

Christian



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BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.—ST. PAUL.

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CARELESS WORDS.

BY MRS. L. F. MORGAN.

Beware, beware of careless words,
They have a fearful power;
And jar upon the spirit's cords,
Through many a weary hour.

Though not designed to give us pain,
Though but at random spoken,
Remembrance brings them back again,
The past's most bitter token.

They haunt us through the toilsome day,
And through the lonely night;
And rise to cloud the spirit's ray,
When all beside is bright.

Thought from the mind, and with the breath
Which gave them, they have flown,
Yet wormwood, gall, and even death,
May dwell in every tone.

And burning tears can well attest,
A sentence lightly framed,
May linger, cankering in the breast
At which it first was aimed.

O, could my prayer indeed be heard,
Might I the past live o'er,
I'd guard against a careless word,
E'en though I spoke no more.

Shall Christians Dance?

Why not Christians, if anybody? We would not advise a sinner to dance. A sinner is an enemy to God; and shall he dance? A sinner must repent, or perish; and shall he dance? A sinner is on the way to hell, and may be there in an hour: shall he dance? There is something supremely shocking in the idea of a dancing sinner. What fearful declarations are those of Job! 'They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.' Job, 21: 11, 13.

But a Christian is a redeemed sinner. 'He is bought with a price.' 'He is washed, he is sanctified, he is justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' 'He is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.' The Christian is the image of Christ, and is to show to the world that he has been with Jesus, and has learned of him. The Christian is 'crucified to the world,' and is, in a little while, to be in heaven, beholding and enjoying, and forever to enjoy the glory of God. Let him sing for joy, and dance too before the Lord, as David did, if such an exercise be suited to his present condition, and adapted to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men. For this is the apostolic exhortation: 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'

Shall Christians dance? Then they must have a time to dance. At what point of time shall it be? Just before, or just after, they sit down at the table of the Lord? Is it the kind of preparation which fits them for that scene which Calvary beheld? Will the dance help them to 'examine themselves?' Will it enable them to deny themselves as they should, after they have been anew to see Christ crucified? Can they, at the dance, think intently upon the scenes in the garden; in the palace of the high priest; in the hall of Pilate; on the way to Calvary; at the nailing of the victim; and at the innocent sufferer's cry of agony, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' This cry under Almighty wrath, crushing him to death for our

sins, makes the ears of Christians tingle. How can they forget it, so as to find a time to dance? Shall Christians dance? Then they must have leisure to dance. 'Wot ye not,' said Jesus, 'that I must be about my Father's business?' He began early, and continued to the end to be about his Father's business; so that in the end he could say to his Father, 'I have glorified thee upon the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' Then he was ready to depart, and with his last breath cried, 'It is finished.' Duty and suffering were completed.—Are Christians, the followers of such a Saviour, at leisure, so that their work is done long before their sun is set? Do they understand God's word so well, that they need study it no more? Are all their duties to God in the closet, in the family, and in his house, 'diligently and faithfully performed'? Do they perform all that is needful for the young, for the aged, for the church, for the world, and then find leisure to unite with gay companions in moving to the sound of the viol, amid the mazes of pleasurable dissipation? Is the soul duly cared for? And from the dance can they return home to commune with God? to pray for all saints and the ministers of Christ, with all prayer, and without ceasing! Can they 'visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep themselves unspotted from the world?'

Shall Christians dance? Then they must have money to maintain the dance. They are God's stewards, and he claims all they have, 'as well as all they are. The gold—'it is mine.'—The silver—'it is mine.' Does he require Christians, as his stewards, to take his silver and his gold, and use them to decorate their persons; to furnish room, and equipage, and music, and refreshments for the dance? His poor must have food, and raiment, and shelter, out of his silver and gold. The institutions of religion must be sustained; the word of God must be put into every family of man; the ministry must be furnished for every creature: and all this must come out of his treasures. And when millions are needed more than are obtained—when the cry is wafted to Christian ears on every breeze, 'Come over and help us'—where is the money to be found to maintain the dance?

Shall Christians dance? Then they must be imitated by others. Allowing that Christians have time, leisure, and money for the dance, and that it may be proper for them to dance, still a question remains—Is it expedient? If it be lawful in the sight of God, does it tend to edification? Is it attended with no danger to others? Will the gay and the thoughtless be likely to derive benefit from such examples of Christians? Did the Apostle Paul say, 'If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend? Should not we also look to the welfare of others? If it be not perilous to ourselves, yet if it be to others, charity requires us to abstain. If we would not advise sinners to dance, we certainly should not set the example. If but one member of a church be found in the ballroom, who will not know it? Will not every eye be fixed on that individual? Will not some be ready to say in heart, 'Did not I see thee at the Lord's table?' Will it not be reported the next day? And will not the echo fly among the circles of the lovers of pleasure? Will not the thoughtless urge this example, as a plea for the indulgence which conscience forbids? And will not many be emboldened, not only near by, but far off, to do what no sinner should venture to do, as it must be at the peril of his soul? And will not those gay companions of yours despise you for your vain indulgence? E. Y.

Have I a Share in the Revival?

