

## A DAY WITH CHRIST.

It may enable us the better to realize what it is to live with Christ, if we conceive of him as being bodily present with us as he was with the first disciples. Suppose then that Christ is at your side, just as he was daily with Peter or John, are you quite willing to have him observe all your conduct, to know how you are occupied, what you say or do, through all the day? He is not present as an austere censor, but as a personal friend, kind, patient, forbearing; yet He is pure and holy, and is grieved or offended at any departure from the perfect law of rectitude and love.—And now with Christ thus at your side, we will suppose you to act naturally, in all respects as you are accustomed to do, assuming nothing for the occasion. How far are you prepared to submit to the personal inspection of Christ?

He enters your family. He rejoices in the general play of affection, and in the innocent mirth of the fire-side. The little prattler on your knee engages his attention, and receives his caresses. He is a cheerful, affectionate, considerate visitor, entering with interest into every subject relating to your happiness.—But what impression does the general, the usual course of affairs in the family produce upon the mind of such an observer? How much place is given to religion? Is God honoured in your house? Is your family worship so conducted—we speak it reverently—that Christ himself could join it, or could at least be an approving spectator? How much of the conversation of the family is upon topics agreeable to Christ? And to what extent is your conversation upon domestic affairs and secular things characterized by a tone of natural and cheerful piety—the recognition of God's providence, of moral obligation, and of the superior importance of spiritual things?

In the whole economy of the household, in the intercourse of the several members of the family with each other, how much is there of the spirit of kindness, subduing irascibility and fretfulness, and causing the day to glide smoothly and pleasantly onward? How far are your expenses, your style of living, the education of your children, in a word, all your domestic arrangements, regulated so as to meet the approbation of Christ? Endeavour thus to entertain Christ in your family for a day, and you may discover whether you do truly live with Him.

From the family, Christ now accompanies you to your place of business. He observes your deportment in your intercourse with the world. He is with you in the counting-room, He is with you in the shop, He is with you on 'Change; wherever you go Christ is at your side; whatever you say or do Christ is a witness of it. He sees with what temper you bear the disappointments and vexations of the day; He sees upon what principles you conduct your business, and for what end; whether you are in haste to be rich, or whether, while, "not slothful in business," you are still "fervent in spirit serving the Lord." Christ stands by you when you are making a bargain, knows whether you speak the truth, or take advantage of your neighbour. If you act just as you are accustomed to do, how much will Christ see in you to approve, and that will cause Him to rejoice in such a representative; or how much that will cause Him to blush for the honour of his name?

From your family and your place of business. Christ next goes with you into society. Perhaps the company to which you introduce Him is a circle of relatives, or of Christian friends, who have met for social entertainment. Such a company ought to be congenial to his tastes and feelings. Does it prove to be so? Is your deportment, and that of your fellow-Christians in a social party,—are your topics of conversation and methods of amusement, such that Christ will feel quite at home there, and, as a cheerful friend, can participate therein?

But perhaps the company to which you introduce Him is of a different character—a gay worldly party. As He enters the brilliant assembly, is not Christ struck with the incongruity of your going to such a place in quest of enjoyment? And as the entertainment of the evening proceeds, the giddy dance begins, the games are introduced, the wine circulates freely, and the flippant conversation grows more noisy as night wears away, does not He wonder more and more that any disciple of his should take pleasure in such scenes, and court their deleterious excitement?

Possibly Christ is gratified at seeing how that young disciple, whose relations to society

have casually brought her into such a position, maintains her consistency, and demeans herself as a Christian, in the presence of the gay and giddy world. But when you are again invited to such a party, be sure that you ask Christ to go with you, and that you keep Him at your side.

Leaving these scenes, Christ next attends you to your closet. He observes whether you resort thither cheerfully, or by constraint of conscience and of habit; whether you enter it in a hurry, and, after a hurried prayer and a listless mechanical reading of the Scriptures, rush forth again to the world of business or of pleasure, where your heart has mainly been; or whether your closet is a favourite resort, which you delight to seek, and where you love to linger, that you may hold near and intimate converse with Him. Are you willing that Christ should thus enter your closet with you?

He attends you also to the prayer-meeting and to the house of God. He knows what passes in your mind before going,—whether you go cheerfully or of constraint, after a long conflict between duty and inclination.—He knows what preparation you make for these social and public religious services, and in what spirit—for He reads the heart—you engage in them. Would you be willing to perform these duties as you are accustomed to do, with Christ at your side as a close observer?

