

FILL ME WITH THY LIFE.

Unto Thy feet, O Saviour divine,
I come with my troubled life!
I am so weak, so weary with all
The constant tumult and strife.

Teach me to smile when the way is
rough,

And sing when the day grows sad.
Into my heart Thy sunshine put
And make Thy tired one glad.

Fill me so full of Thy own pure life
That each day may be lived for
Thee;

That neither the strife nor the woes
of life

Can darken the days for me.

—Gerrit Smith.



Benefits of Christian Fellowship.

The weak are supported and the strong find opportunity to be helpful. "Support the weak," says the apostle. "Ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." "Bear ye one another's burdens." "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness." In true Christian fellowship the weak and strong meet together on common level. They go hand in hand on the journey of life. In a Methodist class meeting in Washington many years ago John McLean, of the Supreme Court of the United States, sat side by side with a slater. On Saturday Justice McLean sat on the bench of the highest court in the nation, hearing arguments and pronouncing decisions on questions of national importance and world-wide interest, while the slater sat on the roof of a house laying slate. On the next day both met together on a common level. Justice McLean related his experience of the grace of God in the heart, and the slater told his experience in his simple language. It is not easy to say whether the slater or the justice was benefited most by the experience of the other. But it could not be otherwise than that a man of few advantages should be greatly encouraged and assisted by the experience of a brother whose mind was well stored with truth and capable of wrestling with such grave problems. To see two men coming together from extreme positions in life and joining hands in the common struggle against sin is beautiful. Here the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the weak and the strong meet together and mutually support and comfort one another.

The afflicted find comfort in Christian fellowship. "Comfort one another," is the exhortation of the apostle. Afflicted persons are oppressed by a sense of loneliness. Surrounded as they are by a multitude, they feel that no one can understand them, no one can enter into sympathy. Human nature turns away from tears and sorrow. Those who seemed to be friends in prosperity forget the sufferer. It is not always intentional, but unconsciously the busy world passes by on the other side. But where there are Christian hearts there are good Samaritans. There is sympathy. Mr. Greatheart was always on the lookout for opportunities to help unfortunate pilgrims, and he found many opportunities. When a company of disciples

of Christ gather about an afflicted soul with genuine sympathy they drive away the gloom and fill the air with sweet odors of consolation.

"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear."

There never was a time when Christian fellowship was so much needed as at the present. We fear no persecution, it is true. But the world bears down upon us with terrific force. The excitement of modern life is intense. The demands of business, the pressure of social engagements, the burdens of study, the struggle to keep up with the times intellectually, socially, and financially, the daily newspaper and the weekly entertainment rob men and women of necessary sleep and rest. We are living in a whirlwind of excitement.

"In action's dizzying eddy whirled," the temptation to abandon the social element of religion and confine our religious efforts to financial operations and stately Sabbath services is very strong.

But this will never do. It is high time to cancel some of our pressing engagements with the world and devote a few minutes every week to the cultivation of the spiritual life. The spiritual life is first. In social meetings where only a few persons meet, this spiritual life may be cultivated as it cannot be in the great congregation.

"Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints
How sweet to the soul is communion with saints!
To find at the banquet of Mercy there's room,
And feel in the presence of Jesus at home."

Will Jesus meet with His disciples in a little company? "Where two or three are met together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them." There is profit in the study of art and science and music. There is profit in friendship. But above all we place Christian fellowship. The place where those who love God and are on their way to heaven assemble to sing and pray and tell what the Lord has done for their souls, and Jesus is in the midst is quite on the verge of heaven.

"And if our fellowship below
In Jesus be so sweet,
What heights of rapture shall we know
When round His throne we meet?"
—Chris. Advocate.



AS TO OWNERSHIP.

Nothing is more clearly and emphatically taught in the New Testament than that the Christian belongs to Jesus Christ. It is not a mere figure of speech, a glow of rhetoric, a poetic phrase. It is literal and exact fact. No slave so completely belongs to his master as the believer, redeemed by Christ, belongs to his Redeemer. The slave may be compelled to render outward service to his owner; but his heart is under no such compulsion. The Christian owes everything he is and everything he has—body, soul, spirit, life, love, time, talents, property, influence—everything to Christ. "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price;" and the price was the blood of Christ.

