

Pastor and People.

"LIFT UP YOUR HEADS."

BY BLANCHÉ BISHOP

O Day, why linger still thy feet
Along the corridors of night?
Know'st not the world hath waited long
For waking song, for waking light?
Along the valley, on the hill
Sleeps still the noisome evening mist;
And by its banks the river slow
Streams its cold length yet sun-unkissed.
Lift up, lift up your heads,
O gates of shining day!

Why cometh not the blessed dawn
For suffering souls that watch through pain?
Long, long the night, and without end
Its creeping hours. Will e'er again
The silence ring with daylight sounds,
The weeping cease from tired eyes?
Ah! who shall know the bitter woe
That looks in vain for morning skies?
Lift up, lift up your heads,
O gates of shining day!

Long waits the world for morning dawn,
Its watching eyes with pain grow dim.
Know not, ye waiting souls and sad,
The night is but a mist of sin?
Behold ev'n now the breaking clouds
Proclaim a coming Son and King?
Lift up, lift up, O waiting hearts,
And let this King of Glory in.
Lift up, lift up your heads,
O gates of shining day!

OPTIMISM VERSUS PESSIMISM.

It would be too much, perhaps, to say that the art of melancholy is an outgrowth of our complex civilization, and yet we have been obliged to coin a word—the word pessimist—to indicate that class of men who persist in looking on the dark side of things. If they happen to be visited with a trifling illness they are sure they will never recover; if trade for a time is a little dull, they imagine themselves on the eve of bankruptcy; if some obstreperous individual makes a disturbance in the church, they conclude that religion is a failure; if some trying problem emerges in public affairs, they will tell you with exasperating resignation that the country is going to ruin. We have all been touched, I dare say, with pessimistic theories at some period of our history; but if that were the only attitude of men, we should want to get rid of this world as soon as possible. Fortunately, there is a bright side as well as a dark side to everything, and we are wise in cultivating the acquaintance of any who have the faculty of seeing it.

We have the optimists to put over against the pessimists; the men who have a constitutional tendency to be happy, who can discover at least a little good even at the heart of the greatest evils, who are more fond of pointing out excellencies than of unearthing faults; who do not lose heart in sickness or disaster or national disturbances, who rejoice not in iniquity, but who rejoice in the truth. And no one can, I think, doubt in which of these two classes it is most fitting for the Christian to be found. We are properly impatient of that cheer which ignores the stern facts of daily life. We must take everything into consideration before we shall feel justified in adopting a creed of hope; and if we hope at all it must be not because we have shut our eyes to everything that is perplexing and sorrowful, but because in spite of these things we retain our trust in the living God. For this, it seems to me, must be the basis of enduring optimism; belief in God and in His changeless purposes of love towards the creatures His hands have made. If human life is a thing of chance, and there is no significance in the reverses as well as the prosperity which may fall to its lot, if there be no Divine Providence guiding the nations of the earth and leading them steadily toward their appointed goal, then I can see no warrant for any other creed than a creed of despair, and I do not wonder that atheism has often sought to be rid of the tangles in the skein of existence by cutting it off altogether. But if there be a God who "ever lives and loves," the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose infinite and eternal love is seated on the throne of the universe, who makes the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of wrath restrains, who has never yet let go His beneficent control of earthly affairs, who cares for our individual lives, who cares for our homes, who cares for our country—then it is no longer childish to keep unimpaired our creed of hope, and to look forward with patient expectation and fervent prayer towards the

One far off, divine event
To which the whole creation moves.

And when optimism is once seen to be so eminently rational, we shall surely not need any argument to prove that it is a desirable attitude, as well for our own sake as the sake of others.

