

"And the Oil Stays."

[An outline of Dr. Wayland Hoyt's conversation to the Cultures of the Christian Life, Memorial Church, Feb. 12, 1924. Reported especially for The National Baptist by Miss L. Richards.]

2 KINGS IV. 6.

Lay this down as a fundamental principle for the Christian life: We may have just as much of the grace and help of God as we are willing to receive. If we are unwilling, it is never in God, but always in ourselves. The oil stays only when there were no more vessels to fill with it.

Since the Father's arm sustains thee, Pray for me, I pray for thee, When a chastening hand retains thee, It is He.

Without measure, uncomplaining, In His hand Lay whatever thou canst not Understand; Though the world thy folly spurneth, From thy faith in piety turneth, Face thy inmost soul shall fill, Lying still.

Like an infant, if thou thinkest That can stand, Childlike, proudly pushing back The proffered hand, Counsel thy childish fear, Strength doth feed weakness; In His love if thou abides, He will guide.

Fearst sometimes that thy Father Hath forgot? When the clouds around thee gather, Doubt Him not. Always hath the daylight broken, Always hath His comfort spoken, Better hath He been for years Than thou art.

Therefore, whoso'er be holdeth Night or day, Know—His grace and His providence Good shall be. Crown of sorrow gladly take, Grateful wear for His sake, Sweetly bending to His will, Lying still.

To His own thy Saviour giveth Daily strength; To each troubled soul that liveth Peace at length; Weakest souls have the largest share Of this tender shepherd's care; Ask Him not when "When" or "How?" Only how!

Well, you will say, "That is very beautiful," and I say, "It is beautiful," and you will say, "It is the mood of faith," and I say, "It is the mood you ought to be in, and which we may all be in, if we will."

Whatever may be the external, there should always be within us a certain faith. There should be always such calmness as when Jesus spoke to the waves and said, "Peace, be still." It is not at all impossible that the Christian heart should be in steady daylight though there be mid-night inwardly.

I remember how I found that out; I never shall forget so long as I live. I do not suppose there was ever a fellow who, when he entered the ministry, had greater views than I had. For I said, "I shall do just what I please; I will always study and study; but I do not like this pastoral work, and I am not going to do it."

"I will trust you to attend to this," and it is always done. And so you see that faith is not only an object on which to rely, but it is also an object of reliance. You may say to a man, "Have faith in yourself." That is a good thing in certain directions, but not in religion. Samson had faith in himself, and he tumbled fearfully. The power that man had faith in could take care of his property, and he "wasted it in riotous living." Then what is it that on which faith is to lay? It is simply and always the divine promises.

We have great faith when we greatly lay hold of what God has promised. It is not an experimental knowledge of God's Word, and then you will know what God promises to do for you.

I was riding with Mr. Spurgeon one day last summer, and he was telling me how the Lord constantly helped him. And he said, "I don't like to have things go too smoothly; I like to have great burdens laid upon me." "Well," I said, "responsible as you are for \$100,000 a year, you seem as easy as if it were but a ha'penny."

And he said, "I pray about it when any great crosses come from which I must be delivered." And I said, "How do you pray?" And he said, "I get a promise; I find one which is applicable to my case, and I plead that promise." Faith is not an aerial spirit; it is not a tremendous outcry; it is quiet, because it has something on which it lays hold, i. e., what God has promised.

And now the reason why we do not have enough of the grace of faith is because we do not bring vessels enough. I say to a person who has become a Christian, "Here is the promise, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out, are you willing to confess Christ?'" "Yes, I am willing."

