

God looks for from His people. And He expects every Christian to bear fruit. There are no trees planted in this garden for ornament. They are ornamental only when they are fruitful; and then grandly so.

The Christian who does most to make the world better, fulfills best the end for which he has been called. He may not be so perfect in his walk as some of his brethren. Through the weakness of the flesh he may often stumble where his brother walks erect. He may not be as intelligent in the gospel as others. And furthermore, he may be, in the estimation of his orthodox brother, dangerously unsound in the faith. But the tree is judged by its fruits. And when he stands in the harvest, covered over with rich fruitage of a devoted life, it will atone for many a mistake he has made. The servant's fidelity to his Master is decided by his work. And when he comes bearing his great burden of sheaves and laying them down at the Master's feet, the imperfection of his knowledge and his apparent unsoundness will be forgotten, in the glory and the joy of the "Well done, good and faithful servant," which shall fall from his Master's lips. Be careful, my brother, that you do not deceive yourself by your soundness in the faith, and your sleekness of behaviour. It was because of *unfruitfulness* that the husbandman ordered the tree to be cut down as a cumberer of the ground.

M. B. RYAN.

PREACHING.

Meanethon remarked of Luther that his words had their birth not in his lips, but in his soul. An examination of the life and character of such a man demonstrates to our mind that there was but little of scholastic quibble in that great soul; for every sermon betrayed an earnest deadly grappling with the levitical troubles of the age. How wonderfully does the man's voice, form, gesture, live in imagination! No amusingly spun fancies, the product of an overdrawn religious sentimentalism, characterized his preaching; every word was a point, and every point was a dagger that pierced in warm and deadly thrust to the very heart of the world's wrongs. Every muscle of his expressive face is in motion, his eye flashes like tropic lightning, his spirit gleams and glows in vivid sincerity, the majesty of truth and right sits on his noble brow, and he has forgotten everything but his message and his auditors. He looks into the inquisitorial chamber without a tremor, into the fierce flame of the stake without a fear, into the Vatican and smiles at its triple-crowned simpletons and double-dyed hypocrites. The breeze of heaven's balmy air stirs his locks, and the light of an eternal progress strikes his rough-hewn forehead. It is a grand, a gloriously sublime thing to stand upon some tempest-riven crag, and watch the Storm King, as with terrible might he walks the ocean,—but grander far is it to see a soul like that of Luther answer Heaven's resistless gaze—stirred until form, gesture, tone and language melt in the white flame of eternal truth. Metaphor leaps from every utterance as the white-crested waves cast their sportive foam up the iron-bound coast rocks. At the preaching of Martin Luther, Germany trembled with desperation. His audiences felt the common sense of his sermons. Common minds love common sense, not triviality, not star-girdled effervescence, but recognized principles, parallel with the common habitudes of thought and expression. The early reformers were practical common sense preachers, and such men and such preaching have always been the most useful and will continue to be.

The sickly dawdle of the modern expression, "called to preach," sinks into a mere nothingness when compared to the heaven-born principle that, deep-rooted in heart and soul, drew forth the fire from the lips of the early reformers. God never

"calls" a man to preach who has no love for the work and whose soul is not on fire with the zeal that belongs to the high and noble work of saving souls from sin, death and error. A preacher of the gospel should be every inch a man. His sermons should be like diamonds, both solid and sparkling with the scintillations of divine truth. His words should be the wings of his thoughts. These words should be carried the shortest and straightest way to their destination. Pomp without force, expression without feeling, or learning without adaptiveness, will soon discover that the world is past the stage of pulpit heroics. The pulpit of to-day needs men who are every inch men. Men whose estimation of the work of saving souls is far beyond the estimation they have of themselves. Preachers are often too much impressed, like men in the professions, with the desire to cater to the wills and wishes of a capricious humanity, but it is a well tested, well tried and established fact that the power and efficiency of men have been found in direct ratio to the quantity and quality of their respective motive powers. If we consider the ministry a mere profession, it is then subject to the laws governing other professions. While in my judgment the Christian ministry has decided points of difference from professions in general, yet I think there are many principles concerning professional motives which will also hold good as respects the ministry. When a man enters a profession because he loves it in all its details, you may be sure he will succeed. Men never fail who are willing to sacrifice fame, family, wealth and home for the work they may have espoused; but when a man enters a profession to get for himself a great name, he generally makes himself a great fool, and doubtless to such an aspirant the words of Josh Billings would be most scrupulously fitting: "Set down, young man, ya will hav time enuf to make a phool ov yerself." Unless a minister of the gospel has an uncontrollable love of the work of the ministry in all its details, he will scarcely succeed. If a man simply takes work in the vineyard to support his family, the work will be poorly done and he will be poorly paid. The man in the ministry who moves the world must be first moved himself. The strongest "call to preach" is the heartfelt desire to present the unsearchable riches of gospel truth to a perishing world. The first and grandest effect of preaching is to hurt somebody, and the more extensive, earnest and heartfelt the reformation the greater the hurt. Look not on the world with the eyes of a visionary—Babylon has no use for Zion.

