

Pastor and People.

BE STILL, MY SOUL.

Be still, my soul, the Lord is on thy side ;
Bear patiently the cross of grief and pain ;
Leave to thy God to order and provide ;
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul, thy best, thy heavenly Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past,
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake ;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul, the waves and winds shall know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord ;
When disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul ; when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed, we shall meet at last.

—From the German.

AMBITION.

As this is generally regarded as an undesirable trait, the word has rather a forbidding sound. Yet there are many things it is both proper and wise to be ambitious concerning. The tenth commandment forbids covetousness, yet the apostle says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts." That ambition furnishes one of the chief characteristics of an active, intelligent mind is only too apparent, and yet a nature with ambition left out would be but poorly equipped to cope with the stern, uphill conflicts of daily life. There seems to be an increasing lack on the part of parents, and with mothers, especially, of watchfulness over the development of the characteristics of their children. It is particularly delightful in reading the biography of eminent men and women of past days, to note with what care the mother almost invariably watched over and instructed the child while very young and during all the formative period of youth. It is not enough that food, raiment and warmth be provided ; some one must see to it that the clothing is properly fitted to the little form, that food is eaten and digested, that warmth is duly noticed and enjoyed. Just so, it is not sufficient that children appear to have sufficient pride, energy and ambition to carry them along creditably, but the different points of character should be narrowly watched as they manifest themselves and encouragement given to those tending in a right direction, and a strong check placed on the unfortunate and undesirable ones. There is no use in closing the eyes to the fact that there are many petty unworthy ambitions among men and women. It is the tendency of the age to strive to meet certain arbitrary requirements of fashion, of society, and of the world at large. The nobler ambitions of men and women of the past seem to have lost much of their attraction and charm.

The decoration of the house, the delicacies of the table, the thousand and one fripperies of toilet, the latest popular novel, the oft-recurring reception, all these unsatisfying and comparatively unimportant considerations crowd out much of the solid, substantial, manly and womanly occupations and ambitions of by-gone years. It is true, institutions for learning are more numerous as the years increase ; women are admitted freely to college halls, and the higher professions are open to them as well as to men, but are the aims and purposes higher or of as high an order to-day as they were years ago when less attention was accorded the superficial, showy decorations of the room and the attire, when books were read and re-read, and there was strong, healthy ambition in the hearts of the rising generation to excel in mental calibre and all the best graces of heart and soul ? We read in the book just published, depicting scenes in the life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, that when the apples were being prepared for the winter's cider apple sauce, Dr. Beecher proposed that he and the children should tell what they knew of Scott's novels to make the work go off faster. This made the work fly, "while Harriet often made a correction or supplied with joyful eagerness some points they had omitted." This was when the great writer was a mere child ; but the Beecher family was not the only one in which it was the custom to blend healthful occupation with mental stimulant, and so inspire even the children to know something useful and worth remembering. The wonder is that any thinking, reasoning being can become satisfied with the mere petty, unworthy ambition attaching to a desire to outshine a neighbour in the glitter of showy ornaments in parlour or chamber, or the gloss of fine dress when the soul's equipment for living and shining and climbing on, awaits the purposes and ambitions which fit it eventually for a higher and better life is incomplete. We can never be satisfied with progress already made when greater possibilities of soul culture are before us. Education only begins on earth, but the more the soul is trained to acquire and to enjoy the better and more complete the life on earth will be, and the greater we believe will be the capacity for further knowledge and enjoyment in heaven. Always pressing onward and coveting earnestly the best gifts, ambition will become only another name for lofty desires and very noble aspirations.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll !
Leave thy low-vaulted past !
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven, within a dome more vast,
Till thou alone art free,
Leaving thy outgrown shell by life's unresting sea !

—Christian-at-Work.

ENTERTAINMENT VERSUS WORSHIP.

The quickened thought of people both in the Church and out of it in these days of widespread agitation has started questions in all directions.

