

Pastor and People.

Trust in God.

Nothing is more becoming or natural in children than entire confidence in the promise and care of a parent. A father stands in a child's mind as the embodiment of courage and power, the mother, of love and goodness. The feeling of trust is perfect. No anxiety on their part, while father has the charge. There is a certainty that all is well. Neither sickness nor trouble diminishes this trust. It grows stronger than danger. Danger drives the little ones to the parent's arms, and there is a sense of security which is felt nowhere else. Now "as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." God has said that He is "a father to the fatherless," and He promises to be our father, if we will be His children. Will a father let his child perish, if he is able to save him? If he asks for bread, will he give him a stone? And can we not confide in our heavenly Father's promises, and trust His ability to care for us? "Yes," says one professing Christianity; "we can trust Him." There is no difficulty in trusting in the Lord for food, when our granaries and store-houses are well filled; for health, when sickness comes not near our dwelling; or for prosperity, when the waves of adversity are all quiet. But let misfortune come. Let the greedy flame devour our dwelling, and all our substance; can we trust the Lord to supply our wants? Let sickness come; can we trust Him to care for us then? Would a kind father pity his child, and care for all his need? Yes, all his wants would be supplied; and how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask Him. "Ask and ye shall receive." Can we trust in Him? "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Can we believe it? We can leave our affairs with the Lord when all goes well; can we when all goes wrong? We can rest quietly in the hands of God when in health; can we when sick? What is confidence in God good for, if we have it only when we could get along very well without it, and it leaves us when we most need it? What is a ship good for that cannot be trusted to go to sea, but must be kept in the harbor? or a sail that will split in the first gale? Patience, when there is no danger; hope, when everything is within our reach;—what are all these worth? But such is the trust that some people have in God; and when trial and adversity come, it will be found worthless. We need a trust that will take hold on God in every trying hour; and hold on through whatever may come. Consider that as uncertain, which is felt in time of joy and prosperity. Look upon that only as genuine trust in God that does not fail in hours of darkness, when every earthly resource is cut off. If it fail not in time of trial, we may feel that we have something on which we can depend, and have confidence to say in the language of inspiration, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall the olive bring forth; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and will joy in the God of my salvation."

Praying for What We Don't Expect.

I happened once to be staying with a gentleman—a long way from here—a very religious kind of a man he was; and in the morning he began the day with a long family prayer that we might be kept from sin, and might have a Christ-like spirit, and the mind that was also in Christ Jesus; and that we might have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. A beautiful prayer it was, and I thought "What a good kind of man you must be." But about an hour after I happened to be coming along the farm, and I heard him hallowing and scolding, and going on finding fault with everybody and everything. And when I came into the house with him he began again. Nothing was right, and he was so impatient and so quick tempered. "Tis very provoking to be annoyed in this way, Daniel. I don't know what servants in these times be good for but to worry and vex one, with their idle, slovenly ways." I didn't say nothin' for a minute or two. And then I says, "You must be very much disappointed, sir." "How so, Daniel? Disappointed?" "I thought you were expecting to receive a very valuable present this morning, sir, and I see it hasn't come." "Present, Daniel?"—and he scratched his head, as much as to say, "Whatever can the man be talking about?" "I certainly heard you speaking of it, sir," I says quite coolly. "Heard me speak of a valuable present. Why, Daniel, you must be dreaming. I've never thought of such a thing." "Perhaps not, sir, but you talked about it; and I hoped it would come whilst I was here, for I should dearly love to see it." He was getting angry with me, now, so I thought I would explain. "You know, sir, this morning you prayed for a Christ-like spirit, and the mind that was in Jesus, and the love of God shed abroad in your heart." "Oh, that's what you mean, is it?" and he spoke as if that weren't anything at all. "Now, sir, wouldn't you be rather surprised if your prayer was to be answered? If you were to feel a nice, gentle, loving kind of spirit coming down upon you, all patient, and forgiving and kind? Why, sir, wouldn't you come to be quite frightened like; and you'd come in and sit down all in a faint, and reckon as you must be a going to die, because you felt so heavenly minded?" "He didn't like it very much," said Daniel, "but I delivered my testimony, and I learnt a lesson for myself, too. You're right, Captain Joe; you're right. We should stare very often if the Lord was to answer our prayer."—From "Daniel Quorn and his Religious Notions," by Rev. Messrs. G. & J. Peck.

"In Good Hands."

