

Christian Endeavor.

CONTINUAL WITNESSING.

REV. W. S. M'TAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE

Aug. 27.—Acts 26 : 22 ; Psalm 34 : 1-4.

What is a witness? One who bears testimony in a case. John the Baptist was properly called a witness for Christ, because he bore testimony to the fact that Jesus would bear away the sin of the world. (Jno. 1 : 29). The apostles were called witnesses, and, as they entered upon their special work after Christ had ascended into heaven, they bore testimony to the fact that He had died, that He was raised from the dead, that He showed Himself alive after His resurrection, that he ascended into heaven, and that He was there exalted to give remission of sins. Every Christian to-day is a witness for Christ, for he bears testimony to the fact that Christ has saved him, and that He is able to save all those who put their trust in Him.

I. How do we bear witness for Christ? By professing Him before the world. When we, in the presence of the Church, make a profession of our faith, we declare in substance, that we are sinners, that we cannot save ourselves, that we have accepted Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and that we are trusting implicitly in the merits of His atoning death. When we thus confess Him, we declare that we believe Christ has taken away our sins, that we regard Him as worthy of the fullest confidence, that He has a right to rule over us, and that we intend to follow Him.

By our example, also, we witness for Christ. Jesus taught His disciples that if they would let their light shine before men, they would glorify their Father in heaven. We are told, that when the heathen saw the pure and holy lives of the members of the early Christian Church, they were so impressed, that many of them resolved to turn away from their own gods, and seek to know the Saviour who had done so much for the Christians. When to-day, a man who has been wicked, impure, and vile, turns away from his sin and continues to lead a holy and consistent Christian life, he bears powerful testimony to the truth that the religion of Christ can meet the needs of the soul, and lift man up to high and noble things. When a man suffers patiently under trial, those who see him, cannot fail to be impressed with the thought, that though Christ afflicts with the one hand, He comforts and upholds with the other. When a Christian, on his death-bed, meets the last enemy without a shudder, his death is a glorious testimony to the fact that the religion of Jesus Christ can sustain the soul when passing away to be with God.

II. We should witness continually. When Paul was converted, he was told that he must be a witness, and, for about 38 years, he was faithful to his high commission. He could say, "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great." Some can witness very well for Christ at the communion table, but very indifferently when they stand behind a counter. Some witness well at church, but very poorly on the market. Some witness well at a religious meeting, but fail at a party. Some do well during Lent, but alas for them when the Lenten season is over!

III. If we would witness continually we must receive help from above. (John 15 : 5). Paul said, "Having, therefore, received help of God, I continue witnessing." As the apostle required help from God, so do we. His temperament, his circumstances, and his early training, were all different from ours, but, just as he required assistance, so do we, and as he received help, so shall we, if we earnestly and humbly pray for it.

Phillips Brooks said, speaking of ministers: "Men are to get from us painfully what we have got most painfully from God." Without wrestling prayer and laborious study there can be no helpful preaching. A good sermon must be toll for.

generous support, consistent example, and diligent attendance, they have been a great source of strength to Knox Church, and it is no wonder that its members, among whom she was universally beloved, feel her loss almost as much as the members of her own family. To those who knew her best, Mrs. Watt seemed to be an embodiment of Christian love. She was truly a helpmeet to her husband, and "her children will rise up and call her blessed." Although she was not demonstrative in her piety, Mrs. Watt was possessed of a very gentle and affectionate disposition, which always manifested itself in kind words and loving deeds. To her, truly, belonged the "ornament of a meek, and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price." Her love to the Lord Jesus Christ was supreme; her duty to Him was always her first concern, and, in her latter years, she attained a maturity of Christian experience that was remarkable. She has left behind a shining example of faith and love. May it be copied.

SUNDAY CARS.

Matthew 18th, 19th and 20th.

Mr. Editor: Let me recommend the above texts to all Christians opposed (and all should be opposed) to Sunday street cars. Have there been any united meetings of Christians, with this one subject for prayer? God will honour petitions for the observance of His own day. If the Churches, if Christians, do this, surely mammon cannot prevail.

LAYMAN.

BRANTFORD YOUNG LADIES' COLLEGE.

