

Pastor and People.

HEAVEN MY HOME.

Heaven! my home! What shall I say of thee?
Mid all the din of life, the ceaseless toil;
Thou art the star of hope and thou the goal
To which I nearer draw each weary mile.

O Land of Peace! where sin has no domain,
How oft my weary soul pines for thy rest
When all around is strife and foolishness,
O how I long to be beside the blest.

O home of pure delight! of lasting love!
Where many a friend is folded safe from care,
Thy star will lure me on 'mid gathering clouds,
And in the evening light I'll anchor there!
—Christopher King.

HOW BEST TO PROMOTE AND CULTIVATE THE SPIRITUAL INTERESTS OF THE CHURCH.*

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There can be no subject of more momentous importance to the truly Christian man than the one suggested by the title selected for the subject of this short paper—the promotion and cultivation of spirituality, the development of spiritual life.

The followers of Christ are the subjects of a spiritual kingdom, in which the laws to be observed are essentially spiritual, and in which all the relationships and environments partake of the same nature. The sustaining and supporting elements, the meats and drinks are spiritual; the occupation is a species of spiritual agriculture. As Paul says, "We have sown unto you spiritual things, and he naturally looked for a spiritual harvest." The same apostle's desire, as expressed to the church at Rome, was that "he might impart unto them some spiritual gift." Now, these gifts the Christian is zealous to secure "so that he may excel to the edifying of the Church." He should also desire them in order that he might be fortified and strengthened to oppose and wrestle against spiritual wickedness and be filled with all spiritual understanding and power.

The Scriptures frequently place that which is spiritual in juxtaposition to that which is carnal and natural, and show that they cannot co-exist in the same person at the same time. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

For these spiritual qualities and experiences we are altogether dependent upon 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,' and no wonder when spirituality emanates from so divine a source that it produces "life and peace." This paper is intended to enquire, "How best to promote and cultivate spirituality in the Church?" and I suggest:—By each individual member and office-holder seeking to promote and cultivate this quality in his own personal experience. A church is composed of an aggregate of units, and what the unit is so must the aggregate be. A congregation of carnally minded men can never produce a spiritually minded church. A man, or a church, that is spiritual loathes that which is carnal and impure. To promote and cultivate spirituality in the Church there must be an honest endeavor to walk in all the statutes of God blameless; a seeking, on the part of the individual member, after that which is holy, good and true. But you may ask, "How can this be done?"

1st. By studying the life and character, and following the example of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "He hath set us an example that we should follow in His steps." He was obedient to His Father's commands. He sought to do His Father's will. He employed His time and energies in helping the needy, sympathizing

with the distressed, teaching the ignorant, denying Himself for the benefit of others, and sacrificing Himself that others might be saved. To follow such an example we should be constantly promoting and cultivating spirituality of life and character.

2nd. We can best promote the quality suggested by living in an atmosphere of constant personal prayer. We are exhorted to pray without ceasing. No one can be spiritual without being prayerful. Spirituality springs from communion with God and is developed by constant intercourse at the throne of grace. *Personal, secret prayer*—"Enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy Father who seeth in secret." *Family prayer*—"As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." *Sanctuary worship*—"Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is." If these rules were observed complaints would be fewer, dishearteningly small congregations, badly attended week-evening prayer meeting, poor sermons and a low state of Christian experience, and in their place would be vitality, energy, generosity, charity and love. By prayer we can promote and cultivate spirituality in the Church.

3rd. By spiritual communion and intercourse the Church can promote and cultivate spirituality. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name." "As iron sharpeneth iron so doth the countenance of a man his friend." If the Church were truly spiritual it would delight in spiritual conversation and intercourse. How many professed Christians speak to one another about Christian experience? The number, I fear, is sadly limited! Many of us, I fear, would be terribly startled by a direct enquiry about our spiritual life; and yet the inspired writer tells us, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." If we loved God and each other as it is our privilege to love; and we talked to each other about the love and the goodness of God we should, by this means, decidedly promote and cultivate spiritual life in ourselves and in the Church.

4th. By generosity in giving for the spiritual elevation of our race, and for adding to the temporal comforts of our fellow creatures who are not so favorably circumstanced as ourselves, we should considerably promote and cultivate spirituality in the Church. The genius of Christianity is giving and sacrifice. A niggardly, selfish, and unsympathetic Christian is an anomaly. "The liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things he shall stand." "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." An excellent way to promote and cultivate spirituality in the Church is to promote and cultivate generosity and benevolence, and without these spirituality is impossible. "Will a man rob God?" Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" "In tithes and offerings." "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Mal. iii: 8-10. For temporal gifts God gives spiritual blessings.

5th. By keeping vows made to God we may promote and cultivate spirituality in the Church. "Better is it that thou should'st not vow than that thou should'st vow and not pay." A religious vow is making a promise to God and the vows we make, if of such a nature as God can accept, He expects us to redeem them. "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee." The psalmist several times refers to the vows he

made and said, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people."