A young man lay on his death-bed. For weeks and months consumption had been bringing his body to the "narrow house." Medical skill had been exhausted, and given up the case as hopeless. Change of climate had proved no real benefit. The attorney had been called, and the last will and testament made—the things of this world all been settled. "You have attended to your temporal matters to-day?" said the pastor. "Yes," said he, "I am at rest in that respect; I have put them into good hands. Now, if my other matters (meaning his spiritual interests) were as satisfactorily settled." The pastor said, "Are they not in good hands?" "Yes," said he, but it seems that I cannot get the certainty of it." Some days afterwards he left us, as we trust, to know by a blessed experience the faithfulness of the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and I thought as I left that chamber of death, and the interests of our souls in good hands? Whose hands? The Son of God's, the Saviour Jesus, Christ the appointed, the Good Shepherd, the Bishop of souls. Blessed be God for Him who bears these three precious names! He is the foundation of our hopes. God has given us the strongest assurance of safety. He chose us in eternity; gave us to His Son. He satisfied the claims of law and justice by His death; called us into His kingdom and grace by His Holy Spirit; sanctifies our natures by His word and Spirit; conquers all our enemies; makes all things work together for our good; and has promised to come again to bring us to His kingdom of glory. "For when He did predestinate them He also called, and whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified." "For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." Yes, thank God, the believer is safe, all his interests are "in good hands."

Churchly Churlishness.

If there is any place under heaven where good manners should be practiced, that place is the Church. But, in many instances, it is the very home of churlishness and boorishness. A stranger, dropping in, finds himself in an atmosphere of such Arctic chilliness and freezing rigidity, that his first thought is that he has suddenly intruded into a spiritual refrigerator. There he stands, uncertain whether to advance or back out. No one shows him a paw, or speaks a kind word to him, or gives him the slightest look of encouragement or welcome. He feels that he is a stranger, an intruder, that he is not welcome, that to stay is only to be tolerated. What wonder the service has no effect on the man? or, if any, that he retires after the benediction more hardened than softened? He went to gather strength for the grand purpose of a new life; he leaves feeling that there is no strength or grace to be extracted from this frosty selfishness which has built itself a temple in the name of Christianity.

Now had some kind-hearted Christian stepped up to this diffident new-comer, and, frank in speech, and warm and sympathetic in heart, grasped him by the hand and bade him welcome, and given him to understand that the Church wanted him, and had work for him to do, how different the result. Ah! when will the Church be as wise as the devil? When at the doors will a stranger meet a welcome as bright and cheery, as hearty and warm, as he finds at those doors which open on death and hell? Fill the Church with an atmosphere of radiant kindness, of genial welcome. Let there be exhibited the courtesy, not of outward deportment and etiquette only, but that also of the heart. Be pleasant. Keep back your antipathies. But show your good-will. Be hospitable, for there is nothing like Church hospitality. Thereby you entertain angels who will come again. Then every flower of Christian grace will bloom in richest colors, and every stranger that enters will be conscious of an attractiveness and a warmth that will irresistibly bind it to him as his home.—Christian at Work.

Take Them to Jesus.

Burdens are numerous and heavy. What shall we do with them? Many are carrying them. Is that the best way we can do? They cling to us with strange tenacity. They load us down by day, and worry us by night. It is thought to be a good sign for one to become sleepless under responsibilities. A shrewd financier was asked by bank directors how they could insure the success of the bank. His reply was wise from a mere worldly standpoint, "Get a president who will take the bank to bed with him." On the same principle we should seek pastors who will take their churches to bed with them. But there is a better way; take banks and churches to Christ, cast all burdens on Him, for He careth for us, and we shall have rest, and yet not lose zeal. In no other way can we escape the burdens without loss of interest and energy, but in this way we escape worry and increase energy. Sleep sweetly, and work refreshingly; feel the full weight of the burden, and find Almighty strength carrying it. We learn to live well when we spontaneously hasten to Christ with all our cares; lay them all on Him, and feel that He is our wisdom and strength at all times, in all labors and trials.—Baptist Union.

For the ill of this life, if there was no silence there would be no music. Ignorance is a spur to knowledge. Darkness is a pavilion for the Almighty; a foil to the painter to make his shadows.—George MacDonald.

Courage.

