

PERSONAL POPULARITY OF JESUS

The common people listened to our Lord because, in the first place, they liked the man. They admired His loyalty to truth. They saw that He flinched at nothing to proclaim it. He dared all to get His message home. There was no looking aside at the authorities, no taking his cue from the chief priests and elders. He heeded the hidden monitor, and in His loyalty He was "faithful unto death." And second, they admired His self-restraint. Little men "lose themselves," and their fervor becomes a destructive fever. A really powerful man holds his power in fine control. "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God. . . . took a towel and girded himself." That is the kind of restraint which imprisons an infinite energy. Men perceive the mighty dynamic behind the quiet and silent grip. And, thirdly, they admired His tenderness and compassion. Power that is well controlled always has an exquisite touch. There is no gentleness like the gentleness of a self-restrained giant. All these are qualities which fascinated the common people and made them give an eager ear to the Master's speech.

And then there was His manner, the mode in which His teaching was expressed. It was not made heavy by abstract statement. He thought in images. His teachings expressed themselves in the concrete. I heard a man say some time ago that the late Alfred Norris, one of the saintliest men who ever adorned the Congregational ministry, had made almost every bit of the Northumbrian shore-line a literature suggestive of high and noble ideal! He was a parabolic teacher, and his emblems and symbols were found round about the common path. And so it was with the Saviour. He expressed His truth in the vehicle of ordinary facts and home experiences. The majority of men delight in a parable. An illustration is winsome. A symbol suits the common mind, while an abstraction only appeals to the very elect! I think it is our wisdom to imitate the Master. Luther was once preaching to a mixed assembly, and he said: "I perceive in the church Dr. Justus Jonas and Melancthon, and other learned doctors; by their leave I shall forget that they are here and preach to the multitude!"

And then there was the Saviour's matter. His central ideal was emancipation; the emancipation from guilt and sin and error and self; and this by the attainment of full communion with the Father-God. That was the central idea, but the center of all His ideas was Himself. Christ Himself was the soul and core of all His teaching. "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The message was for everybody, the emancipating truth appealed to all. It was not for some exclusive coterie, some select circle, but for all men irrespective of rank and condition. Is there any wonder that to such a man, with such a manner, and with such matter, the heart of the toiler went out with the passionate eagerness of the hart that scent the water-brooks? "The common people heard him gladly."—J. H. Jowett.

"TO FIND OUT GOD'S WILL."

1. Pray.
 2. Think.
 3. Talk to wise people, but do not regard their decision as final.
 4. Beware of the bias of your own will, but do not be too much afraid of it (God never unnecessarily thwarts a man's nature and likings, and it is a mistake to think that His will is in the line of the disagreeable).
 5. Meantime do the next thing (for doing God's will in small things is the best preparation for knowing it in great things).
 6. When decision and action are necessary, go ahead.
 7. Never reconsider the decision when it is finally acted upon; and
 8. You will probably not find out till afterwards, perhaps long afterwards, that you have been led at all.
- Henry Drummond.

BIBLICAL ETHICS.

One of the more notable defects in the Bible preaching of the day is the absence of the ethical element clear cut, outspoken, and bold. At the close of the year how many preachers can say what Paul did in review of his work at Ephesus: I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. Insistence upon practical godliness every day of the week is done too largely with the use of such generalities of speech, such a far-offness of indictment-terms, such a soft toned description, it all presents a sharp contrast with such personal arraignment as is needed and called for by the Word of God in order to touch and quicken the conscience. "Thou art the man" kind of sermons are rarely heard. As Rev. Dr. John Watson wrote it: With psalms like the fifteenth and twenty-fourth, with passages like the first and fifty-eighth and ninth chapters of Isaiah with the Sermon on the Mount and the Epistle of St. James, the preacher has a strong message to deliver on godly living, and should lift up his voice like a trumpet against the short-comings and inconsistencies of professing Christians. Hypocrites should be pilloried without mercy, for Jesus showed none to the Scribes and Pharisees, and cant should be scourged in the pulpit with the fiercer zeal and more utter contempt than in the press, for the Church has suffered more by tricky and dishonorable professing Christians than by all the attacks of her critics from Celsus to Voltaire. The time has come for declaring that the capitalist who treats his workmen unjustly, but gives large subscriptions to foreign missions, or the merchant who makes a shameful bankruptcy, but takes part in religious meetings, can no more be tolerated in Christian society, and that he only can be regarded as an honest and orthodox Christian who keeps Christ's law and sets an example of living the life of a real disciple of the Lord.

