

PRESENTLY.

Why cast in care thy joy away?
Oh, heart be still!
Fret not for blessings that delay
The day of God is a long day;
Be sure his help is on the way,
Wait thou His will.

He is a God of grace and might,
He will not fail;
Look for His coming in the night,
He leaves thee not alone to fight,
Trust Him when breaks the morn-
ing light,
Love will prevail.

Lose not thy faith, hope and be
strong,

Content to wait,
Thy heart's desire fulfilled ere long,
His angels will about thee throng,
Thy soul shall sing its vesper song,
And not too late.

Marianne Farningham.



MINIMUM CHRISTIANS.

Might we not better call them Christian "sponges," except that one sometimes doubts their right to the name "Christian" at all? They receive all that they can take, soak it up greedily, and accept it as their right. They swell with the importance, but their religion is as weak and spineless as the thing which they resemble.

God's richest gifts come to them as a matter of course. They take them as their deserts, and look forward to heaven as their natural right, in payment for a very limited morality and church activity, while real self-denial and cross-bearing is pushed aside as something which God Himself cannot ask of them. They look for honor and recognition, and give the least that they can. *The Christian Work* calls such a one a minimum Christian, and says:

"He is the Christian who is going to heaven at the cheapest rate possible. He intends to get all of the world he can and not meet the world's doom. He aims to have as little religion as he possibly can without lacking it altogether. He would keep good friends with the devil with the intention of meanly cheating him out of his just dues at last. The minimum Christian goes to church in the morning, and sometimes in the evening also, unless it rains, or is too warm, or too cold or he is tired and sleepy, or has the headache from eating too much dinner. He listens most respectfully to the preacher, and joins in prayer and praise. He applies the truth very judiciously, sometimes to himself, but much oftener to his neighbors.

"So, too, the minimum Christian is very friendly to all good works. He wishes them well, but it is not in his power to do much for them. He regards the Sabbath school as an admirable institution, especially for the neglected and ignorant. He has also a great admiration for the Christian Endeavor and kindred associations, and they are just what are needed. But it is not convenient for him to take any part in any of them. His business engagements are so pressing during the week that he needs the Sabbath as a day of rest. Neither does he think himself qualified, at least so he quite modestly puts it, to act as a teacher in the Sabbath school or take any prominent part in any of the meetings or enterprises of

the church. There are so many persons better prepared for these important duties that he must really beg to be excused. He is very friendly to home and foreign missions, and gives his mite. He thinks, however, that there are altogether too many appeals for money, but he gives, if not enough to save his reputation, pretty near it. At all events he aims at it, and makes some sort of show of being interested. But he is really more concerned about pacifying conscience than honoring Christ in all the duties he compels himself to perform. ***

"He is an ardent supporter of those plans for raising money which will draw it out of the pockets of others and most spare his own pocket. This is where the minimum Christian's self-denial comes in—he restrains himself that others may have opportunity to do more.

"Another characteristic of the minimum Christian is that he is not clear on a number of points. *** He cannot see any particular harm in this, or that, or the other popular amusement. There is nothing in the Bible against any of them. He does not see but that a man can be a Christian and dance, or go to the theatre, or play euchre, or even poker and rake in an occasional jack pot, or visit a race course where the training and development of that noble animal, the horse, are exhibited. He knows several most excellent persons who habitually indulge in these things. Why should not he? Is he any better than they? Well, no. In this at least we fully agree with him. He is, indeed, no better than they are. He stands so close to the dividing line between the people of God and the people of the world that it is hard to say on which side of it he is actually to be found.

"This is all a most perilous business. In trying to get to heaven with a very little religion, it is possible to miss it altogether. Without gaining the whole world, you may lose your own soul. The minimum Christian dishonors God more than even the sinner does, for he knows so much the better. He is a hindrance to the progress of the Gospel, a drag on the wheels of Christian progress. This is no time for such Christians in the church. The age is calling for men of a more stalwart and worthy stamp."—*Christian Advocate*.



WHO SHALL LEAD?