"Art thou weary, art thou languid, Art thou sore distressed? Come to me, saith one, and coming Be at rest. "Hath he marks to lead me to him, If he be my guide? In his feet and hands are wound-prints, And his side. "Hath he diadem as Monarch, Hath his brow adorned? Yes, a crown, 'a very surety, But of thorns. "If I and him I follow, What his gladness here? Many a sorrow, many a labor, Many a tear. "If I still hold closely to him, What hath he at last? Sorrow vanquished, labor ended, Jordan past. "If I ask him to receive me, Will he say no nay? Not till earth, and not till heaven Pass away. "Finding, following, keeping, struggling, Is he sure to bless? Angels, martyrs, prophets, virgins, Answer, 'Yes?'"

Beseeking.

The Gospel contains few commands, but many entreaties. Jesus invited, persuaded, exhorted, but seldom commanded. Miraculous mercies were not given on condition of service, but in generous zeal to relieve distress. If the healed became loyal to their Redeemer, it was not from compulsion, but from the choice of their own hearts, the voluntary love and gratitude of their own souls. In the same spirit the apostles taught. Their letters to the churches abound in counsel, advice, entreaty, warning, invitation, promise; but the language of authority is seldom used. This fact denotes the genius of the Christian system and Christian life. The service of Christ is pre-eminently freedom. Arbitrary rules, exact regulations, specific organizations, uniform prescriptions, are unknown, and great liberty for every believer is allowed, the chief restraint being the internal force of love, responding to the gentle beseechings and advice of the inspiring word. Thus the Lord begins at the heart and works out; relies upon love rather than law; takes away the love of sin, and thus removes the terror of the law; makes men free from wicked purposes, so that commands are not needed, since persuasion is effective.

The Best Preaching.

The Interior speaks of a Presbyterian minister receiving less than four hundred dollars a year, whom the editor would rather hear preach than any other man known to him. We wondered whether he meant Father Gray, sometime of Mt. Carroll, Ill., whom we reckon one of the extraordinary preachers. The case is worth a note, because it is full of instruction for young men. The great popular preachers do very little for the thought and current opinion of the church. Let any reader ask, who has done most for him? What preacher helped you, formed your thought, fixed your opinions? Very few will think of men now famous, as the specially useful ministers in their personal history. Oftentimes it is some man then, and still, in an humble pastorate. The reasons for this fact are various. One of them is, that a class of popular gifts interest without instructing. We are pleased, elevated, half-inspired, but nothing settles down into our blood and bone. Another is, that popular preaching usually, not always, avoids matters of difference, and seizes great lines of harmony in thinking. Old Hundred, in theology, is performed grandly, gloriously. But the avoided topics are those in which thought is at work, and where opinions are taking shape. The men who face the disputed ground, and man the picket line of discussion, are the heroic victors in this campaign. When it is over, statelier figures ride over the field and proclaim the victory; but the dead men under their feet are the brave soldiers that won the fight. If you wish to be a popular preacher, and have certain natural gifts, we can furnish a simple recipe. Be always interesting in what you say, but never say anything that could offend anybody who attends your church. If you are a conscientious man, anxious to do your best work for God, you will do your best thinking, and put it into your sermons, whether the young light-heads or the old hard-heads stay in your congregation or go to some other. They will probably go away and you will have small honor from men, but you may do more than popular men to shape the mind of one generation. We listened, when at home, to a man of the instructive and pioneering group. It is, to us, a luxury to hear him preach; but there is not the smallest danger that any great church will call him from his little country congregation. What is he doing year after year? He is getting the ears of young men who will be ministers, of laymen who shape the thought of their neighbors. He is pouring himself into his age, and not a drop of his life is spilled on the ground. We wish young men who are able to tread this high path, would learn the little lesson, that salary and honors count really for very little; that a man who has fifty pairs of ears to address, and lives on crusts, may do a great man's great work in the spirit and power of our Divine Master. Father Gray used to have an audience of about two score souls, but many a chance listener like ourselves has heard unutterable things, and received ineffaceable impressions from his words. This is to be one of God's prophets, to speak His truth straight into men's souls, to work out in the pulpit, what God works in the closet.—The Methodist.

CONTEMPLATIVE admiration is a large part of the worship of the Deity. Nothing can array us so near to God and heaven as this. The mind can walk beyond the eye, and (though in a cloud) pass into heaven while we live. Man is the soul's perspective glass, when he long remove, the discoloring of his own nature.—Thomson.

Serious Things To-morrow.

