

## THE SUMMER PRAYER MEETING AND LECTURE.

*Go to it regularly!* Now is the time when many will neglect it, and be absent; see to it that you are not one of them; if the weather is warm, let your zeal be like it. If self-indulgence pleads for rest at home, bring up the counter-plea of your covenant engagements, and your own spirituality, and the influence of a good example. Endeavor so to arrange your business, and your family cares, that, as the general rule, you may always be at the weekly lecture, and the weekly prayer-meeting.

*Go for your own sake!* You may always be benefitted by it; you may always hear some truth there that will instruct you; join in some prayer profitably; have some omission or neglect reprov'd; or receive fresh impressions of the importance of faithfulness in duty. By regular attendance, the power of good habit will be confirmed, and your spirituality be increased. By waiting steadily on the Lord when many things combine to disincite you from doing it, you will, in a double sense, renew your strength.

*Go for your Pastor's sake.* If you would strengthen his hands, and encourage his heart, let him see that you are always there. Do not give him reason, from your conduct, to suppose that your piety is burnt out by the heat of summer, or frozen out by the cold of winter. Let him see that you value communion with God and his truth, more than politics or rest, or even business. Let him feel that he can rely on you, and know that however few may be present, you will be one of them. Every member of the church who is regularly at the weekly lecture and prayer-meeting, especially in summer, is doing far more than he supposes to make his minister both encouraged and successful in his work.

*Go for the Church's sake.* Never is the church revived, but as the spirit of prayer is quickened. It was when they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another—communed with God, and his truth, and each other, as faithful disciples ever should do, that the Lord hearkened and heard it. It was when the two held converse with Jesus, and heard his teachings, that their hearts burned within them; and often in modern times, the Spirit of God descends, and the revival commences, where his people are gathered in the place of prayer, and to hear what God, by his truth will speak unto them. If you would see the church revived and spiritual, and the impatient awakened, be faithful to the lecture and the prayer-meeting.

*Go for the world's sake.* Let them see that at all times you are faithful to the means of grace, and to your privileges and duties; that you think there is something more important to attend to than the world, and that you are always of this opinion. If now and then a non-professor of religion should enter your lecture-room or place of prayer, do not let him have it to think or say, that "but very few of the church members, especially the male members of the church were there!" This is a sad testimony for the world to bear respecting the church. See to it that you do not give occasion for it. The church is appointed as God's witness to the world: let it not be your fault, if it is found, by a majority of members, bearing false witness as to the importance of prayer, and the value of divine truth, and the blessedness of communion with heaven.

Go, then, to the weekly lecture, and the prayer-meeting, for your own sake, for your pastor's sake, for the sake alike of the church and the world. Go with a prepared and serious heart, with an earnest desire to be profited; go regularly, punctually, and without fail, unless when detained by the providence of God. Go to get good, and to do good,—to be instructed yourself, and to set an example to others. Go to be impressed with truth, and quickened in duty, and to ask the reviving influence of the Holy Spirit on the church, and on the world. Go, especially, in summer, when there are so many temptations to stay away; when so many become worldly, and the spirit of religion so often declines. Go with a faithful, humble, prepared, waiting heart, and you shall not come away without a blessing.—*Puritan Recorder.*

## Early Conviction.

Not long since, Mrs. — called on her minister to propose herself as a candidate for church fellowship. On enquiry respecting her religious views and experience, she stated that about thirty years ago, she was in a

Sunday-school where she often had deep convictions. She saw something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin—caught a glimpse of Christ as the Saviour she needed—and often secretly resolved to be the Lord's. But no one spoke to her on the subject. At last she left the school and launched into the world: here she was surrounded by its allurements. The Devil was always at hand with his devices—her own heart was deceitful, and her convictions gradually died away. She then married and had duties to perform in her family which engrossed her time and her thoughts. She still attended the preaching of the gospel, but she never regained the feelings she had lost. After some years it pleased God to convert her husband and he joined the church, but she still remained in a dead, a cold state. After hearing this, and much more to the same purpose, her minister said—"You have been a great warrior; thirty years is a long time to be in battle; oh! how you must have fought against God! How you must have wounded your conscience! What a mercy it is that God did not give you up, and say, *Let her alone!* let her go down to hell without another conviction! Pray, what was it that brought you at last to yield up yourself unto God?"

"O, sir, it was the conversion of a young person in the Sunday-school. She is my niece, and when I heard she had been at your house about joining the church, it cut me to the heart. I could scarcely sleep for many nights about it. I thought what a guilty creature I have been; thirty years have been lost. What might I not have enjoyed if I had yielded to the strivings of the Holy Spirit when I was in the Sunday-school! How happy might I have been to-day if I had served the Lord from my youth! But thirty years are lost."