Leadership in the church belongs of divine right to its ministry. The kingdom of God is in the heart, and is therefore invisible, but the church as an organized body is visible, and must be officered and led, through all its camps, by men whom the Holy Ghost has called and qualified. Such an arrangement is not an accident, nor is it the result of human foresight. When Jesus Christ began to trace the faint outlines of his visible church, he committed the leadership, alike in teaching and government, to apostles whom he had chosen. By these it was transmitted, not to successors in the apostolic office, for there were no successors in that sense, but to ministers called of God and ordained to their office and who had proved their fitness for the work. Peter exhorts the elders to "feed," or tend "the flock of Christ," and to take "the oversight thereof," and

Paul is equally emphatic when he exhorts the elders at Ephesus: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." On every minister there is laid a weighty responsibility, and where there is responsibility there must be authority commensurate with that responsibility.

The minister who is not qualified to lead in every good word and work has sadly mistaken his calling. He may be fit for some other kind of service, but not to "oversee" the flock of Christ. How essential, for example, is ministerial leadership in the great missionary enterprise, and how humiliating it would be if, among the ranks and the membership, there should be found men or women who outdid their pastor in missionary zeal, in knowledge of the facts, in skill to plan large movements, and in ability to lead and direct the missionary activities of the church. And yet there are ministers not a few who in this respect practically abdicate their office, and instead of being leaders suffer themselves to be led. It is more than probable that this arises from underestimating the importance of the missionary enterprise. It is treated practically as a side issue instead of the main question, which it really is. When urged to instruct the people, frequently and systematically, on the lines of missionary duty and privilege, and to give prominence to the subject in the pulpit and the prayer meeting, the reply has often been heard, "I would be glad to do so, but really I haven't the time." But this is to give missions a very subordinate place and to overlook one of the most important duties of the ministerial office.

If the minister is to be the leader of his people in the missionary crusade, he must equip himself thoroughly for the task. The first requisite is to be imbued with the missionary spirit, which is the spirit of Christ. This has been characteristic of all the great missionary leaders from Paul downward to the present day, but is never found except in those who walk in daily fellowship with God. It would be a great help to many a minister if he would set himself to a careful review of the Scriptures from the missionary point of view; that is to say, to ascertain just what the Scriptures teach concerning the purpose of God in human redemption, and the means and methods whereby that purpose is to reach its final consummation. That man would be indeed cold of heart who could pursue such a course of investigation for even a few months, and not have his heart fired with the thought that he lives in a redeemed world, and that Christian duty and responsibility centre in the command to preach the Gospel of this redemption to the whole creation. Subsidiary to the prayerful study of the Scriptures will be the study of missionary literature, which is now so rich and abundant that the minister need never be at a loss for material to instruct and interest his people. In view of the great missionary revival of the present day no minister can afford to lag behind. He must be a leader or he will soon be nothing.—*The Missionary Outlook*.



Virtue is the beauty and vice the deformity of the soul.—*Socrates*.

PREACHING THE WORD.

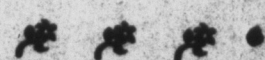
It is the word of God that effects good results in a religious assembly. Not the voice of the preacher nor his manner, nor his eloquence, nor his skill in argumentation, but the word of the Lord makes men feel like living a better life. A discourse made up of history and poetry, philosophy and science, adorned by elegant quotations from classic authors, may be a remarkable address, but it is not a Gospel sermon. It may do good, but it cannot be the power of God unto salvation. When a minister announces a text of Scripture at the beginning of his discourse for the sake of form or appearance, and then proceeds to address the people on secular subjects, never again referring to his text and making no further use of the Bible, he does not preach the word.

It is the word of God that awakens the sinner and shows him the way of salvation. It is the word of God that converts the soul of the penitent, edifies and sanctifies the believer, and builds up the church. It is like the rain which cometh down from heaven and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and causeth it to bring forth seed for the sower and bread for the eater. So is the word of God. It shall not return unto Him void, but accomplish that which He pleaseth, and prosper in the thing whereto He hath sent it. It is like a sword with two edges. It shall slay the man of sin and win victory for righteousness. This is the secret of religious revivals, of moral reform and national elevation and prosperity.



KINDNESS.

"The greatest thing," says some one, "a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of his other children." I wonder why it is that we are not all kinder than we are. How much the world needs it! How easily it is done! How instantaneously it acts! How superabundantly it pays itself back! How infallibly it is remembered! For there is no debtor in the world so honorable, so superbly honorable, as love. "Love never faileth."—*Henry Drummond*.



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