

GLADSTONE ON CHRISTIANITY

The gospel is the great reforming agency of the world. It found human slavery entrenched in the most highly civilized nations then existing. It has overthrown it wherever it has gone. It found physical power supreme; it has steadily asserted the supremacy of the intellectual and moral. It found woman degraded; it has given her an equality of rights with man.

The greatest of modern statesmen, Mr. Gladstone, is reported as saying:

"Talk about questions of the day; there is but one question, and that is the gospel. It can and will correct everything needing correction. All men at the head of great movements are Christian men. During the many years I was in the Cabinet I was brought into association with sixty master minds, and all but five of them were Christians. My only hope for the world is in bringing the human mind in contact with divine revelation.

Let those who think it smart to sneer at Christianity ponder these words of one of the best-read men of the day. In promoting the gospel in its purity we are working in behalf of the dearest interests of humanity.

Save men from sin and you save them from the saloon, from gambling and from everything that degrades the human character.—Bishop B. T. Roberts, in the Free Methodist about 1888.

MYSTERY

No one understands how it is that a few grains of wheat scattered over the field will sprout under right conditions of moisture and warmth, and grow and multiply, bringing forth thirty, sixty or a hundredfold. But we know the fact. We have observed it a hundred times. No one knows how it is that the bread, made from this wheat taken into the human body, is reduced to nourishing fluid, which is conveyed to every part of the physical man, upbuilding everywhere, giving restoration and strength—even repairing damage which has been suffered by accident or disease. But we feel the fact within us.

No one knows how it is that the death of Christ, which occurred in a far land and in a far time, can possibly avail to correct the disorder of the human soul and restore the moral being to the moral image of God, so that the mind is in him "which was also in Christ Jesus." And no one knows how we feed by faith on the Son of God and drink His blood. But we have with us the blessed fact that we are sustained in Christian life as we partake of the bread and wine, as we pray, as we sing His praises, as we look in holy submission to the Lord of life.

Thank God that our receiving may be beyond our understanding!—Free Methodist.

SIN REVEALED

A man tried to steal copper by cutting down wire, but one day while thus engaged at the top of a high pole he came in touch with a "live" wire and was instantly killed. There he hung gripped by the mighty current with his guilty intentions revealed to God and man.

There is a "live" wire in every sin and many are slain thereby, their guilt an awful record to take into the presence of their God.—Sunlight for the Young.

FIRST OF ALL, FOR THE HEART

The special series of meetings which promises healing for the body, promises more or less complete information as to the time and manner of the second coming of Christ, or will deal with up-to-date social questions will receive the attention of superficial people. Not all the same people, of course, for tastes differ. But by playing these specialties a hearing is obtained.

And no right-thinking person can object to the healing of the body—such healings, divinely wrought, do occur in these days. This in spite of the fraud, self-deception and "mind healing" which accompany many of the healing movements and are all too prominent wherever the healing emphasis is overdone.

And every preacher should learn to preach sanely and wisely on the second coming of Christ, staying close by the plain and holy-life-provoking things of the Word. Such discussions will tend to check the feverish, spectacular, sensational, amateurish and harmful setting forth of this very vital theme.

And Christianity has much to do with the social order. The modernists, having given up personal salvation and having surrendered the doctrine of future punishment and personal religion, have little to preach but the exterior amelioration of man's present state. Such preaching, sanely done as an accompaniment of the great gospel, would be an omen and occasion of good. Wherever it—the social gospel—is given as a substitute for the "kingdom within," preaching has become an insipid and flabby failure. But the true man of God must do all he can to improve man's present outer state while he makes it ever plain that man's supreme need is inner.

In all the past, now, and in all the future it has been, is and ever will be true that the best imaginable improvements in man's condition—better health, better schools, better roads, better dentists, better play-grounds, better wages, better automobiles, better governments—still leave man a sinner. This fact of his sin is his worst trouble now and his damning prospect for eternity.

On the other hand, under worse conditions than nine-tenths of us have ever known the religion of the heart has brought inner happiness, blessed peace, usually improvement in all outer things, and certainly eternal life.

Blessed is the pastor, evangelist or any other preacher who has caught a vision of the biggest thing in the gospel, and whatever incidentals he includes makes the inner religion, the center of all his life, his prayers, plans and efforts.—Free Methodist.

KEEPING HER TROUBLES TOGETHER

A hard-working woman of ready help and abundant sympathy for the troubled, lately gave her recipe for cheerfulness.

"Why, it's no credit to me. It's only that I've got in the habit of having all my uncomfortable feelings at one time. Mornings, after my husband has started off, I do the breakfast dishes; and if there's anything worrying me I just attend to it then. If I don't get it thought out then it has to go over till the next day. You select a few minutes like that, in the early morning when you are fresh and do up your worries for the day, and you'll find it's the easiest thing in the world to keep cheerful the rest of the time and be ready to attend to other folk's troubles."

—Selected.

BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD

Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

Every day should be commenced with God and upon the knees. He begins the day unwisely who leaves his chamber without a secret conference with his Heavenly Friend. The true Christian goes to his closet both for his panoply and his "rations" for the day's march and its inevitable conflicts. As the Oriental traveler sets out for the sultry journey by loading up his camel under the palm tree's shade, and by filling his flagons from the cool fountain that sparkles at its roots, so does God's wayfarer draw his fresh supplies from the unexhausted spring.

Morning is the golden time for devotion. The mercies of the night provoke to thankfulness. The buoyant heart that is in love with God makes its earliest flight, like the lark, toward the gates of heaven. Gratitude, faith, dependent trust, all prompt to early interviews with Him who, never slumbering Himself, waits on His throne for our morning orisons.

We all remember Bunyan's beautiful description of his pilgrim's lodging over night in the "Chamber of Peace", which looked toward the sunrising, and at daybreak he "awoke and sang." If stony Egyptian "Memmon" made music when the first rays kindled on his flinty brow, a devout heart should not be mute when God causes the outgoings of His mornings to rejoice. No pressure of business or household duties should crowd out prayer.—Selected.

"THEY DIE WELL"

One of the shortest and most convincing reports on early Methodism, in which sincere critics were constrained to share was "They die well." It is God's good will that the end of a holy life is peace and assurance of a heavenly home. It is God who gives life, and who also calls life, to its final account in death.

The saints die well; this is the story that history has to tell of their departure. Jesus set for all time the great example of suffering through the experiences of His departure with courage and resignation, sealing the beautiful record of a beautiful life with the commitment of His soul to God in the words, "Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit." The martyrs learned from their Lord how to die in faith and victory, even in the midst of indescribable sufferings when their lives were taken away by the monsters of evil of their day. Saint Stephen's victory in death was so great that his faith in God triumphed in the midst of the stones that were sent crashing upon him. The man who faced the Jewish council calmly, with his face serene like the face of an angel, died in the full confidence of the power of God and the final victory of the resurrection.

Hear the dying Wesley: "The best of all is, God is with us." "How beautiful it is to be with God," said Frances E. Willard at the journey's end. Longfellow wrote: "Death is the chilliness which precedes the dawn, we shudder for a moment, then awake in the broad sunshine of another life."

Follow daily where duty leads that at life's end thy work be accomplished and thy conscience clear.

The years write their records on human hearts as they do on trees, in inner circles of growth which no eye can see.