It is no easy task to write down an accurate definition of the grossness of the iniquity of the disciplinary work of a church which takes practically no cognizance of the enormous sins of covetousness of gambling and drunken women at bridge-whist parties though such women are widely known and even published in the press and other sins of a painfully long catalogue. It is not strange that there should be so few signs in daily life of a quickened conscience and so many proofs of a low state of piety and disrespect for the preached Word and other ordinances of religion. Let Bible ethics ring more clearly and emphatically from our pulpits and thereby a tenderer love than we now see, exhibited for both the saved and the lost.—Presbyterian Standard.

That was a good prayer of the old deacon: "Lord, make us willing to run on little errands for Thee."

Let us be content in work,

To do the thing we can, and not presume

To fret because it's little.

—Mrs. Browning.

There are some things that get better with age. A true and noble friendship increases in its value as time goes on. This is especially true when you can add immortal youth to your friend. Christ never gets old.—Louis A. Banks, D.D.

God is a kind Father. He sets us all in the places where he wishes us to be employed, and that employment is truly "our Father's business." He chooses work for every creature which will be delightful to them, if they do it simply and humbly. He gives us always strength enough and sense enough for what he wants us to do; if we either tire ourselves or puzzle ourselves, it is our own fault. And we may always be sure, whatever we are doing, that we can not be pleasing him if we are not happy ourselves.—John Ruskin.

PATIENT FAITHFULNESS MAY WIN THE CROWN.*

By Robert E. Spear.

When Gideon and his three hundred men came to the Jordan in their chase of Zebah and Zalmunna, the Midianite kings who had long ravaged Israel, they did not stop to rest but passed over, "faint, yet pursuing." Their mission was to overtake those kings, not to keep themselves from weariness or from getting out of breath, and their patient fidelity which held fast to duty until it was done enabled them to overtake the enemy and stamp out Midianite oppression. When we have a task to do, we need to stick to it until it is done.

And when we have a cause to defend, when we are not pursuing but guarding, patient faithfulness is the supreme thing. Edward Thring, the great schoolmaster of Uppingham, got his nickname as a schoolboy by his spirit of indomitable fidelity. The rule of the school was that the boys who came first were to have the use of the five courts, and Thring was sent ahead to hold one. The school bully came and tried to drive him off. When he could not defend what he was holding in trust in any other way, Thring who was a little boy, dug his fingers into the edges of the stones of the court and declared, "I will not give it up. I'll Die First." It was not selfishness on his part. It was the resolute defense of the right.

Those workers do most who don't soon tire out and lay their work down. There are a great many who start and soon stop. The quality most needed in work is patient faithfulness. Indeed, patience is simply faithfulness drawn out forever. "No, sir," said an old Sunday school superintendent, "I never missed and I was never late. I have been superintendent for twenty-seven years and I moved away once and came back again, but I never was late a minute, and I never missed a day. Once I had to run to get in on time, but I ran." Such men achieve something. They are themselves, an incarnate bit of heavenly character.

When the struggle to overcome or achieve is long drawn out, the man who has the will to stay and not surrender will prevail. We are speaking of the conflicts which it is right for us to wage, the moral titles, not the physical, but an illustration from the physical will give us the true principle. An Irishman and a negro had a combat. It was to settle a long feud, and they agreed to fight until one of them called "sufficient." For hours they struggled without a word, until both men were almost exhausted, and then at last the negro called, "sufficient." "Begorra," said the Irishman, as he dropped his hands and was proclaimed victor, "I've been trying to think of that word for the last forty-five minutes." It was well he couldn't remember it. The men who forget it are the men who prevail in their conflict with that moral foe whom we can always defeat if we patiently wait and are not faithless.

Robert Morrison waited for seven years in China for his first convert. God has waited nineteen centuries for the Church to obey the Great Commission to evangelize the world.

Paul, as he looked back over his life, declared, "I have kept the faith." He had kept it against many odds. By patient continuance we well doing, all who seek for true glory and honor shall have a gift. What is it? (Rom. 2:7.)

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

- Mon.—Faithful love (Matt. 26:1-13).
 Tues.—Faithful obedience (Phil. 2:5-11).
 Wed.—Faithful service (2 Tim. 4:6-8).
 Thurs.—The incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:24-27).
 Fri.—The crown of life (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10).
 Sat.—The crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4).

*Y.P. Topic, Sunday, March 13, 1910.—Patient faithfulness that wins the crown. (Rev. 2:1-10, 18, 19).