Whatever may be the fate and fruitage of Dr. Briggs' famous book "Whither," embracing twenty years of study and research, it will not cover the entire ground of inquiry and investigation. The slipping away from the safe anchorage of a sound orthodoxy, as held in the past, is not the only event that is sufficient to awaken apprehension and question as to final results.

There is much suggested in the alarming fact that there is a tendency to make the Church of the living God a theatre of entertainment rather than hold it sacred as the temple designed by the Great Head of the Church to be the place where worship in spirit and in truth must be offered by those who assemble there. There is an insinuating demand menacing the most sacred and vital interests of the Church at this time looking in the direction of exalting entertainment above worship in the places consecrated only to one object.

The music must be set to the scale of the opera to delight and enrapture the cultivated ear and taste as a specimen of fine art rather than that holy incense of devout worship breathing fervently the prayer for a closer walk with God and the nearer and closer communion which will make the face to shine and the heart to rejoice because of the holy fellowship. The head-lights and foot-lights of the pulpit must be so arranged as to send out the dazzling and blazing coruscations of an over-powering rhetoric to the astonishment of all who listen, though it may result more in the exaltation of the human than in the glory of the divine.

The aim to popularize the Church in the direction of transforming the hours of holy worship into hours of recreation and entertainment after the manner of the opera and play house, is a mistake which will react upon the church by dwarfing her influence and defeating the object of her grand mission. To spiritualize every service by keeping steady in view the chief end of man to be the glorifying of God, will demand the enthronement of the idea of worship in every part of the service.

Enough has been said in the Bible of the Church to prevent any unseemly embarrassment coming upon the membership if they are careful to observe and do according to the plain direction. The prompt and vigorous rebuke administered by Christ Himself in driving out from His sacred temple the horde of desecrators, is an instructive object lesson to the Christian world at this time.

The handwriting of God upon the walls of his earthly presence chamber, "Holiness becometh My house," presents no great difficulty in the interpretation thereof. An over-weening reaching out to win and hold the world by the means approved by the gay and godless world must end in an inglorious defeat of the Church in her noble mission.

It is claimed the formulated doctrine of the Confession of Faith in one age may need revision in another age to suit time and taste and season, but the cardinal principle of the Church's growth and vitality is settled for all time and needs no revision. "If Christ be lifted up, He will draw all men unto Him." The most popular thing, therefore, that the Church can do is to adhere firmly to the design and mission of the great Founder.

The strong arm of wealth ought never to be allowed to swing her threatening cudgel over God's heritage, and dictate the policy of the Church in any measure. As long as God holds control of the gold and silver of the world, He will put it in the way of His people, if they are faithful and true, to meet every obligation and demand in His work.—*Central West.*

CLEAN LIVING.

The Apostle James assures us that it is pre-eminently the duty of a Christian to "keep himself unspotted from the world." We are living in a world that is by no means morally clean. We walk amid impurities from a thousand sources. The most diligent and painstaking effort will not protect us from the near presence of things that may bring, and, in practice, do bring, defilement to multitudes of souls.

Two brothers are directed by their parents to go on an errand, at the end of a muddy street. One of them goes anxiously and carefully, watching every step, turning now to this side, now to that, to find the clearest and driest portion of the road. He comes home as clean as when he first set out. He has kept himself "unspotted" from the defilements of the way. The other pursues an opposite course. If there is a mud-hole, he goes splashing through it. If there is a garbage barrel, he rubs up against it, and gives it a lick and a poke. If there is a particularly dirty alley along the route, he investigates it. Dead dogs and cats are his delight. Holes in back fences, gutters running with mud, sooty corners, and foul-smelling paths, are his delight, and he comes home with torn clothes—that incorrigible source of terror to mothers, and disgust to all decent people—"the boy who is always getting into the dirt."