This question will meet the eye of many a professing Christian, who, in this time of refreshing to so many churches, finds himself in the midst of the most striking manifestations of God's power and grace. To him the question is not inapt or unimportant,—have I a share in the revival? We may intimate a few signs which encourage an affirmative reply. The Christian who shares in a revival experiences a recurrence of the blessings which marked his earliest sense of justification and acceptance. Then he had the consciousness of being a great sinner, and found peace in accepting Christ as a great and sufficient Saviour. His heart was subdued, and he entered the kingdom of heaven as a little child. Christ was supremely lovely, and the contemplation of his perfections and grace, drew his soul to heaven.—If now he shares in the revival he is brought back to the same blessed experiences. He has the same views of his own sins, and the same views of the exceeding riches of the grace of Christ, and his heart goes forth to the Redeemer as tenderly and as strongly. Nothing is a revival of religion in the soul which has not these essential marks.

2. The Christian who shares in a revival experiences anew the strongest and most earnest desires for the salvation of sinners. He certainly experienced such desires when he was converted. He then trembled in view of the peril of sinners, and longed to lead them to the Saviour who had blessed his own soul. He could weep for them—he could exhort them—he could point out to them the true path and beg them to walk in it. He could pray without ceasing for them, bearing before the throne of grace a burdened, yearning heart. If he shares in the revival, these will be again his experiences. If the perils of the impenitent awaken no solicitude in his breast,—if he has not a burdened heart seeking relief in exhortations and prayers, his heart is not touched. The manifestations of divine grace have not revived him. His soul is dry though encompassed with God's fertilizing dew.

3. If he shares in the revival, then he readily and cheerfully co-operates with his pastor and his brethren in labors to promote the work of God. He is not ambitious of station—not censorious—not dictatorial;—he seeks any place, any labor, which may best unite and call forth the energies of God's people, and do most for the cause of salvation. In the early days of his Christian experience he loved to work with his pastor and brethren for Christ and the souls of men, and if he shares in the revival the same duties will again be pleasures, so dear and precious that he cannot withhold himself from them.

4. The Christian who shares in the revival will be circumspect and consistent in his daily life. Time was when he would not for the world bring a wound on the cause of religion by any irregularity of temper or conduct;—if he is the subject of God's reviving grace, he is as vigilant and consistent now. That is not religion which does not correct the daily life.

5. The Christian who shares in the revival has his heart and his eye on the better country. When he was converted he became a pilgrim,—he started from the low grounds of his mortal life for the celestial city. Heaven was his home. So with the revived Christian. He has experienced new impulses, and seeks heaven with a keener relish. It is his Father's house,—the home of his brethren.—There he shall meet his Saviour with all heaven's unfallen and all earth's redeemed. Conscious of his present weakness and struggles, he anticipates with gladness the inheritance of the saints and exclaims, 'O glorious hour! O blest abode! I shall be near and like my God, And flesh and sin no more control The sacred pleasures of soul!'

These are signs of sharing in revival. These ought to be the present experiences of every Christian. Oh that they were the present experiences of

all the members of the Church of Christ! Then would his kingdom come speedily, and his will be done in earth as it is done in heaven!

But these lines may fall under the eye of some impenitent person, to whose soul the question may come home,—'have I a share in the revival?' All around you are the marks of God's presence and grace. Your friends are praying for your salvation,—your associates are giving themselves to Christ and taking the path which leads to heaven. God's Spirit, it may be, is touching your soul, and wooing you by its gentle, heavenly influences. Will you not then share in the revival, by giving yourself a penitent, trembling sinner into the arms of Christ?—How pitiable your case should this season of refreshing pass away and your soul remain unblessed!—'The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved!'

Bad Signs.

1. It is a bad sign for a church to have many pastors.
2. It is a bad sign for pastors to leave always in controversy with the deacons.
3. It is a bad sign when professors of religion sleep away the hours in the sanctuary; and in very bad taste when they open their mouth, and snore—'But, dear brother, it is an infirmity—I cannot help it.' Fudge.
4. It is a bad sign when a member of the church is frequently absent from his place in the sanctuary; when he is seldom or never at the meetings of the church; when he seldom or never gives anything for the promotion of the cause of Christ. But he prays and talks about blessed seasons in by-gone days; he talks about his love to his dear Saviour. Well, what of it? Yes, what of it?
5. It is a bad sign when members of the church suppose they can get more good in staying at home on the Sabbath than in going to meeting, for it shows, either, that they do not know how to appreciate the gospel, or, what is worse, have not piety enough in their hearts to relish the gospel when they hear it.

Prayerless Parents.

Prayerless parents! Your irreligion may tend to your children's damnation. That time when God visited your family with a heavy stroke, they were thoughtful for a season, but there was no church in your house to give a heavenly direction to that thoughtfulness, and it soon died away. That evening, when they came home from the Sabbath school, so serious, if you had been a pious father or mother, you would have taken your boy aside, and spoken tenderly to him, and asked what his teacher had been telling him, and you would have prayed with him, and tried to deepen the impression. But your children came in from the church, or school, and found no church in their father's house. Their hearts were softened, but your worldliness soon hardened them. The seed of the kingdom was just springing in their souls, and by this time might have been a rich harvest of salvation; but in the atmosphere of your ungodly house, the tender blade withered instantly. Your idle talk, your frivolity, your Sunday visitors, your prayerless evenings, ruined all. Your children were coming to Christ, and you suffered them not. And you will not need to hinder them long. The carnal mind is enmity against God; but no enmity so deep as theirs who were almost reconciled and then drew back. You drove your children back.—You hardened them. They may never more be moved. They may grow up as prayerless and ungodly as yourself. If God should change yourself, they may soon be too hard for your own tears and entreaties. If you die as you are,