"Lost," said the minister—"lost—yes, they are lost to God—lost to the church—lost to the world, as well as to yourself. You might have been the means of converting many precious souls in these thirty years, if you had consecrated to God the dew of your youth."

## REFLECTION.

If this person had been prepared to enter the church of Christ at the age of twelve, she might have shone, and I think would have shone, brightly as a Christian for thirty years; but she was neglected—she was thrown off, perhaps under the idea that if the Lord had begun a good work he would carry it on, forgetting that the blade is as much a proof of life, and as much the work of God as the full ear—forgetting that the babe needs a nurse—forgetting that the Shepherd's bosom is the place for the lambs—forgetting that the church is a garden, not only for young trees, and old trees, but for sapplings—forgetting that old people were once young, and that it is not fair to expect an old man's head on a boy's shoulders. I am persuaded that we ought not to take years into the account; some young people at fourteen have more correct views of God's method of saving sinners, and more lively feelings on the subject, than some professors of three score and ten. O, shall we wait until our young people have been deluded by the world, and polluted by sin, and nearly drawn to hell by the devil, and then seek after them with their half worn-out bodies and weakened minds, and urge them to repent and believe the gospel? It is a great comfort, I admit, to see old rebels repenting, but I would remember, that *prevention is better than cure.*

I have been exceedingly happy in receiving many young persons into my church, says a pastor, the greater part of them from the Sunday-school, and I confess that I expect great help from them in the way of leading others to the Saviour. We want youthful blood in the veins of the church;—we need youthful warmth in performing the duties of the church; and this, when aided by the wise counsel and holy experience of older members, may be expected to work wonders on the unthinking world around us.

There are two classes of persons who cannot do much service for the devil—that is, very old persons and little children; and hence Satan is comparatively quiet with them; but it is with our youth that he attempts his most fearful destruction. From the age of twelve to thirty he works terribly. O, what havoc, what ruin, what damnation! Dear pastors—dear parents—dear teachers, you are not ignorant of Satan's devices. O, then, let your aims, your plans, your prayers, be to preserve the young from his snares, and God will give you the desire of your hearts, by adding multitudes of our youth to the church of Christ.

## Worth of the Soul.

*I have nothing to spare,* is the plea of sordid reluctance. But a far different sentiment will be formed amid the scenes of the last day. Men now persuade themselves that they have nothing to spare till they can support a certain style of luxury, and have provided for the establishment of children. But in the awful hour when you, and I, and all the Pagan nations, shall be called from our graves to stand before the bar of Christ, what comparison will these objects bear to the salvation of a single soul! Eternal mercy! let not the blood of heathen millions, in that hour be found in our skirts! Standing, as I now do, in sight of a dissolving universe, beholding the dead arise, the world in flames, the heavens fleeing away, all nations convulsed with terror, or rapt in the vision of the Lamb,—I pronounce the conversion of a single Pagan of more value than all the wealth that ever Omnipotence produced. On such an awful subject it becomes me to speak with caution; but I solemnly aver, that were there but one heathen in the world, and he in the remotest corner of Asia, if no greater duty confined us at home, it would be worth the pains for all the people in America to embark together to carry the gospel to him! Place your soul in his soul's stead. Or rather consent for a moment to change condition with the savages on our borders. Were you posting on to the judgment of the great day, in the darkness and pollution of Pagan idolatry, and were they living in wealth in this very district of the church, how hard would it seem for your neighbors to neglect your misery! When you should open your eyes in the eternal world and discover the ruin in which they have suffered you to remain, how would you reproach them that they did not even sell their possessions, if no other means were sufficient, to send the Gospel to you. My flesh trembles at the prospect.

But they shall not reproach us. It shall be known in heaven that we could pity our brethren. We will send them all the relief in our power, and will enjoy the luxury of reflecting what happiness we may entail on generations yet unborn, if we can only effect the conversion of a single tribe.—*Griffin's Ser.*

## The Penitent Thief.

Saurin, replying to those who delay conversion by a reference to the thief on the cross, says:

"Who was this thief? What was his crime? What induced him to commit it?—What was the first instance of his depravity? What was that of his repentance? What means did grace employ for his conversion? So many questions, so many doubts, are so many sufficient reasons for inferring nothing from his conversion. Perhaps he had been engaged in this awful course but a short time. Perhaps seduced by an unhappy facility, he was less guilty of theft than of softness and compliance. Perhaps only the accomplice of Barabbas in sedition, he had less design of disturbing society than of checking the tyrannic and exorbitant power of the Romans.—Perhaps surprised by weakness, or tempted by necessity, he had received sentence for his first offence. Perhaps having languished a long time in prison, he had repented of his sin. We do not affirm these things; they are merely conjectures; but all you object are similar conjectures, which may be refuted with the same ease. And though the whole of these probabilities were refuted, how many criminal circumstances occur in your life which were not in his? We said that he received not the education which you have, nor the torrent of grace with which you are flooded; he was unacquainted with a thousand influences which act upon you;—the moment he saw Jesus, he loved him, and he believed on him! How was that? With what faith?—At what time? In a manner the most heroic in the world; a faith like his was never found in Israel. At the time when Jesus was fixed on the cross; when he was pierced with the nails; when he was delivered to an infuriated populace; when they spit upon him; when he was mocked by the Greek, rejected by the Jew; betrayed by Judas; denied by Peter, forsaken by his disciples—when Jesus made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant—the thief—the thief seemed to have taken all the faith to himself, and to constitute the whole church."

## The Bible.

The religion of the Bible, though having its earthly birth in the tent of a fugitive He-

brew, and reaching its maturity in the cottage of a peasant of Nazareth, has made its way over the whole earth, has come down through thirty centuries, and is still the chief source of spiritual life, the main support of moral effort, the prolific principle of high thoughts and pure aims and noble deeds throughout the civilized world. And if from the surface you enter into the depths of society, you find the Bible the patriot's charter-book, the child's delight, the old man's comfort, and the young man's guide. In its pages the sick and weary find the solace which they need, and the tempted meet with timely succour. Its words whisper hope and peace to the dying, and minister daily food to the healthy and vigorous household. With the pious music of its sublime or plaintive songs, echo the roofs of ten thousand times ten thousand christian temples, and the child's prayer night and morrow is hushed forth in the simple and comprehensive words which were dictated by Him who is its central light. The poetry of the Bible has been the forming power of the greatest modern poems; for Tasso, Milton, and Cowper, present in high relief the features of its moulding hand. And its high and aspiring spirit, its heavenward tendencies, its ethereal sanctities, its judicial grandeur, have given birth to those sublime creations in architecture and painting, which are seen in the works of Michael Angelo, and may be designated the school of christian art. Nor is there any department of human thought or effort that biblically-educated men have not enriched or adorned.—*Dr. Beard.*

## Christ's Agony in the Garden.

Three times in Gethsemane his shrinking humanity deprecated the cup. Three times he prostrated himself in prayer and appeal to his father. And three times he arose in the conflict, resolved to reach the issue of his agony. Here, however, the utmost power of conception is at fault. At best, we can but approach the verge of the mystery. What reach or grasp of thought or language can unfold the anatomy of his heart's anguish, or exhibit the chemistry of his bruised emotions. The fearful alternative was before him. If he did not die, he saw the wrath of his father kindling in heaven, scathing this fair creation, and lighting up the flames of hell. He saw generation after generation sinking beneath its fearful pressure, and swelling the congregation of the damned. He saw, he felt Infinite Majesty angry with man; heaven lost; hell incurred, and the prospective thrones of eternity exchanged for the dark dungeons of perdition. The untrodden wine-press of the wrath of God was before him. The unequal hour of Almighty conflict had arrived. Earth was burdened with children about him, and heaven lined with squadrons above—but "of all there was none to help." In the might of his own invincible purpose, alone—and unaided—he met the dreadful alternative, and hence his agony—the fearful exordium of the mysterious drama upon which he was entering.

## All can do Good.

Every one can do some good, if he is disposed. You all have circles where your influence is felt more than another's. Some can communicate their thoughts, whilst others can work silently. One individual you can influence to-day, that you may never see again.—How often has a word turned the whole current of a man's life! A profane person has received a check that he never forgets. A sea captain remarked to us a few days ago—"When I was in Nantucket, I was invited to dine with a friend. I noticed that he was very profane in his conversation. During our interview he gave me a short sketch of his history. In my turn, I remarked that from a youth I had been taught by one of the best of parents, that profanity and vulgarity were not marks of good breeding. In all my travels I had not found a real gentleman who was in the constant habit of using profane language. After spending a pleasant interview with the gentleman, I left him. It was about ten years since. Three weeks ago I was in Philadelphia, and there I met my old acquaintance. Nearly the first words he said to me were, 'I have not used a profane word since you reprov'd me in Nantucket.' What could be more pleasant to this captain's feelings?—And how much good did he accomplish by a comparatively mild reproof?"

Are you not surrounded by the vicious, the profane, the impure? A word kindly spoken may save them from vice. Be always ready to exert your influence on the side of virtue.