In another column our readers will find the announcement for the re-opening of the Brantford Young Ladies' College, on September 6th. It is scarcely necessary for us to say anything on behalf of an institution so long identified with our Church, and so well and favourably known by the ministers and elders. At the recent meeting of the General Assembly, the commissioners had an opportunity of visiting the college and its beautiful grounds, and also of seeing the students at work. There was but one opinion expressed, that for situation, healthy surroundings, home comforts, and thorough training, not only in the solid English branches, but also in those accomplishments deemed essential to a finished education, no college in the Dominion can show a better record. The past year has been a most successful one, and the enrolments for next year are equally promising.

EGOTISM.

If asked what egotism really is, the majority of people would promptly answer, vanity or selfishness. But we shall find, if we think, that more is required than these "short methods" of explanation. Whatever tendency there may be in egotism to lead to vanity and selfishness, they are not its inevitable accompaniments. For the egotist may be morbidly humble, and he may be capable of acts of great unselfishness. We shall find in egotism a variety of ingredients, some of them of directly opposite kinds one to another; and we shall notice that they are combined in various proportions in the different classes of egotists whom we shall consider. Not only vanity and selfishness, with their kindred vices of pride and ambition, but an overstrained conscientiousness—a morbid self-distrust and humility, a weakness of moral fibre and want of self-control, as well as a particular intellectual cast of mind, may all be found in various forms of egotism.

Before thinking of the most objectionable and inveterate kind of egotists, let us consider three of the more venial sort—the ostentatious, the intellectual, and the religious. The famous saying in *Punch*, "it is worse than wicked, it is vulgar," might perhaps be applied to the first of these classes; which, full of the worldly importance which wealth confers, will flaunt its horses and carriages, its wines, its

furniture and style of living, making them at once the staple of conversation with the most casual acquaintance. Perhaps a plea for mercy may be raised, on the ground that the vanity of this kind of egotist cannot be very deep-seated, since he tacitly admits that his merits rest not on himself but on his possessions, and that if he should happen to lose them, he would be a person of small consideration.

There is another class of persons who are apt to become egotists from the intellectual construction of their minds. The study of human nature and character being to them the subject of paramount interest, they naturally study their own mental and moral characteristics in order to arrive at true views on the subject. How can they, they might ask, obey the great philosopher's maxim, "Know thyself," without the closest and most concentrated self-study? The observations they may make of others are liable to the grossest mistakes, for the secret springs of other minds are veiled from them; and as they are well aware that their own friends misread them, so are they equally convinced that they must often misread others, and accuse or excuse them when accusations and excuses ought to be reversed. Even when these egotists turn their attention to those around them, they can only make conjectures about them by a process of comparison with the workings of their own minds. It must be admitted that the intellectual egotist has something to say in his own excuse, and that his egotism may have little of the alloy of vanity or selfishness. Christopher North is said to have been quite free from these faults, though he could talk all day about himself. "No one was ever tired of his form of egotism," as we read the other day in a review. Wordsworth has some claims to belong to the same class, and it would not be difficult to mention others. The religious egotist is a being deserving of much pity. He is one in whom conscientiousness is the strongest element. Indeed, his conscience is not merely fully but abnormally developed. Born in an introspective age, his natural tendency is further increased by his religious views. If they happen to be in agreement with one ecclesiastical party, he will be for ever pulling himself up by the roots to see if the required sense of "assurance" is his. If with the other, he will rack his soul with minute systems of self-examination, analysing and dissecting his motives till every symptom of his overstrained soul becomes as interesting to him as do bodily symptoms to the hypochondriac. No spoilt and exacting invalid could demand more attention than this poor sickly soul of his. If he escape the danger religious melancholy he cannot escape the just charge of egotism, if Mrs. Browning be right in saying:—

"We are wrong always when we think too much
Of what we think or are: albeit our thoughts
Be verily bitter as self-sacrifice,
We're no less selfish."

Mrs. Browning, at any rate, would refuse to acquit him of selfishness, though it be of a refined kind. He has passed the lawful limit which Bishop Barry laid down at the Church Congress, "of duty and love to the great self within us," the kind of self-love that would keep us from acting unworthily of our highest interests.