Herein is the responsibility of life. Christ turned again and again to the conception of life as a stewardship. He spoke of it in striking parables and in earnest didactic appeal and command. It underlies the great commission. It was his conception of his own life. He came to earth to do his Father's will and not his own, except that his Father's will was his own will. From the first, and to the end, he must be "about his Father's business." The apostles constantly urge upon us the same thought. We dare not think of our wealth or abilities or social power otherwise than as trusts from God, which we are to administer for him, that we may joyously render our account to him, and tell how much we have gained by trading. Paul pointedly asks: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" That is what the Christian must say every day: "I am in business for God, with the talent which he has invested in me and in my possessions of every sort. What can I do for him today as his trusted agent and honored servant?"

For herein also is the joy of life, and its strength. "Ye were bought with a price; become not the bond-servants of men." This is the only true freedom, the consciousness that through the purchase of Christ's blood we are freed from sin and the world, and belong only and wholly to God. We need only to consult him and his wishes and his plans for our living. As Horace Bushnell expresses it: "Every man's life is a plan of God." To find that plan and to execute it, to make the most of ourselves for God, and to do the best possible with that which he has entrusted to us, that is what it is to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are his.—*The Examiner*.



DON'T PREACH: JUST TALK.

It was a rainy Sabbath, and but few were present in the little country church. As the preacher came in, some of the sisters gathered about him and said, "Don't preach to us today, brother; just talk to us."

How many long-suffering congregations, with systems rasped under the loud, shrill, high-pitched tones of the preachers, if they could only find a voice during the sermon, would cry out to the pulpit: "Don't preach to us any longer; just talk to us!"

Hooker, in his "Ecclesiastical Polity," tells of the complaint of the people about the preaching in his day: "Some take but one word for their text, and afterwards run into the mountains so that we cannot follow them, not knowing how they went up or how they will come down again." So some preachers no sooner name their text than they mount up into a high swelling tone, as far removed from the ordinary way in which a man talks as the east is from the west; and, having once mounted, they never come down again until the end of the sermon.

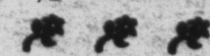
Etymologically, the sermon, or homily, is a *talk*, and not a speech; a conversation, and not an oration. The best rule, then, for the ordinary preacher is, to make the conversational style the basis of his delivery. Not that he is never to rise from this, but let this be the point from which

he starts out as his fervor leads him, and to which he returns after a short excursion. The following advantages will result; the preacher will not be so much in danger of wearying himself. One may talk for hours in conversation without fatigue. It is the unnatural, declamatory tone that makes the throat ache. Again, he will not be so much in danger of wearying the people. One may listen to a conversation for hours without feeling tired, but one cannot listen to a person declaring in a uniform pitch for half an hour without fairly aching. In conversation one varies his tone to suit the thought, while one who declaims is in danger of keeping one pitch for all kinds of thought. To be sure there are some in every congregation who think the preacher tame who only talks. "How do you like your new preacher?" said one neighbor to another. "Oh, he is improving wonderfully; he preaches louder and louder!" But those who have this test—in any congregation—are comparatively few.

A preacher who talks to people will be less liable to fall into affectation and cant. Said the colored brother, "De new preacher is mo' larnt dan Mistar Boles; but bless you, sah! he aint got *de doleful sound* like Mr. Boles had. No indeed!"

But if a man assumes a preaching and doleful tone the moment he enters the pulpit, he cannot but be guilty of affectation; his tones cannot be a true index to his feelings. There are some good souls, indeed, upon whom the doleful tone seems to act as a kind of charm. They will close their eyes and float to heaven under the influence of the preacher's tone, without any regard to what he is saying. But it is safe to say that while one in a congregation, under a preaching tone will close his eyes and soar to heaven, ten will close their eyes and sink to sleep.

If one speaks in the tone of conversation, he will use the short, simple words of conversation. Nothing is more manifest than that the pulpit should use, not the artificial words of books, but the simple, common words of life. Great, swelling tones necessarily draw after them "great, swelling words." All successful evangelists are colloquial and conversational in their preaching.—*Unknown*.



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