T. H. BLENUS.

Jacksonville, Florida, }
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PHIL. iv. 8.

This Scripture teaches the importance of thinking—giving attention—to whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and whatever is of good report. The "whatever" includes every good thing. We know whatever the Lord commands is good by virtue of His power and authority to command or legislate. But the salient point of the lesson is in the intrinsic value of the thing itself. Goodness does not need the force of law to make it good. God's laws are good of themselves. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." The Lord's transforming power upon our natures is by the inherent virtue of His law. Our loyalty to Him rests on our obedience to Him as lawgiver, but our character on the law or command given. Our salvation, therefore, is not only on the principle of labor and reward—so much heaven for so much work—but upon character; the better the man the greater his enjoyment. Much depends upon the effect the good has on our nature in making us good. The value of a command is not simply in its obedience but in its results. Two things are very important. First, to be very care-

ful what we do with the commandments; and second, to be very careful what the commandments do with us. There are too many, unfortunately, who are very strict concerning the first, but have no place for the second. The one who best keeps the commandments of God is the one who is best. God not only commands us what to do but also what to be. "We must let our light so shine that others may see our good works." The world is not so very anxious to know what we are doing for the Lord as they are to know what the Lord is doing for us. If we give our attention to the good for the sake of the good, we will naturally reproduce the good in our natures, which is evidently one lesson taught in the above scripture.

We notice also that the "whatever" implies there may be good things for which we have no express commands. It is our adherence to such good things that is a true test of our goodness. The father may command the child to do certain things, and the child may obey; but can the father tell by this that the child did it in love, or by virtue of its desire to obey him. It may have been fear that prompted the child's obedience. While it is true that love will obey, it is equally true that we can obey without love. Herein is the force of the saying, "If ye love Me keep My commandments." But when we see the child doing good for the sake of the good, without the lash of authority, then we are compelled to acknowledge the goodness of the actor as well as the act. I remember when my father would give me a certain amount of work to do I was very careful to do no more than what he commanded. I loved play much better than work, and the only reason I had for doing a single stroke of work was because father bid me do it. But as soon as I became more interested in father's interest than I did in play, I did not wait for a "Thus saith father," but whatever was good I was at it.

Let us not cloak our indolence with authority, refusing to work for God because He has given no special command. He has certainly told us through the apostle to attend to the good. If we love God we will love to do His will and hate to do anything contrary to His will. Our love for Him will constrain us to keep His commandments and to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Christ's example in doing good on the Sabbath day intensifies this principle, i. e., that good is the interpreter of all law, and he who does that which is good is fulfilling the law. He who will not do a good work because there is no express command for it is first cousin to the few who would not do good on the Sabbath day.

H. M.

WELL DOING.

And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.—Gal. vi. 9.

The well-doing makes this life and the life to come glorious. It is the cream, the essence, the oil, the concentrated part of life. As the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, what must the continuation of well-doing be but the consummation of wisdom?

The well-doing consists in the rendering to God, man and self their dues. Or, as Paul expresses it, (Titus ii. 12), "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." The same apostle urges us (Phil. iv. 8, 9), "To meditate upon and do the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report."

Let all rest assured that if they continue in well doing till death, that their reaping time will be joyous. The harvest will far surpass the highest expectations. I therefore lovingly entreat every one who may read these lines, "To be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

MARIA E. GATES.

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