The Apostle speaks in sober earnest when he tells us that we are saved by hope. Hope will bring to mind the record of past deliverances, which will tide us over many a crisis of peril, will inspire us to nobler and more patient effort, and will lead us to anticipate the magnificent developments of the future. The man who loses hope in himself is doomed. His best energies are paralyzed, and unable any longer to fight the battle of life, he sinks into listless apathy and thence into final ruin. The man who loses hope in his fellows is absolutely useless when the call comes for those who will deliver

society from conventional bondage or pampered vice. The saviours of mankind in every age must be fully alive to the wrong they seek to redress, but beneath the wrong they must be able to discern the germs of a possible goodness which need only love to set them growing; they must be able to hear not only the confused noises of discord and anarchy, but the still small voice of the human soul crying out after God. The man who loses hope in regard to his country may be a sincere man, be a good man, but he scarcely augments the national forces, and we shall not want him at the helm when a steady hand and a brave heart are needed to keep the ship of state off the treacherous rocks and quicksands.

We shall prefer then to follow those who seem to think that there is something to save and that there is a good prospect of saving it; who are not heated to the boiling point of fanaticism because they happen to be oppressed; who stand calm and undaunted, whether the tide of popular sentiment is for them or against them, because they believe in their country and believe, too, in their God. I do not know any land in which a creed of hope would be more reasonable or more likely to produce good results than this Dominion of Canada. It is not by accident, but by the providence of God that we find ourselves possessed of a territory almost unrivalled in extent and variety of resources, and the inheritor of laws and liberties which have more than once paved the way to national greatness. No young Canadian should fail to be familiar with the records of past Canadian history. He will there find events as stirring as those of classic romance or mediæval chivalry. He will there learn how the noble red man—whom we can scarcely judge in his present degradation—once held undisputed sway over prairie and mountain and steam; how the brave sons of France planted the flag of conquest and civilization in old Acadia and the heights of Quebec, how, after long and bloody wars, in which there is nothing to choose between the heroism of the victor and the vanquished, the banner of England waved over the whole land, and her glory became the priceless birthright of her children. Nor will the student wisely review the past who ignores any of the elements which entered into it, or fails to accept the lessons which it brings to us to-day. No one can recall to his imagination the original freedom of the Indian, and consign him now without some remorse to any kind of moral chains and slavery. No one can trace out the subtle influence of the Gaelic race upon the fortunes of the commonwealth, and now dismiss them with a contemptuous sneer, much less regard their ostracism as essential to our future prosperity. If the past teaches us anything it teaches us this at least, to live and let live, to be just towards our friends and just toward our enemies also, to seek the country's advancement, not through strife and bigotry, but through the unifying power of a common patriotism, binding together the diverse elements of the community into a prosperous, godly and harmonious nation.—*W. T. Herridge, B.D.*

LOVE AND HATE.

Two great passions of the human mind are love and hate. They are exceedingly strong and almost uncontrollable, and in the great scheme of man's redemption they are both brought into play, and their natural course counteracted or changed. The man who is happily changed from nature to grace finds these two great passions of his mind completely changed, and having for their objects the extreme opposites to their former affinities. He loves God and His people whereas he hated them before. Before this great counteraction took place, he felt guilty, condemned, uneasy and unhappy; since it took place, he feels acquitted, pardoned, happy and free. The very greatness of the change is proof that it is wrought by Divine power, because reason or philosophy could never suggest motives sufficiently strong to counteract these passions. Even the law of God, with all its sanctions, could not change the heart. It takes the divine power of the Gospel of Christ to accomplish this wonderful work. The Gospel, and that alone, can make sin odious, and holiness delightful; and it affects this marvellous change in our passions not by force, nor by harsh threatenings, but by loving persuasion, by revealing to us the matchless love of Christ, and, as Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth us." This love is not only unmerited, but it is inexhaustible and unbounded. It produced the most astonishing acts of kindness to us. It prompted Christ to help and pity us in our lost and helpless condition. It prompted Him to take upon Himself our infirmities—to become a curse for us, that He might bring us out from under the curse of the law. The exiled John beautifully expressed it when he said, "He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." How the soul of the Christian is made to thrill with joy in meditating upon the marvellous, unfathomable love of Christ for his people! It indeed passeth all knowledge, whether of men or of angels.—*Christian Index.*

THE LITTLE THINGS.