When we begin the Christian life and identify ourselves with God's church and people we make vows or promises to God that we will live according to the laws and precepts of Christ and that we will give of our substance to advance his kingdom. How many seriously contemplate these vows after they are made? Are they not in too many cases, "as the morning cloud and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as smoke out of the chimney." Hosea. xiii. 3. How often are parental vows made at the baptismal font kept? How often are sick bed vows neglected after God has graciously restored us to health? We would urge, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for God hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed." Eccle. v. 4. If we would promote and cultivate true spirituality we must keep good faith with God and fulfil all the promises we make to Him.

And now what need I say more? Spirituality is of God! He is its author and finisher. If we would acquire spirituality in our life and conduct we must observe to do according to all the commandments He has enjoined upon us; the chiefest of which is to believe on the name of His only begotten and well beloved Son, for no sin is greater than the sin of unbelief, and nothing obscures spiritual life more than doubt.

If we would promote and cultivate the interests of the Church our faith in God must take the front rank; we must study the life of Christ and have our life modelled on His pattern; we must be regular and constant in prayer; have communion and intercourse with those like-minded with ourselves; be generous and keep all our vows made to God; by this means we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and so develop all the graces of the spirit.

London, January, 1895.

WEEK DAY WORK OF MR. MOODY'S CHURCH, CHICAGO.

The Chicago Avenue Church, is not simply a place for Sunday meeting, for its door stands open each day in the week. It meets the varied needs of various people. During the week are prayer-meetings and praise-meetings for all, class-meetings, social gatherings of the Church and Sunday School, a woman's meeting and children's meetings.

On Monday evening the Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavor meets. The value of this meeting cannot be told—it can only be seen in the lives of the earnest young Christians who go out from it, and in the lives that are reached through them.

Tuesday evening there are various gatherings. Here in one room the children's choir is rehearsing for the Sunday service, in another a large Bible class is holding its prayer-meeting, while in still another the Boys' Brigade meets.

On Wednesday afternoon is the woman's meeting. To many a tired, hard-working woman this little spot has come to be the most sacred place on earth. Here for a little while she may forget the toil and care as she listens to some precious message of comfort or cheer from the blessed Word; here she may speak of her burden if she have one, and be sure of the sympathy and prayers of the others; here she may bring some testimony to the Lord's goodness, some experience of answered prayer, that will help the sister next her, or across the way. As they sit together, there, in the quiet room, the faces grow brighter, and the tired look steals away as if it had no place there. The women who come are not simply the members of our own congregation but they come from the streets and

churches all about, invited and brought in at first by some young lady from the Institute who has visited them, or perhaps by some one who has found the place a blessing to herself. One dear little woman who is always in her place near the front said, "I shall always love Miss S—, because she invited me to the mothers' meeting." Miss S— is far away now, and perhaps will never know here all it meant when she made that little call in her parish, and left behind an invitation to the meeting.

The children and the babies come too, and while the mothers are in the meeting the little ones are entertained in the kindergarten rooms. There are young ladies from the Institute to take care of them and it is a pleasant sight to take a peep into the room. Jack is in the corner building a block-house, Willie and Mary are rolling a big ball back and forth, Jennie is rocking a doll, and the babies are sleeping peacefully in their carriages or seated in the laps of their temporary nurses, looking contentedly at picture-books. It would be hard to tell which longed most for Wednesday to come, the women or the children.

On Wednesday evening is the mid-week gospelservice, always well attended and fruitful in results. Thursday evening is reserved for social gatherings and entertainments. These are always free, and all are welcome. The regular church prayer-meeting occurs on Friday evening. It has been described by one as the "liveliest" prayer-meeting in the world. A young lady said "Usually people have to be urged to speak, but here they must be urged to stop speaking."

Most blessed results come from these week day services; souls are built up and strengthened in the Christian life, while others are won to the Saviour.

The children are not forgotten. The Boy's Brigade now numbers two hundred and fifty members, varying in age from eleven to seventeen, and is under the excellent leadership of Mr. W. B. Hilton. There is also a corps of young men from twenty to twenty-five years of age named "Moody's Volunteers," separated from the Brigade, which is well-attended and growing, and a cadet corps of sixty little boys who are still too young for the Brigade. About one hundred girls are taught calisthenic drill and there is a physical culture class for girls too old to be reached by the calisthenics. All these classes are under Mr. Hilton's direction.

The Industrial school for girls meets on Saturday afternoons. All the classes are for members of the Sunday School and only those are admitted. Their aim is not simply to drill and to teach but to win the children. They are only a means to an end—the end of bringing the young people into the fold of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A COMMON EXPERIENCE.

Last year there died a Christian minister eminent for his abilities and attainments in several departments of philosophy and literature. His death was preceded by a gradual decline of over a year. During this period he said to a friend who visited him that he found pleasure and profit in using the Psalter as a manual of devotion, not studying it critically, but turning the words of the Psalms into prayers on his own behalf. What a testimony to the excellence of these wondrous lyrics! They were written thousands of years ago under Syrian skies and amid the dim light of an introductory dispensation, yet they furnish the best vehicle of devotional exercise which even an accomplished scholar can find. They touch the whole gamut of religious experience, and always strike a true note. An unseen hand must have guided the tongue of the singer so that while what he utters is certainly human in expression and character, it is also divinely appropriate and just. All is suitable to man, yet well-pleasing to God. What would the believer do in times of trial and perplexity without the Psalms? —*The Christian Intelligencer.*

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