And in the same manner Christ takes notice of what you do for His cause. He knows whether you visit the poor, converse with the impenitent, seek out the vicious and degraded, and in what spirit you perform such labours. If you are a Sabbath-school teacher, He sits by your side and observes whether you hear your class mechanically, or whether with kindness and patience, you adapt your instructions to them personally, and are intent upon their salvation. Christ is at your side, too, when an appeal is made to you for a charitable object, and He sees how you regard it, or He sees how much you put into the contribution-box when such an appeal is made in public. Are you quite willing that Christ should see and know, as a personal observer, just what you are doing for his cause?

If you will endeavour thus to conceive of Christ as with you in the body, for a single day, you may judge how far you truly live with Him.

## The Silent Influence of Christians.

The Bible calls the good man's life a light, and it is the nature of light to flow out spontaneously in all directions, and fill the world unconsciously with its beams. So the Christian shines, it would say, not so much because he will, as because he is a luminous object.—Not that the active influence of Christians is made of no account in the figure, but only that this symbol of light has its property, in the fact that their unconscious influence is the chief influence, and has the precedence in its power over the world. And yet there are many who will be ready to think that light is a very tame and feeble instrument, because it is noiseless. An earthquake for example, is to them a much more vigorous and effective agency. Hear how it comes thundering through the solid foundations of nature. It rocks a whole continent. The noblest works of man, cities, monuments, and temples, are in a moment, leveled to the ground, or swallowed down the opening gulfs of fire. Little do they think that the light of every morning, the soft, and genial, and silent light, is an agent many times more powerful. But let the light of the morning cease and return no more, let the hour of morning come, and bring with it no dawn: the outcries of a horror stricken world fill the air, and make, as it were the darkness audible. The beasts go wild and frantic at the loss of the sun. The vegetable growths turn pale and die. A chill creeps on and frosty winds begin to howl across the freezing earth. Colder, and yet colder, is the night. The vital blood, at length, of all creatures, stops congealed. Down goes the frost towards the earth's center. The heart of the sea is frozen, nay the earthquakes are themselves frozen in, under their fiery caverns.—the very globe itself, too, and all the fellow planets that have lost their sun, are become mere balls of ice, swinging silent in the darkness. Such is the light, which revisits us in the silence of the morning. It makes no shock or scar. It would not wake an infant in his cradle. And yet it perpetually new-creates the world, rescuing it, each morning, as a prey from night and chaos. So the Christian

is a light, even "the light of the world;" and we must not think that because he shines insensibly or silently, as a mere object, he is therefore powerless. The greatest powers are ever those which lie back of the little stirrings and commotions of nature; and I verily believe that the insensible influences of good men are as much more potent than what I have called their voluntary and active, as the great silent powers of nature are of greater consequence than her little disturbances and tumults.—Dr. Bushnell.

## Charity and Obedience.

A late Congregational paper, the Christian Mirror, after speaking of the extent to which open communion has been practiced among the Baptists of England, commends the fact as a lesson of charity to the Baptists of America. It is very common for our Congregational friends to make remarks of this kind, yet it is a fact that our practice of sacramental communion is not modified in any way by our possessing a high or low degree of charity. The practice of "strict communion" rests on a principle, a definite, intellectual conviction; namely, that the two sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist are strictly connected by Christ's own legislation. The one is placed as antecedent to the other. Neither of them conveys grace to the soul, but they both celebrate graces previously received. While this conviction exists, no increase of piety would alter the practice, because love to Christ will lead us to acts of obedience.

To Protestants who are accustomed to use language like that above alluded to, we would address one question: Suppose your churches were blessed with such a Pentecostal gift of divine influence, as would lead to a great increase of love or charity; would that dispose you to join with pious Catholics in receiving the Eucharist in one kind—that is the bread alone? Certainly it would not, unless it should change your convictions touching that ordinance, and touching Christ's command, "Drink ye all of it." And charity would not change those convictions, unless they now rest on an exclusive bigotry, which is the opposite of charity.

A minister of our acquaintance was once asked, What led you to join the Baptists? He answered: "After my conversion, I was perplexed at first in order to decide what church I ought to join. At last I concluded to take the New Testament, to read it through once more; resolved that if I could not find an organized church in that, I would not join any church at all. I resolved, too, that if I could find a church there, I would go to the ends of the earth to join such a community. Well, I found baptism enjoined in the great commission—I found it enjoined by the Apostles on all converts, I found that believers who received it constituted a visible church, and that they continued in 'fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers.' Finding no other kind of church but this, I naturally sought those who admitted no other principles of church-building." Here was a case of conscience, and certainly an enlarged charity could not dispel these convictions. Charity would lead this man to love those who differ from him sincerely, but charity could not lead him to abandon what he saw to be the truth of God.