"And you do not hold anything back?" "No, I do not." "Well," I say, "here is the promise, 'If you confess me before men, I will confess you before my Father.' Do you believe it?" "Yes, I believe that." So this person brings the vessel of the Lord's promise, and the Lord pours into it the grace of faith, and she believes her sins forgiven. Many Christians stop right there; they never get beyond the forgiveness of their sins. They confess to the forgiveness of their sins. If one speaks, he always has a backward look. He says, "Ever so many years ago I gave myself to Christ, and he

forgot my sins." But he has only confessed; he has never brought to the altar a vessel of promise. It is as if a baby should be born, and stay a baby always, though he should live to be a hundred years old. Lots of Christians whose heads are whitened toward the grave have never gone further than the forgiveness of sins. Just think of the rich promises for us besides the forgiveness. There is the promise of the divine indwelling; "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Suppose I take the vessels of this promise, believe them. These, also, are Scripture promises concerning earthly care, a heavenly discipline, and that promise about "all things working together for good to them that love God." That means trouble with the servants in the kitchen, the dust gathering quickly when you have just swept it away; the breakfast burned which you were preparing for your husband when he should come home. It means all the crises, crosses, and the straits, and the bother. It is just like mosquito, that does not seriously wound, but only irritates. Suppose then you bring the vessel of that promise, that the Lord may pour in His grace.

Then there are promises concerning great extremity; as, for instance, that promise, "Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." They mace and they crook. One who had just been to Palestine brought back a mace; it was an oak club into which had been driven iron nails. It contained a very tremendous blow, and was necessary, for the shepherd must be well armed. There is always the vulture hovering over the flock, and there are vipers which must be smitten down. There are banditti prowling around who get their living by predatory raids on the shepherd.

Then "the rod" is the shepherd's crook. It is that with which he points out the way to the flock as he goes before it, with which he lifts over some gully the lamb too weak to go himself. That is the meaning of the rod and staff.

Well, you are in extremity; it seems to you as if you were in the valley of the shadow of death. Then what are you to do? Bring the vessel of a Scripture promise like this. Do not strain and struggle and sweat. Look through this Word of God and find a promise which exactly meets your case. If you knew the treasures God had laid for you in this Word, you would have more faith; for you would know more what you had to believe. Borrow, then, vessels of promise, that the Lord may fill them. Believe for that daily life, and believe for death that is coming to all of us. Borrow vessels of promise, and so into them will flow the grace of faith, and you will be man and woman of great faith.

I was reading some time since in one of Dr. William Taylor's books, and there was this foot note: "He was going home from church when he was a boy in Scotland, and he asked his father what the minister meant when he spoke of 'appropriating faith' to which his father wisely answered, 'Just take your Bible, and when you come to any promise that just fits you, you just mark that promise; that is appropriating faith.'"

Then, also, let us bring vessels of service, for we may have the grace of strength. That was a beautiful request that one made the other evening in the prayer meeting, "Pray for me that I may use the light I have." The more she used the light she had, so much the more light she would have. One of the most beautiful passages in the Bible for the Christian life is: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

"Well, I believe in holding on," remarked Aunt Polly again. "You know how it is in the army, where the most of the soldiers are ahead. They must keep up the guard back to the base of supplies; and that guarding line may get very thin in some places, but still it does a lot of good. It keeps up the guard till the day of battle, you know. It may be a weak line, but it is a line. Oh, if we hold on, something will come along to help us."

"I wonder what we are expecting this line up for," conjectured Aunt Patty. "What is a coming?" "Don't know, Patty. Keep it up, I say. How would it do, for an experiment, to change our hour? We can shift back again, and then meet the meeting, another."

"I might do good, and it certainly won't do any harm. Then we might see some of our old members back, you know, and perhaps we can get others out." No organization is dead that has one earnest member. As long as one has two it was not only alive, but stirring and known. "I hear, Sister Wherrin, that Trimmings, the grocer, says we are 'most dead,' and our flag will soon be hauled down."

"The flag shall not be hauled down," affirmed old lady Wherrin. "He bears us, and that guarding line may get very thin if we would give him our custom." "Oustem!" cried Aunt Patty, who believed that rum must be boycotted. "He will never get rich from my pocket!"

After this conversation the town was notified of some meeting would be in the evening, and that it was hoped a large attendance would be the result. When the evening came the little hall was brightly illuminated; but alas! only Aunt Polly and Aunt Patty were there. They looked at one another, and looked at the clock, and looked at the door, and then sighed.