Let us now turn our attention to the worst kind of egotist from a moral point of view—the selfish egotist. If this annoying person (of either sex) has had the misfortune of being an only child, his fault will probably be aggravated by his surroundings. There will be no brothers or sisters to correct it, and though school and college may do something for him, nature and home-training being more permanent forces will hold their own in the end. We might hope much from the influence of a wife if it were not that marriage often gives double force to egotism, making it, as the French say, "l'égoïsme à deux." His unalterable conviction that there is something intrinsically interesting, remarkable and important about himself that must raise him both in his own and in other people's eyes, is half ludicrous, half pathetic. The love which should have flowed out has struck inward, and he speaks of every thought, word or act of his own with a tenderness of affection that is almost touching. The thought of any kind

action that he has done—for we will not deny him that merit—will stir him to an eloquence of genuine emotion. Whether he do the unselfish deed or not self is sure to be the winner; for, in the first case, it will be enthroned for admiring contemplation; in the second, the reasons for abstaining from the act will be studied and elaborated and arranged in the most becoming garb. There may be a certain loveableness in the man, to begin with; his love of our approbation, his craving for sympathy, may make us feel a sort of fondness for him. But our affection will be of no robust nature but of the weaker sort, born of pity with a cross of contempt. For though history introduces to us some egotists of strong character, as a rule there is a weakness of moral fibre in the egotist, showing itself in the indulgent pampering of self, and in the absence of a proper reserve and reticence. If, too, he possessed more of the strength of self-reliance, he would weary his hearers less by the appeals he makes to their opinion, in his outpourings about himself. Perhaps it is this frequent weakness of character in the egotist that gives him, as a rule, but little influence over others. For to say that a man is an egotist is not the same as to say that he is a man of strong personality. He will have little influence of a positive kind, though he may unfortunately have much of the negative and baneful sort described in Mr. Meredith's well-known novel, the hero of which (if we may call him by such a name), by his hungry and insatiable egotism, seemed to absorb and exhaust the vital forces of all around him.

If it be true that, as Bishop Butler teaches us, "self-love is not selfishness till it usurp a monstrous and unnatural predominance," the fatal error of the egotist is not that his studies begin with self, but that they end there. It is, of course, impossible to know anything or anybody except through the impression they make on us, on our senses, our feelings, our reason—and the more naturally subjective a mind is, the more keenly sensitive it is to the force with which all that is outside itself strikes it. But the egotist is at fault when he stops at the point of discovering how others affect himself, regardless of how he affects others, whether for good or ill, for pleasure or pain. All that frets or annoys himself must be removed; any one who jars upon him must be avoided, till he has contracted his prison-walls to the smallest habitable dimensions. The consequence is that so far as his object—his own happiness—is concerned, he has fewer sources of it than any of his neighbours. To quote the famous line of Wordsworth in a somewhat new connection, "The inward eye which is the bliss of solitude" becomes in time the curse of it. For there is no pleasant sin that is more closely followed by its avenger. In extreme cases, a diseased egotism is not only an effect of unsoundness of mind, but a common cause of it, as Hawthorne has pictured for us in his weird and striking sketch, "Egotism, or the Bosom-Serpent," in which the principal character is from time to time put under restraint as insane. The tale may be in the form of a parable, yet its foundations are those of reality. But we need not turn to fiction for an example of the miseries of selfish egotism. A short time ago a book was published which made a deep impression on the literary world. It contained a minute and elaborate account of the life and the thoughts of a woman of genius—Marie Bashkirtseff. The self which she so carefully portrayed was to her the object of the intensest interest, the most absorbing study, and the most devoted worship. She was consumed by a devouring ambition. The very best the world had to offer of admiration, love, honour and glory must be secured for this insatiable idol, no matter at what cost of loss or suffering to others. Should any win a distinction she coveted, jealousy pierced her as with a sharp sword. Beautiful, gifted, interesting as she was, the book presents us with a speaking picture of the Nemesis of an unbridled egotism. Her sufferings were so great that we must needs pity as well as blame her; especially as, towards the end of her short life, the inward gaze was turned outward, at least, as regards one person, and poor Marie was able to love another besides herself. But her whole previous life is a comment, if we need one, on that saying of profound truth and wisdom, "He that loveth his life shall lose it," for the life spoken of there means surely the low aims and desires bred of the self-love of the egotist, —The Spectator.