Many ages ago, a Greek nobleman made a feast for his friends. In the midst of his mirth, a messenger entered in great haste with a letter. It was from a distance, to tell him that a plot had been formed by his enemies to kill him that night. "My master desired me to say that you must read the letter without delay for it is about serious things." "Serious things to-morrow," said the nobleman, as he threw the letter aside, and took up his cup of wine. The delay was fatal. Before the feast was at an end, his enemies rushed into the hall and slew him. "What folly," you say; "why did he not attend to the warning?" But are you not acting in the same manner? The world with all its pleasures and profits to-day; serious things to-morrow. Give heed to this friendly warning. Forsake your evil ways. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and without whom you must be forever lost. He invites you by His Holy Spirit in His Word: "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;" for "now is the day of salvation." Serious things to-day!

Influence of a Holy Life.

There is a power about a heart consecrated to God—a power acting through all time—exhaustless, chainless—only to be computed and realized in a greater world. So the soul, drawing down power from heaven, moves on life with wonderful results, reaching from age to age. Each soul, as it moves on its glorious way towards heaven, makes a ripple on the sea of time, which widens and expands till it breaks on the golden shore, safely landing waifs of infinite value, who would have otherwise been lost.

A Sermon from a Pair of Boots.

There lived forty years ago, in Berlin, a shoemaker who had a habit of speaking harshly of all his neighbours who did not feel exactly as he did about religion. The old pastor of the parish, in which the shoemaker lived, heard of this and felt that he must give him a lesson. He did it in this way: He sent for the shoemaker one morning, and when he came in, said to him:

"Master, take my measure for a pair of boots." "With pleasure, your reverence," answered the shoemaker; "please take off your boot." The clergyman did so, and the shoemaker measured his foot from toe to heel, and over the instep, noted all down in his pocket-book, and then prepared to leave the room. But as he was putting up the measure, the pastor said to him:

"Master, my son also requires a pair of boots."

"I will make them with pleasure, your reverence. Can I take the young man's measure?"

"It is not necessary," said the pastor; "the lad is fourteen, but you can make my boots and his from the same last."

"Your reverence, that will never do," said the shoemaker, with a smile of surprise.

"I tell you, sir, to make my son's on the same last."

"No, your reverence, I cannot do it." "It must be—on the same last."

"But, your reverence, it is not possible, if the boots are to fit," said the shoemaker, thinking to himself that the old pastor's wits were leaving him.

"Ah, then master shoemaker," said the clergyman, "every pair of boots must be made on their own last, if they are to fit, and yet you think that God is to form all Christians exactly according to your own last, of the same measure and growth in religion as yourself. That will not do either."

The shoemaker was abashed. Then he said:

"I thank your reverence for this sermon, and I will try to remember it, and to judge my neighbours less harshly in the future."

The Lepers of Jerusalem.

We walked across to the Zion gate, and, mounting the city wall there—an uneven and somewhat broken, but slightly promenade—followed it round to its junction with the Temple Wall and to Robinson's Arch. Underneath the wall by Zion gate dwell, in low stone huts and burrows, a considerable number of lepers, who form a horrid community by themselves. These poor creatures, with toothless feet and fingerless hands, came out of their dens and assailed us with piteous cries for charity. What could be done? It was impossible to give to all. The little we threw them they fought for, and the unsuccessful followed us with whetted eagerness. We could do nothing but flee, leaving Demetrius behind as a rear-guard. I should have had more pity for them if they had not exhibited so much maliciousness. They knew their power and brought all their loathsomeness after us, thinking that we would be forced to buy their retreat. Two hideous old women followed us a long distance, and, when they became convinced that further howling and whining would be fruitless, they suddenly changed tone, and cursed us with healthful vigor. Having cursed us, they hobbled home to roost.—Charles Dudley Warner, in the Atlantic.

We love to think that religious life is the growth of all the faculties, and not a slow strangulation of them. As we look at it, religion no more cramps a man than wings do a bird, or fins do a fish. It supplies him with propelling power. A Christian man should be an active man—active in every fibre, vibrating with energy. Great injury has been done religion by allowing people to regard it as a mild form of slavery, a kind of bondage to goodness, in which they consented to be tied up that they might not hurt themselves or others. But it is not such religion as this; at least, in the New Testament. The gospel Christ preached, and Paul preached is a gospel of liberty, and not of slavery.—Golden Rule.

Watch the Lips.