"That Trimmings," said Aunt Patty, "would be gratified to know how few we have, and 'would be just like them there at the store to come over and peek in." "I have a great mind to put the curtains down."

"Let 'em look," replied Aunt Polly with dignity. "We don't need, like Trimmings, to have any screens or blinds up at our windows. What's that?"

"I thought I would join you," she said, mournfully. "Weary have had known of the evil of intemperance. The Squire had his 'infamy,' and there was John Stimson, 'if any body could say that he was among the living, he had been away from home for years, and he not only had his father's weakness, but a rever's disposition."

"This is encouraging," declared Aunt Polly. "We have enough in prayer to claim the blessing." Trimmings did not think much of any blessing that might attend the meeting. His patrons kept him informed of the size of the attendance.

"I need Aunt Polly a-joinin'!" reported Billy Whipple.

"I send Aunt Patty, and of mournful, 'I stand in the dock, and weeping, she cried Tobias Higgin. Trimmings laughed, rubbed his hands, and nodding his head emphatically, said, "Gee-wee've got 'em. That flag is a-comin' down!"

Somebody reported that "Stimson's wicker" was seen standing in the lamplight at the door. "Well," said Trimmings, "she makes only three. After all this hollerin' 'bout a wicker in the evening, 'lighter up the hall, and so on, they can only muster three at the meetin'! How would it do, boys, to send somebody over, and see how they're gettin' along? Winders are low, you know."

"Might be a prayin for the feller that's a-lookin' at you," suggested Dan Dabney. "Great folks them are to pray for ye." "Might send you over," said Bob Bradley to Trimmings. "Spec they're prayin' for Trimmings all the time."

The rumeller did not enjoy the coarse language that was used. "You're gettin' a little too personal," said Trimmings, severely. This brought the thoughtless group to their senses and they trembled before the dread owner of their souls and their bodies. "Might try on a stranger," was Bob Bradley's suggestion. "Ef one should happen along," said Farnham Davis. "Huh!" said Bob. "Here's one now."

A young man entered, and stepped behind the partition separating the large department of rum from the department of groceries. He called for a glass of ale. Trimmings saw that he was already under the influence of liquor, though partially "Suthin—suthin—with a little more grip to it!" remarked Trimmings, with a smile. "Nothin'. Ale will do. Hote! here? They didn't used to have one."

"Trimmings's face lighted up. 'I'll be even with him,' he thought, 'for not takin' suthin stronger.' "Hote!" said Trimmings. "Stranger 'bout here?" "Well, I haven't been on the ground for some years. Guess I won't see my folks till morning. They don't expect me."

"Wall, now, since you were here, guess they have put up a hotel. You can't see much of it in the dark. There, come to this winder. 'It's that building with the lighted winders. Walk in, and make yourself to hum.' It chanced that the hall building had been erected recently. Some of Trimmings's rattling minions followed the stranger, promising to come back and report.

"It was Bob Bradley who gave a report whose effect was like that of a bombshell. 'Ef it don't beat all!' he said, in the return of the spy party to the rum-shop. "We just might see the door of the winder's hall and walk in to see the squire's wicker wasn't a prayin'!"

He saw her face, and it did just partly see him, and ef it didn't break him all up! And he got on his knees, too. "Who, who was it?" asked Trimmings. "Why, those winder boys, 'em. How they might get suthin, but he long for an attempt, as sure as you, to reproduce our Master's life within us. We put joy where the divine order would dictate sorrow, and sure our sorrow when the Lord would have us rejoice in him. We reach for the sinners, and we do not know when it is more useful as yet that we should endure the discipline of defeat, so the divine strength may be made perfect in our weakness. Blessed is he who, instead of seeking to attain the likeness of Christ, by growing from him, realizes that he has been planted in the likeness. 'He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he shall shall prosper.'"

