

TO BECOME CHRISTLIKE

God would have us ponder the punishments of sin and find in them the emphatic expressions of his judgment of our conduct and of ourselves. He represents our shamelessness, and desires that we consider his judgments till our callousness is removed. The case stands thus: God is long-suffering, slow to anger; not of a fault-finding, ever-chiding nature, but most loving and most just; and this God has recorded against us the strongest possible condemnation. This God, who cannot do what is not most just, and who cannot make mistakes; this unforgiving and holy God, whose opinion of us represents the very truth, has pronounced us to be wicked and worthless; and we seem scarcely at all impressed by the declaration. God's judgment of us is not only absolutely true, but it must also take effect; so that what he has pronounced against us will be seen written in the facts bearing upon and entering into our life. But, although we know this, we are for the most part as unmoved as if, in hearing God's judgment pronounced against us, we had heard but the sighing of the wind or any other inarticulate, unintelligible sound. There is a climax of ignominy in having excited in the divine mind feelings of displeasure against us. One might suppose a man would die of shame, and could not bear to live conscious of having merited the condemnation and punishment of such a being; one might suppose that the breath of God's disapproval would blast every blessing to us, and that so long as we know ourselves displeasing to him, his sweetest gifts must be bitter to us; but the coldness of a friend gives us more thought, and the contempt of men as contemptible as ourselves affects us with a more genuine confusion.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

"Let your light shine." This is not the text, but the sermon. It preaches itself. It has no need of amplifying.

"Let your light shine." How much, Lord? Just what is entrusted to you, whether much or little. Sometimes a light may be lent to us—lent for only a little while. And still of this the Master says: "Let your light shine." The planets all shine with borrowed light; yet when did a planet ever refuse to do its duty because the light it reflected was not its own?

"Let your light shine." Why, Lord? "That others may see." Sometimes we act as though we thought the light entrusted us was for our own pleasure or convenience. But who ever heard of a lighthouse built for the benefit of the keeper? It is built to help those far out on the dangerous sea; built to guide those who seldom give a thought to him. Yet he never grows sensitive over the fact that he is forgotten. He bravely does his work; obeys his command, which is: "Let your light shine."

"Let your light shine." How far, Lord? "As far as your light will extend." Along the seaman's pathway are many lighthouses. One here, another there; making a safe, plain path for the ship. Not one lighthouse doing the work of another, yet not one independent of the other. Just so I must hold my light where I am standing; you, a little farther, will hold your light. And thus a world can be lighted, and not one wayfarer need be lost.

But again I hear the command. This time it is not: "Let your light shine!" but "Let your life shine."

I recently read of an awful catastrophe where a stately ship with hundreds on board, was dashed to pieces on the rocks and all lives lost. "Why was it?" was the anxious inquiry on every hand. "Had the keeper of the lighthouse failed to light the lamps?" On investigation it

was found that the lamps had been lit, but the flies had gathered thick about them and completely obstructed the light. Little sins, little neglects, little unlovely habits may be the flies which are gathering about your lamp and mine, and hinder our light from shining. Some one who is watching us—perhaps some one whom we would give our life to serve or save—fails to see the needed light, and goes down to endless death.

Reader, writer, let your light shine. No matter what your life is, still it cannot be hid. The world will see its defects or its beauty. As in the commercial world, we are generally rated somewhere near our real worth. It is not only by heaven's recording angel that our spiritual record is rather accurately kept. Neither is it always by the saints. The earthly representatives of Satan usually know just about where to rate us.

"Let your light shine." Why, Lord? "That the world may see." See what? See your theories, my objections? "No." See me? Ah, that would be pleasant. "No! That the world may see your good works and glorify your Father." The sailors see the light flashing from the lighthouse; and though they forget the lonely keeper, they bless the generous hearts that built the house and placed and kept the light within. You and I have just steadily to hold our light so that it cannot help but shine. It will prove a benediction to some halting feet journeying along the rugged way. They may never know that we were near, yet will they bless and praise the watching love which brought them help in the hour of need. My hand is weak, and can hold only a very little lamp. Yet the command is as much to me as to you.

