

STORY OF A HYMN.

Gal. 6:14. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross."

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

"When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me;
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

"When the sun of bliss is beaming
Light and love upon my way,
From the cross the radiance streaming
Adds more luster to the day.

"Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there, that knows no measure,
Joys that through all time abide."

The author of this hymn was Sir John Bowring. Of the origin of this hymn Rev. Francis E. Wilbur gives the following account: "The early Portuguese colonists built at Macoa, on the crest of a hill on the South China coast, a massive cathedral with a splendid approach of stone steps. But a violent typhoon nearly wrecked the building, only the front wall remaining intact. On the summit of this facade stands a great bronze cross, defying storm and weather. When Sir John Bowring, then governor of Hongkong, visited Macao in 1825, he was much impressed by that uplifted cross. The sight inspired the famous hymn, "In the cross of Christ I Glory, Towering O'er the Wrecks of Time." Since that day, thousands of visitors have looked upon the ruin, and cross that glorifies the ruin; some with indifference, some with curiosity, some with reverence, but few have known that the splendid hymn sung by the world-circling Church of God for nearly ninety years, was born in the mind of the British Governor of Hongkong, by the sight of the same cross that stands today "towering o'er the wrecks of time." As you sing this hymn, think of a great ruined wall of a misty hill-top; birds nesting on its hideous gargoyles, the sea and the mountains and the sky of China seen through its gaping doors and windows; and over all the Cross, changing desolation to majesty.—Selected.

WHAT THE SINNER IS FULL OF.

1. Mouth full of bitterness, Rom. 3:14.
2. Hand full of bribes. Ps. 26:9-10.
3. Soul full of troubles, Ps. 88:3.
4. Heart full of evil. Eccl. 9:3.
5. Body full of darkness, Luke 11:34.
6. Inner life full of ravaging, Luke 11:39.
7. House full of deceits, Jer. 5:27.

—Keith L. Brooks.

PRAYING MEN—THE GREAT NEED.

The world is coming into the Church at many points and in many ways. It oozes in; it pours in; it comes in with brazen front or soft, insinuating disguise; it comes in at the top and comes in at the bottom; and percolates through many a hidden way.

For praying men and holy men we are looking—men whose presence in the Church will make it like a censer of holiest incense flaming up to God. With God the man counts for everything. Rites, forms, organizations are of small moment; unless they are backed by the holiness of the man they are offensive in His sight. "Incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Why does God speak so strongly against His own ordinances? Personal purity had failed. The impure man tainted all the sacred institutions of God and defiled them. God regards the man in so important a way as to put a kind of discount on all else. Men have built Him glorious temples and have striven and exhausted themselves to please God by all manner of gifts; but in lofty strains He has rebuked these proud worshippers and rejected their princely gifts.

"Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool; where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things hath been, saith the Lord. He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." Turning away in disgust from these costly and profane offerings, He declares: "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word."

This truth that God regards the personal purity of the man is fundamental. This truth suffers when ordinances are made much of and forms of worship multiply. The man and his spiritual character depreciate as Church ceremonies increase. The simplicity of worship is lost in religious aesthetics, or in the gaudiness of religious forms.

This truth that the personal purity of the individual is the only thing God cares for is lost sight of when the Church begins to estimate men for what they have. When the Church eyes a man's money, social standing, his belongings in any way, then spiritual values are at a fearful discount, and the tear of penitence, the heaviness of guilt are never seen at her portals. Worldly bribes have opened and stained its pearly gates by the entrance of the impure.

This truth that God is looking after personal purity is swallowed up when the Church has a greed for numbers. "Not numbers, but personal purity is our aim," said the fathers of Methodism. The parading of Church statistics is mightily against the grain of spiritual religion. Eyeing numbers greatly hinders the looking after personal purity. The increase of quantity is generally at a loss of quality. Bulk abates preciousness.

The age of Church organization and Church machinery is not an age noted for elevated and strong personal piety. Machinery looks for engineers and organizations for generals, and not for saints, to run them. The simplest organizations may aid purity as well as strength; but beyond that narrow limit organization swallows up the individual, and is

careless of personal purity; push, activity, enthusiasm, zeal for an organization, come in as the vicious substitutes for spiritual character. Holiness and all the spiritual graces of hardy culture and slow growth are discarded as too slow and too costly for the progress and rush of the age. By dint of machinery, new organizations, and spiritual weakness, results are vainly expected to be secured which can only be secured by faith, prayer and waiting on God.

The man and his spiritual character is what God is looking after. If men, holy men, can be turned out by the easy processes of church machinery readier and better than by the old-time processes, we would gladly invest in every new and improved patent; but we do not believe it can be done. We adhere to the old way, the way the holy prophets went—the highway of holiness.

Praying men are God's chosen leaders. The distinction between the leaders that God brings to the front to lead and bless His people, and those leaders who owe their position of leadership to a worldly, unsanctified selection, is this: God's men are pre-eminently men of prayer. This distinguishes them as the simple, Divine attestation of their call, the seal of their separation by God. Whatever of other graces or gifts they may have the gifts and grace of prayer towers above them all, in whatever else they may share or differ, in the gift of prayer they are one. * * * * *

Praying men are the safety of the Church from materialism that is affecting all its plans and polity, and which is hardening its life-blood. The insinuation circulates as a secret, deadly poison that the Church is not so dependent on purely spiritual forces as it used to be—that changed times and changed conditions have brought it out of its spiritual straits and dependencies and put it where other forces can bear it to its climax. A fatal snare of this kind has allured the church into worldly embraces, dazzled her leaders, weakened her foundations, and shorn her of much of her beauty and strength. Praying men are the saviours of the Church from this material tendency. They pour into it the original spiritual forces, lift it off the sandbars of materialism, and press it out into the ocean depths of spiritual power. Praying men keep God in the Church in full force, keep His hand on the helm, and train the Church in its lessons of strength and trust.—Africa's Silent Messenger.

OUR WORK FOR GOD.

Rev. T. W. Murray.

Text: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."—John 6:29.

This is a reply to a question that has perplexed the ages, to wit: "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" The sum total of Christianity lies potentially in that brief sentence uttered by Jesus.

I. What Is Implied in Believing on Him?

1. Negative. (a) Not merely accepting the historical facts concerning him. "The devils believe and tremble." (b) Not merely an intellectual acceptance of truth as preached or read in the Word.