Clamorous words, wrathful, testy, peevish, bitter, sneering words, curt speaking and detraction, are answerable for large measures of human misery. Anger, says Chrysostom, rides upon noise as upon a horse; still the rider, and the rider is in the dust. Solomon's sayings about brawling women, of whom he must have had many a specimen among his thousand wives and concubines, given him of God, perhaps, as whips and scourges for his sensuality and polygamy, have found many to respond to them. A sharp temper and a high-keyed voice in a wife and mother are enough to drive out all comfort from a home, and to make even a bar-room and its company a desired refuge. David, when he asked God to keep the door of his lips, had been driven out by Saul, to seek shelter with Achish, king of Gath, and he prays that in his trouble he may not say anything hurtful to the religion of Israel before idolatrous Philistines, nor utter any repining words against his God. And, like David, we should be specially careful of our words in the day of trouble, or of ill-health, or of bad condition of body; for then we are like the hot springs of Iceland, that need only the provocation of a trifling in, to return steam and scalding water and showers of stones. A parent, or a school teacher, will think that children act worse some days than at other times, and like creatures possessed, and will punish accordingly, when it is only some trouble of his own that made it seem so. And so, too, Sabbath services will be disparaged, neighbors harshly judged, or God's ways repined at, when, in a better frame ourselves, we should have been pleased and satisfied. We are sometimes like matches, ready to take fire at a touch, and hardly safe to be dropped about anywhere.

Words of detraction and slander require the watch. It is not all mention of a neighbor's faults and evil deeds that is wrong; for we cannot but notice gross faults, and to speak of them in a right spirit may be perfectly right, and needful for self-defence and the good of society. The sin and wrong is in being quick to see and publish faults, magnifying them, imagining them, meddling with them when it is none of our business to do so, and speaking of them from promptings of envy, resentment, and rivalry. A slanderous tongue moves as naturally in the element of hatred, as a fish in the water. One who loves his neighbor as himself, and seeks to do unto others as he would they should do unto him, can hardly be a slanderer. The mischief of detraction springs from a mean, unloving spirit, soured by disappointment, fretted by envy, urged on by meddlesomeness and miserable curiosity. When one with such a frame goes from house to house with the preface, "They say, or they do say, but I don't know how true it is, that this man drinks," or "that man and his wife don't live very pleasantly together;" or, "that man did not come by his money very honestly;" or, "this woman is no better than she should be"—it is very probable that then a busybody and slanderer is at work who greatly needs the prayer, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Random Readings.

As sin darkens the mind and hardens the heart, it should be hated cordially and forsaken utterly.—Rom. iv. 9.

The body of our prayer is the sum of our duty; and as we must ask of God whatever we need, we must labour for all that we ask.—Jeremy Taylor.

He that hath love can no more be motionless than the aspen in the gale, the sere leaf in the hurricane, or the spray in the tempest. As well may hearts cease to beat as love to labour.—Spurgeon.

A man who has humor, and sees things from a judicious point of view, is almost always able to call good-nature and happiness to his side, and troubles are not half so troublesome, nor are cares half so sharp, while he has such a faculty within him.

When read aright, the whole Book of God contains whispers of particular love to individual sufferers, which enter the ear that grace has opened, and soothe the heart that was ruffled by manifold vexations. The key to all is, "Christ is mine, and God views me in Him."

We heard tell of a poor broken-down old woman who sat shivering in her smoky chimney corner, her eyes dimmed and her ears dulled by reason of age, and on being asked what she was doing muttering away to herself, she replied, "Counting my mercies, my child."

Life has such hard conditions that every dear and precious gift, every rare virtue, every pleasant faculty, every genial endowment, love, hope, joy, wit, sprightliness, benevolence, must sometimes be put into the crucible to distill the one elixir—patience.—Gail Hamilton.

A MARRIED man falling into misfortune is more apt to retrieve his situation in the world than a single one, chiefly because his spirits are soothed and retrieved by domestic endearments, and his self-respect kept alive by finding that, although all abroad he is a little world of love at home over which he is a monarch.—Jermy Taylor.

"THERE is too much jelly-fish morality in our churches—too many Christians must be classed among the 'invertbrates.' We need to cultivate a more stalwart morality. We should cherish that chastity of honor which, as Burke says, feels a stain like a wound. But alas! over the doors of how many churches might be hung up the sign: 'Wanted—moral stamina.'—Examiner and Chronicle.

THERE is much in the expression of the poet: "Guard well your thoughts: your thoughts are heard in heaven." Our musings and meditations, all our fitting emotions and thoughts, of which men know nothing—these are fully understood in the world above. How careful should we be to think only that which is good, and of which we will be willing to give an account.