"Let your light shine." Where, Lord; and when? Just now, wherever you are. In the church where it is often easy; in the office, the home, the nursery, the kitchen, where it is often hard; and in your social world, where it is often hardest of all. Just now some one is watching, and only you can guide the way. Let your light shine!"—Anna D. Bradley.

BE SWIFT.

Be swift, dear heart, in loving.

For time is brief,

And thou may'st soon along life's highway

Keep step with grief.

Be swift, dear heart, in saying

The kindly word;

When ears are sealed, thy passionate pleading

Will not be heard.

Be swift, dear heart, in doing

The gracious deed,

Lest soon they whom thou holdest dearest

Be past the need.

Be swift, dear heart, in giving

The rare sweet flower,

Nor wait to heap with blooms the casket

In some sad hour.

Dear heart, be swift in loving—

Time speedeth on;

And all thy chance of blessed service

Will soon be gone.

—E. A. Lente.

FOR DAILY READING.

M., Sept. 11. The surrender of self-will. Luke 22: 39-42.

T., Sept. 12. Of self-dependence. Prov. 3: 1-7.

W., Sept. 13. Of vengeance. Rom. 12: 16-20.

T., Sept. 14. Of ambition. Gal. 1: 10-17.

F., Sept. 15. The great refusal. Matt. 19: 16-22.

S., Sept. 16. The great example. 1 Pet. 3: 17-22.

Sun., Sept. 17. Topic—The great surrender. Acts 9: 1-22; Rom. 6: 16-23.

It is not more brains that the world needs, but more heart; not more scholarship, but more sympathy and the grace of God.

THE GREAT SURRENDER

Some Bible Hints.

Saul's blindness (Acts 9: 18) and his recovery were as nothing compared to the spiritual blindness in which he had been, and the spiritual vision he received. The true blindness is of the soul.

There is no progress outside of Christ, but as soon as one thoroughly yields to Christ, his strength increases from day to day (Acts 9: 22).

Nothing promises finer wages than sin, and though Satan cheats us time and again, how many go on working for him to the last! (Rom. 6: 23).

"Heaven alone is given away." Only the greatest of blessings, eternal life, is given freely, for no price that could be paid would be adequate. (Rom. 6: 23).

Suggestive Thoughts.

Christ wishes to yield Himself entirely to us, and that is why He wishes us to yield ourselves entirely to Him.

It is not our surrender, it is our promotion—not our defeat, but our victory.

We cannot be led; we have only the choice of service, either of God or of the devil. Can we hesitate?

We do not surrender liberty; we surrender slavery, and enter into the "glorious liberty of the children of God."

A Few Illustrations.

If a man, in selling you a field, reserves the farther corner of it, he also has the right of way thither. So if Satan yields all your heart but one little corner, he has the right of way of that corner through your whole heart.

U. S. Grant became "Unconditional Surrender Grant," because of one sturdy message. Let us win that title for ourselves.

An army, when it surrenders, lays down its arms. When we yield to Christ, we are to yield all that we have and are.

A magnanimous victor returns the sword of his conquered foe. So Christ returns to us our surrendered powers, vastly enlarged and glorified.

To Think About.

Have I made the great surrender?

Am I reserving any of my powers for myself?

Having surrendered to Christ, am I active in His service?

A Cluster of Quotations.

Christians are free to do what they please, because they please to do God's will.—A. C. Dixon.

As a line is made up of a number of dots, every Christian life is made up of a number of surrenders to God.—F. B. Meyer.

God waits to give not freedom from temptation, but victory every day.—Andrew Murray.

A captured French officer walked up to Nelson, and offered to give him his hand. "No," said Nelson; "your sword first."

For the Sailors.

Christian Endeavor societies are springing up on board ships of war and merchant vessels, and in sailors' rests ashore. The sailors make splendid Endeavorers, sincere and earnest.

These "Floating societies" need a close connection with the land forces, since they cannot in any way get the staying influences of the church. Every land society may have, and should have, some part in this work. You can correspond with some of the sailors. It is a wonderful help for a Christian sailor, amid a body of men very few of whom are Christians, to have the support of some Christian friend, though at a distance. You can greet the sailors when they come ashore, and make them at home in your society. You can send good literature to the ships. You can put yourself and your society in communication with those that are conducting the movement among the sailors, and carry out their suggestions.