fact that a Christian who is given to much wandering of mind when engaged in secret devotion is not living the real life of self-denial; self in some form is filling the heart and ready to take even the perfumed incense of prayer and swing the golden censor before its own deep idolatry.

How often we listen to testimonies that breathe nothing but self. Even when it is positively denied that the glorifying is not of self, but of God, there is evidence of the devil's own deceit in making the soul believe this secretly in self satisfaction. How many times our resentment of injury and injustice is fired by our own vanity and unwillingness to be crucified with Christ in the death of self. Not only in the seat, but on the platform; not only in the hearer, but in the leader, this same spark appears. Evident to others, evident, alas! to our gracious Saviour and Lord; but concealed from ourselves. How much we all lack of the Saviour's real spirit of denying of self! Meditation on this subject should lead us to watch all uprisings of self, in our spirit, in our words, in private and public devotion, in council, in church, in testimony, and to hear the Master's voice, "Deny thyself, or thou canst not follow Me."—Mission Bulletin.

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The Silent Forces.

One cannot read the Scriptures with care without being impressed with the power ascribed to the silent forces of the Kingdom of Grace. In nature these are mighty forces. The sun shines upon the earth and not a leaf is shaken by the touch of its beams, but life is quickened. The little tendril clasps the rock, and then enters the little crevice; after awhile the rock is parted by the growing root. The storm sweeps over the land and ruin is in its track, but the same atmosphere breathes as a gentle zephyr cooling the fevered cheek, strengthening the tender flower, and wakening the sleeping forces of life. So when Christ would set forth the nature of the work of the Spirit he said: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." And again in his teaching he illustrated the nature and work of the kingdom of God by the processes of life: "First the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." The sower sows the seed, and by the quiet processes of growth the harvest comes in due time. The mustard seed is planted, it germinates and grows, and at length there is a tree in whose kindly shelter the birds find a lodging. The heaven is placed within the meal, and by the peculiar law of its nature, it communicates its own nature to the mass, until society in all its institutions, relations and workings is permeated by the spirit of the kingdom of God. The same lesson was taught the prophet on the mountain, God was in the still, small voice, the voice that scarce disturbed the silence, but in which was the power that regenerates the world.

We easily overlook this. We like to feel the shaking of the earthquake, to see the fury of the storm. We invoke law; we appeal to the powers men in their earthly wisdom use; we are impatient of the slowly moving forces of grace. We are not content to sow the seed and then take our needed rest in quietness; we are impatient of waiting for the great visible results we seek, and, discouraged, we censure and condemn. But Paul persuaded men. With all the tenderness of a heart filled with love he pleaded with men to believe on the Lord Jesus. In this he followed, the example of Christ who had compassion on the multitude, and out of the little store fed them all. The mercies of God are tender. Following this example, speaking out of his love, bring to men his tender messages of love and waiting for the breath of his Spirit, we will not be disappointed in the results.—United Presbyterian.

Never Failed.

You cannot find any place in Scripture where a man was ever sent by God to do a work in which he failed. God sent Moses to Egypt to bring three millions of bondmen up out of the house of bondage into the promised land. Did he fail? It looked, at first, as if he were going to. If we had been in the court when Pharaoh said to Moses, "Who is God, that I should obey Him?" and ordered him out of his presence, we might have thought it meant failure. But did it? God sent Elijah to stand before Ahab, and it was a bold thing when he told him there should be neither dew nor rain; but didn't he look up the heavens for three years and six months? Now here is God sending His only beloved Son from His bosom, from the throne, down into this world. Do you think He is going to fail? Thanks be to God, He can save to the uttermost, and there is not a man who may not find it so, if he is willing to be saved.—D. L. Moody.

The Life, Not the Profession that Tells.

How a man lives, and not what he professes, tells what kind of a man he is. The prophet's condemnation of Israel was, "This people draweth nigh to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Their profession was all right, but their life was abominably idolatrous. It is their conduct and not their creed that is the true index to a people's religion. When the life contradicts the profession, the conduct, and not the creed, tells what the man's real character is; and what a man is, is what God knows him to be, and that determines his destiny. Dr. Dixon illustrates this teaching, as follows: "A lady was once twitted by her friends upon her inconsistency in marrying the man she did. Her reply was: 'Yes, I have said that I would never marry a Scotchman. I have said, too, that I would never marry a Presbyterian. I did say that I would never marry a person, but I never did say that I would not marry a Scotch Presbyterian parson!' What was the index of her character? What she did, or what she professed? Loud profession is all right, provided the

life speaks even louder than the profession, and in exact harmony therewith.—The Telescope.

A Skeptic Converted.

Years ago there was, in a certain village, a young physician, who seemed to be a confirmed skeptic. At last, to the surprise of good people, he presented himself to the church committee as a candidate for church membership, and when asked what called his attention to the personal claims of Christ, he answered, "For years I have sat by my office window, and each Friday evening in storm and fair weather I have seen good Deacons G— and P— walk past to the church prayer-meeting, and their constant 'going' made me think."

It was not what they said, for he had not heard them say anything, but it was their "keeping at it" which shattered the infidelity of his heart.—Selected.

So long as we are in the world, it is our business to think of others before we think of ourselves. That was what Christ did from the first to last. That puts man at his best, links him in aim and purpose with the Crucified, and when we thus think and act, we begin to live in the higher, to have enjoyments of which the world knows nothing, and that neither time nor circumstance can ever lessen.—H. L. Reade.

God wants us to serve him at present just where we are and with the things we happen to have. Moses and Shammur, and the young lad of the Gospel, and the poor widow, and the weeping women, and Dorcas all accomplished great things for God, but they would not have done so had they failed to use the things they had at the moment. The same faithfulness on the part of all God's people and the world would be won to him ere long.—The Treasury.

Some people are always telegraphing to heaven for God to send a cargo of blessing to them; but they are not at the wharfside to unload the vessel when it comes.—F. B. Meyer.

It makes no difference, so far as we are concerned, whether Christ comes to the world to-morrow in His second advent, or we go to Christ to-morrow, by the road of death. When true friends meet, does it matter which has gone to the house of the other?

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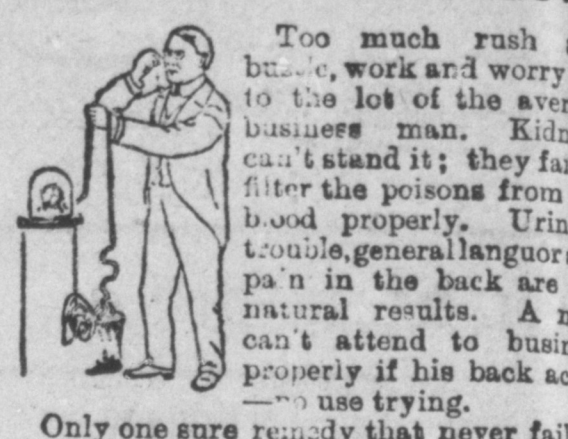
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