

A Meditation.

By JOHN R. MOTT.

To meditate upon spiritual things is to get into the middle of them, to live in their light, to get under their power, to let them move us. It is necessary for the Christian, in order that he may discover and understand spiritual truth. It is indispensable to the most satisfactory spiritual growth. If our lives are to be truly communicative and helpful to others, we must cultivate constantly the practice of meditation. Let it be a favorable place for meditation. Have a place where you can hear God's voice; he can hear you anywhere. Many can testify as to the advantage of some solitary place. Doyou suppose that Jacob ever forgot Bethel, or David Mizar, "the little Hill," or John the Isle of Patmos, or Nathaniel the fig-tree?

Have a regular time for this purpose, the danger is that a man will soon have no time. If a man tells me that he does not give himself to spiritual exercise except when he feels inclined to do so, I make up my mind that he does so very seldom, and possibly not at all. We all need to emphasize regularity in the care of the spiritual life. As Bushnell has pointed out, "God is a Being of routine." We must set apart, at whatever sacrifice, regular times for pondering the words and thoughts of God.

Let us devote sufficient time to meditation, as well as regular time. It takes time to believe. We must first take time to hear God before we are able to trust him as fully as we should.

Not only should we have a regular place and time for meditation, but we should also cultivate the habit of giving active attention to religious things at all times and in all places. John Wesley traced out some of his most helpful trains of thought while on his horse back journeys. One prominent Christian worker in this country has received some of his most powerful spiritual messages while pondering the Scriptures on railway trains and street cars.

Use the Bible as the basis and guide in meditation. Without the Bible this process may make one morbid, melancholy, selfish and fanatical, whereas with the Bible it is a most beneficial and fruitful exercise. You will remember that Emerson, in speaking of the words of Montaigne, says that "They are vascular. Cut them and they will bleed." With how much more truth might not the same be said of the words of the Bible. They are quick and powerful, living and active. They are, indeed, spirit and life. Ponder Christ's claims about himself. Study meditatively the character of Christ. Meditate on the kingdom of Christ.

Above all, think of the example of Jesus Christ. One of the principal and most significant distinctions between his life and ours lies in the amount of time he found it necessary to spend alone with the Father. St. Luke tells us that "he went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives." That is he went as was his custom, as was his habit, to the secret place to meditate and to pray. If he found it necessary or even desirable, what presumption and folly it is for us to think that we can get along without this practice. My brothers, let us form an undiscourageable resolution that whatever else we miss, we shall not miss the great advantages that come from giving ourselves earnestly and faithfully to thinking on spiritual things.—The Westminster (Philadelphia).

The seldon is no different or better anywhere else. It does not improve by exportation.—S. B. Capen.

Our Young People

November 27.

Intemperance and Missions.

Topic.—How intemperance hinders missions.—Rom. 14: 13-21.

Some Bible Hints.

We talk about the "path of civilization," but we are filling it full of stumbling-blocks for the uncivilized races (v. 13.)

Killing those for whom Christ was killed! Could there be any greater sin than that (v. 15)?

The sin of liquor-selling to the heathen overshadows all the good of Christian lands. By it our "good is evil spoken of" (v. 16.)

Better no meat at all than meat that becomes a hindrance to the weak; better no commerce at all than a commerce that destroys Christian influence (v. 21).

Intemperance and Missions.

A Chinaman once said to a missionary: "You cannot be true, for in one hand you bring opium to curse China, and in the other you bring your religion."

It is said that the only place in the new island possessions of the United States that is free from drunkenness is Sulu, where, because the American forces are surrounded by Mohammedans, liquor-selling is forbidden both inside and outside the army.

A Hindu declared in 1900: "With the spread of the English education in India, we notice the more extensive use of liquors, which we are strictly and religiously prohibited from touching."

To Think About.

What am I doing to promote temperance in this fountain land of missions?

What am I doing to protest against the rum traffic in heathen lands?

How am I promoting temperance work in the world-wide field?

A Cluster of Quotations.

The greatest hindrance to missions, the greatest shame of Christian nations, is the traffic in liquors and opium on the frontiers of civilization.—Crafts.

The greed of Christian nations has turned the entire West Coast of Africa into one long bar-room from which no fewer than two million savages go forth to die every year as a result of the traffic.—Morris.

Civic Endeavors.

Patriotism should be a part of your religion.

See that every member of the society knows by heart the national anthems.

Organize a course of free lectures in which different officers of the town, county, and Province will tell the citizens how the work of their respective offices is conducted, answering questions at the close.

Appoint a Christian citizenship committee, and give it five minutes at every meeting to report matters connected with patriotism.

See that prayer for our country is made at every meeting.

Form a civic club to study your government and the duties of a citizen.

Self Sacrifice in Love.

Self denial, self-sacrifice, self-surrender! These are hard doctrines and impossible! Whereupon, in silent hours, we sceptically ask, Is this possible? Is it natural?

Let preacher or moralist say what he will I am not here to sacrifice myself to others. God sent me here for happiness, not misery. Now introduce one passage of Scripture,

and the dark doctrine becomes illuminated: "The love of Christ constraineth us." Self-denial for the sake of self-denial does no good; self-sacrifice for its own sake is no religious act at all. If you give up a meal for the sake of showing power over self, or for the sake of self-discipline, it is the most miserable of all delusions. You are not more religious in doing this than before. This is self-culture, and self-culture being occupied forever about self leaves you only in that circle of self from which religion is to free you; but to give up a meal that one you love may have it, is properly a religious act—no hard and dismal duty, because made easy by effectation.

To bear pain for the sake of bearing it has in it no moral quality at all; but to bear it rather than surrender truth, or in order to save another, is positive enjoyment as well as ennobling to the soul.

Did you ever receive even a blow meant for another in order to shield that other? Do you not know there was an actual pleasure in the keen pain far beyond the most rapturous thrill of nerve which could be gained from pleasure in the midst of pain-lessness?

Is not the mystic yearning of love expressed in words more purely thus: "Let me suffer for him"? This element of love is that which makes this doctrine an intelligible and blessed truth.

So sacrifice alone, bare and unrelieved, is ghastly, unnatural, and dead; but self-sacrifice, illuminated by love, is warmth and life; it is the life of Christ, the life of God, the blessedness and the only proper life of man.—F. W. Robertson.

The Things Worth While.

I know that many of you are puzzled to know in what direction you can start to help Christ to help the world. Let me say this to you in that connection: Once I came to crossroads in the old life and did not know in what direction God wanted me to help hasten his kingdom. I started to read the Book to find what the ideal life was, and I found that the only thing worth doing in the world was to do the will of God; whether that was done in the pulpit or in the slums; whether it was done in the college or class room, or on the street, did not matter at all. "My meat and drink," Christ said, "is to do the will of Him that sent me," and if you make up your mind that you are going to do the will of God above everything else, it matters little in what direction you work. There are more posts waiting for men than are men waiting for posts. Christ needs men in every community and in every land; it matters little whether we go to foreign lands or stay at home as long as we are sure we are where God puts us.—Henry Drummond.

Daily Readings.

- M., Nov. 21. As it did in Rome. Rom. 13: 11-14.
- T., Nov. 22. A stumbling-block. Rom. 14: 29-23.
- W., Nov. 23. In Corinth. 1 Cor. 5: 7-13.
- T., Nov. 24. In Galatia. Gal. 5: 16-23.
- F., Nov. 25. Peter's picture. 1 Pet. 4: 1-5.
- S., Nov. 26. In Thessalonica. 1 Thess. 5: 5-8.