"I shall we obtain a truly joyful Christian experience, therefore, if we learn that holy living is neither the realization of some ideal self nor the imitation of some real saint. 'For me to live in Christ, I must be like him, and he is living in me.' The double purpose of our union with Christ must not be forgotten, nor its heavenly way and earthward aspects for an instant separated to our apprehension. 'No commendation to them that are in Christ Jesus' is none of our business, but we must be believers, forget not the other, lest you bring upon yourself the curse of a dry and barren Antiochianism. 'Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' The branches are the product and the measure of the root, the one spreading as widely as the other strikes deeply. And how solemn the obligation resting upon those who are truly rooted in Christ, to reach forth their branch and bear the fruit of good works which they have undertaken, and so to be represented by their faith. Our privilege, in Jesus are glorious beyond comparison. But they are awful, when we remember that they are the pledge and measure of our obligations. Never before on earth, or perhaps in Heaven was one expected to utter so great a word as this, 'In Christ.' Yet, if we know its meaning, we shall pause lest we speak it lightly or unadvisedly. 'For he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.' 'In Christ,' by Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D.

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When a writer says a certain thing is impossible to describe, and then uses a column in its description, he doubtless means that nobody but himself could describe it. Not so with Minard's Liniment, for when we say it is the King or Conqueror of all pains, we describe it in brief.

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but it is also religion made worthless, and your religion is the worst thing in the universe. It is good for doing in all worlds. In this world it does not secure renewal of character, and in the next it does not afford security from penalty.

The persons who adopt the methods of such purity avoid the pains of genuine repentance as they avoid all other pains. They would not undertake religion in any form if they were not afraid to go into the future world without it. It is embraced as the less of two difficulties, and since they must be religious, they are determined not to be any more so than is necessary. They fear nothing so much as being righteous overmuch while they live, unless, it may be, not being quite pious enough when they die. This sort of religion at last is but moral decay, which fertilizes the selfishness of these people until its branches reach to heaven. By it they vainly seek to climb up over the walls of the eternal city rather than enter in at the straight gate; and when the terms of salvation are offered to gain their acceptance of the gospel, this foolish effort is encouraged. It is a waste of time and strength to indulge the idle notion that they can come to God by any which involves less than absolute self-renunciation. Chiselling at the straight gate to make it less straight, or trying to widen the narrow way for their consciences is useless folly.

We write these things to correct a tendency of which we have occasionally seen evidences in certain quarters—a tendency to cheapen salvation in order to increase the patronage of an aspiring revivalist. There can be no greater fraud. Cheap salvation is the worst damnation. If any man will secure the part of great price, he must sell all to buy it.—Nashville Advocate.

Christian experience is the waking real in ourselves of what is already true for us in Christ. "I am the vine, ye are the branches," said Christ. But the vine furnishes the branches not by the principle of life, but with the type of life. No pressure or molding from without is needed to shape them to the pattern of the parent stock. Every minute peculiarity of form and color and taste and fragrance are the result of life, and evolved from it. A true believer, therefore, will ask no better thing of the Lord than "that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in his body," for such a manifestation will, by a necessary law, be the unfolding within him of every virtue of which he has any power of doing good. It is not in any conventional standard of frames and feelings that the disciple is to find a measure of attainment required of him. It is not by any painful reproving of another's spiritual history that he is to acquire the true Christian character, but by his own. Outward imitations, though they be of the perfect example himself, has little place in the order of spiritual growth. Little place because of its falsity. "Without me," said he, "I can do nothing." How true is this! We are not to imitate, but to attempt, as sure as you, to reproduce our Master's life within us. We put joy where the divine order would dictate sorrow, and sure our sorrow when the Lord would have us rejoice in him. We reach for the sinners, and we do not know when it is more useful as yet that we should endure the discipline of defeat, so the divine strength may be made perfect in our weakness. Blessed is he who, instead of seeking to attain the likeness of Christ, by growing from him, realizes that he has been planted in the likeness. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he shall shall prosper."

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