There are principles of religion avowed by some around us, which would render it utterly impossible for our Lord to make any outward ordinance binding on his people. Because, however positive might be the injunction, these principles would condemn a strict adherence to it as a violation of charity. They are principles which take from Christ himself the power of legislation, if that legislation touch any thing external. Now we believe that true charity will lead us to love all Christians whom we deem to be in error notwithstanding their errors, will lead us to co-operate with them in doing good, will lead us "as far as we have attained to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing," but at the same time, will lead us to verify the saying, "if a man love me he will keep my words—this is the love of God that ye keep his commandments."—Christian Watchman and Reflector.

## POWER OF PRAYER.

"There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do so much to promote the work of God, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer. By this, even women, children, and servants, may have a public influence. Let persons in other respects be ever so weak, and ever so mean, and under ever so poor advantages to do much for Christ and the souls of men—yet if they have much of the spirit of grace and supplication, in this

way they may have power with him who is infinite in power, and has the government of the whole world. A poor man in his cottage may have a blessed influence all over the world.—God is, if I may so say, at the command of the prayer of faith—and in this respect is, as it were, under the power of his people—"as princes, they have power with God and prevail." Though they may be private persons, their prayers are put up in the name of a Mediator, who is a public person, being the head of the whole Church, and the Lord of the universe. If they have a great sense of the impotence of eternal things, and a concern for the precious souls of men, they need not regret it that they are not preachers—they may go in their earnestness and agonies of soul, and pour out their souls before one who is able to do all things."—President Edwards.

## Pray for One Another.

What is more delightful than the reciprocal offering of prayer to God among Christians—praying one for another? Is not this an exercise most imperiously demanded in the present state of the churches? Brethren, pray one for another.

1. It is a delightful Christian exercise. To enter into communion with God for a brother or a sister in the common faith, to ask Heaven's blessing on their soul, to plead with spiritual longings for their sanctification, usefulness, peace, and sure prospects, and to feel that all this was reciprocated, so that Christian desire for one another meets at the mercy-seat, how delightful the exercise.

2. It helps to keep one another in mind.—The tendency here is to forgetfulness and becoming estranged. But praying one for another will serve to counteract this tendency.—When we pray for an object, we remember that object. When we ask for a blessing on a brother or a sister, we remember that brother or sister. Christian remembrance is a great want in our churches. Indeed, it is no uncommon thing to find, in the bosom of the same church, those who are ignorant of each other. The question is not unfrequently asked, is such, or such a one, a member of this church? More of reciprocal prayer would tend to cure this ignorance.

3. It serves to promote in one another a mutual Christian interest. If we pray for an object, it is fair to conclude we feel some interest in it, and, of course, in the answer to our prayer. No child of God can be in the habit of praying for a brother or sister in the Lord, and not feel an increasing interest in that brother or sister. If any praying one has a doubt of this, let him try it.

4. It fosters religious fellowship. A community of Christians, heartily looking up to God for blessings on one another, will find the cord of their spiritual brotherhood becoming stronger and stronger. In this exercise a spirit unearthly reigns. It is the fruit of a new implantation, and the growth is like the seed planted.

5. Reciprocal prayer tends to unity. Those who truly pray are one. "We are all one in Christ Jesus." Virtually, *vitally*, we are one. When we pray for one another, we say, "Our Father," We all say so. "We have one Father, even God." "Bless spiritually, savingly, thy children." And all we are brethren, children of the common Father, a unity. Let us pray one for another.—New-England Religious Herald.

## THE CHURCH.

It is peculiar to religion that she has a language for every individual; a language that all can understand, the high as well as the humble, the happy as well as the unhappy; and that she ascends or descends, without an effort, into every rank and region of society. And it is one of the admirable features of the constitution of the Christian church, that her ministers are not only scattered over, but form an integral part of the whole of society, living as near to the cottage as the palace; in habitual intercourse with the highest and the lowest: equally the monitors of greatness and the consolers of misery. The tutelary power, spite of the abuses and faults into which it has been led by its very force and extent, has for ages exercised a more vigilant and energetic control over the moral dignity and the dearest interests of man, than any other.

Nobody would be so averse as I should, for the sake of religion herself, to see a revival of the abuses by which she has been abused or corrupted. But I confess that I do not fear this at the present day. The principles of lay supremacy and freedom of thought have defi-