The errand of life on which all of us are sent, is performed under very similar circumstances. The road we must travel is by no means well kept or cleanly. By the grace and Spirit of God we may avoid its defilement. Watchfulness,—an eager desire to keep clean lives, and to walk in clean ways, is, however, constantly necessary. Living "unspotted from the world" often requires us to avoid tempting

paths and portions of the "city of destruction" that are thronged with eager and interested spectators. Dirt and dazzle are sometimes astonishingly near together. With all our care to choose clean ways, our treacherous feet will often lead us into the "back alleys of sin." We persuade ourselves that they cannot be so foul after all. It is a treacherous plea, and always leads to defilement which only bitter tears of repentance can wash out. But if a man is a Christian at all, the general course and tenor of his footsteps is towards clean ways and a clean life. He does not naturally seek the foul things. He does not watch eagerly for the garbage cart, or voluntarily turn rag-picker in the gutters of society. If there is a mud-puddle in his way, he goes around it. In other words, while the tendency of unconverted men is to grow more in love with the vile things and the sinful things of this world, and to be increasingly defiled therewith, the true Christian becomes more and more careful to avoid defilement, and to keep himself "unspotted from the world."

All this requires constant vigilance and constant prayer. The man who thinks that without divine help he can tread such a journey, has very imperfectly estimated the perils of that journey, or sadly over-estimated his own powers. If Paul could declare, in the sublime confidence of a living faith, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me," he was also obliged, in bitterness of soul to confess, "When I would do good, evil is present with me. Who of us, unaided, can claim to be sufficient for these things?"—*Christian Index.*

A REASONABLE SERVICE.

The service which Christ requires from His disciples is not an unjust or an unreasonable one. He is not a tyrant to impose heavy burdens and impossible tasks on his followers, but the reverse. His service is reasonable, His yoke is easy, His burden is light.

When a man is entirely consecrated to God, and in a position where God can use him, the service is then not grievous but joyous ; not irksome, but pleasant. It is when the will is not subdued, when man is not in harmony with God, that the service seems hard. If all the wheels in an engine work in harmony with the drive-wheel, everything moves along like a thing of life ; but if some of the cogs get out of joint, then there is trouble. So, when a Christian is right with the Master, he can surmount obstacles, conquer difficulties and triumph over every trouble. But when he lets some little doubt or fear or indulgence get in his heart, then he is well crippled.

The service to one who is in perfect harmony with God and His laws is as pleasant and easy as flying to a bird or swimming to a fish.

The service is reasonable because it is pleasant, possible and profitable. Even the weakest Christian is, through grace imparted, stronger than all the powers of darkness combined. Ye can do all things through Christ strengthening you ; and all things work together for good to them that love and serve God.

UNSPOKEN WORDS.

"It is impossible but that offences will come." Every day brings its provocations, its perplexities, its misunderstandings. Irritations arise ; frictions make their appearance ; hurts are received. How hard it is amid all these conditions to guard one's tongue, and leave unspoken what is best covered by silence !

A mosquito bitemay, if properly cultivated, develop into an ulcer. Keep the skin thoroughly abraded, sprinkle on a little acid, touch it with minute articles of poison, and one may have a canker or a gangrene. The body will soon discharge its impurities into that sunken place, and help convert it into an open sewer. But let a mosquito bite alone or apply a little sweet oil and ammonia, and it soon disappears, leaving no trace.

A little wound in the spirit may be cultivated until the whole nature is infected. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." "Gentle silence prevents untold trouble." "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."—*Christian Advance.*

MOSES AND HIS CRITICS.

It is refreshing to find such firm faith in the Bible, in a geologist of such world-wide fame like Sir J. William Dawson, F.R.S. In the *Contemporary Review* there is an article by him on "Genesis, and Some of its Critics." Unhappily, he finds these critics in men who sit in theological chairs in universities, determining the human processes by which the Scriptures were composed, and sneering at every man who does not accept their dicta. Against these "critics of yesterday" Sir William Dawson contends that the editor or author of "the noble composition contained in Genesis iii." and was a man who knew what he was saying : was not a writer of such absolute mental imbecility as our modern doctors make out ; that he had profound and accurate conceptions of physical facts ; that there is no such contradiction between Genesis i. and ii. as these modern critics suppose ; that the Bible account of Eden is sustained by recent geographical researches ; and that the antiquity, unity and genuineness of the early chapters of Genesis will not suffer from literary, linguistic and scientific enquiries, however far they be.