In Jaffna, Ceylon, the Christian women used to take from the portion of rice daily measured out for the family food, a double handful, and put it into a bag hanging against the wall for an offering to God's work. A heathen priest heard of the practice and commended it, introducing it among the heathen women; and from their offerings, in time, a temple was built. This shows how little things aggregate and become powers for good or evil.

ONE DAY'S NEGLECT.

Rubenstein, the great musician, said: "If I neglect practice a single day, I notice it; if for two days, my friends notice it; and if for three, the people notice it." It requires just as diligent watchfulness, and as faithful, continuous practice in all duties to keep our spiritual life up to its best. After one day's careless conduct, one day's neglect of duty, one day's disregard of the principles of God's work, the tone and temper of our life may require weeks for restoring.

FIRST NEGLECTING—THEN DISOBEYING.

There can be no surer evidence of our departure from God than this, that we are neglecting things which the word of God tells us to do, while we are very busy doing things which the word of God does not tell us to do. If there is a godly desire to be an obedient child, the language of our hearts will be "Father, not my will, but Thine be done."

You have observed that the more careless a believer is in attending to the instructions of the word, the more eager he is to follow after something which God has forbidden.

THE PENTATEUCH.

If called upon to prove the inspiration of the Pentateuch by its internal evidence, there is nothing to which we would turn with more confidence than to the Ten Commandments. It is inconceivable that a nation of escaped slaves, ignorant, and debased by long and oppressive servitude, should have given to the world such a moral code. Thousands of years of investigation and experiment have been able to add nothing to this decalogue. It was but broadened and deepened by Christ's coming; no new element was introduced into it. Here is a moral demonstration that this law came from God.—*Western Recorder.*

THE TWO COMPASSES.

When crossing the Atlantic I noticed that our steamer was furnished with two compasses. One was fixed to the deck where the man at the wheel could see it. The other compass was fastened half-way up one of the masts, and often a sailor would be seen climbing up to inspect it. I asked the captain, "Why do you have two compasses?" He said, "This is an iron vessel, and the compass on the deck is often affected by its surroundings. Such is not the case with the compass at the mast-head; that one is above the influence. We steer by the compass above."

In the voyage of life we have two compasses. One is the compass of Feeling, often sadly influenced by surroundings. The other is the compass of Faith, above these influences, and ever pointing true through storm and sunshine to the course marked out on the eternal chart. Let us steer by the compass above!

AS THE LORD FORGIVES.

Let all who indulge in an unforgiving spirit carefully ponder the injunction which come by divine inspiration to those especially who profess to have been forgiven by God of their sins, in these words: "Even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye." This command strikes a sharp blow at those who, while imagining that they are Christians, are stubbornly withholding their forgiveness of those who have injured them. What right has any one to think that he is a true Christian if he have no disposition to forgive an offender? None at all.

Now see what this command implies. It implies that Christians should forgive every trespass which a brother has committed against him; because, if Christ has forgiven the offended person of one sin, He has forgiven him of all sin. Paul says, respecting believers, that Christ "has forgiven us all our trespasses." So then, Christians should also forgive all the offences which their brethren and sisters commit against them.

But you say that some trespasses are so rasping and contemptible that you cannot forgive them. Well, are not your sins against God very rasping and contemptible? Are your sins all small? Can you begin to measure the hatefulness and enormity of your ten thousand sins against God and Christ? No, you cannot. And yet you want God, for Christ's sake, to forgive every sin which you ever committed against Him. Does this mean that you are perfectly willing that God should keep right on forgiving the sins which are utterly hateful to Him, and greatly grieve Him, and yet you are unwilling to forgive a brother of offences which are infinitely less wicked and momentous against you.

Let your heart answer this plain question. But rest assured that you must be willing to forgive all trespasses against you if you would be forgiven by Christ of all your sins against Him. And remember that no forgiveness is fully complete which does not include the forgetting of the offences forgiven, so forgetting them as that they shall not be called up to stand in the way of treating the forgiven one with a truly Christian spirit, and in a practically brotherly manner. God forgets the sins, and all of the sins, of which He forgives us; and if we would be like Him, both now and in eternity, we must act like Him. Oh, for more of the forgiving spirit!—*C. H. Wetherbe.*