

***** Religious and Literary. *****

(Rev. W. J. Sipprell, B.A., B.D.)

STAR-GLINTS.

Woo and win Life's responsibilities.

Grasp the handle of your own being.

Life's chief destructions are in the city of man's soul.

The mission of Jesus Christ is to carry each soul up from littleness to full-orbed greatness.

He who stands forth clothed with real might of goodness can neither be ble in life, nor forgotten in death.

Our happiness and success being at that point where we accept in sincerity the birth-gift and career God hath chosen.

The hermit and the cloistered saint end their career with innocence, but Christ struggling unto blood against sin, ends His career with character.

Life's crowning victory is not seen in winning a brilliant battle, in suffering a crushing wrong, but in loving great principles midst small duties, in nourishing sublime hopes amid vulgar cares and in illustrating eternal principles in trifles.

The heart like the body needs nourishment, and finds it in the highest deeds and best qualities of those who have gone before. The best gift to any people is not vineyards nor overflowing granaries, nor throned harbours, nor rich fields, but a good man and great, whose example and influence repeat greatness in all the people.

Every reform was first an idea in the mind of one man, and when it shall have become a thought in the mind of every man it will revolutionize the age. Let us not be pulseless men, content to creep or lie in society's ambulance waggon, but let us covet wings to bear us upward toward the God whose image it is ours to reflect in a world of shadowed lives and aims unrealized.

The flock passing through the forest leaves some white threads behind. The bird lines its nest with down from its own bosom, and the pure heart going forward leaves behind some treasure that perfumes its path. While we should live in action and seek to realize in life all eternal principles that come to our thought we must not forget that the hearts of men are weary as well as weak and need sympathy and sweetness amid life's heavy atmospheres as much as they need strengthening grace.

Back to Christ and the Gospels is fast becoming the watchword of the age. Back to Him who is no empty abstraction, but bone of our bone, marred by no weakness, scarred by no sin, tossing back Life's temptations as some rock-ribbed shore tosses back the sea billows in harmless spray strong for the day of battle, patient for every trying care, gentle, so that His white hand felt the fall of the rose leaf, and

yet He could infect His gianthood to the needs of the little child. Death could not hold Him, for He flung its hands aside and clove a pathway through the grave and made death's night to shine like day.

SIN AND ITS ANTIDOTE.

Sin is the most concrete personal fact in human life, which we, by nature, know. It is no abstraction, nor resultant of theorizing, but a fact too well known to men. It is a constant struggle between man's animal nature and the higher spiritual forces of his being.

It intercepts between the soul and its God. In its presence the light dies off the landscape of life, and peace and joy depart. Its antidote is not in philosophic thought, but in the force that comes from contact with a living personality. Sin is death. Truth is life. Death and sin are destructive. Truth and Life are constructive, and in the deepest philosophy of which man has knowledge. One has said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." To realize this in life's experience is to conquer in and triumph.

While man needs an antidote to sin he needs more. He needs the uplifting power of a new ideal. To know a freedom from sin's thralldom alone is to live in inertia. There must needs be the vitalizing power of a new affection, born of new hopes and lofty aims. Such attractive power is found in Jesus Christ the world Life-Giver. God in Christ is the pledge of the soul's victory over the body, for men weighted down by weight of sin and wear the words, "Ye may, ye must be born again," are sweeter than angel songs falling down from the hill of Paradise. From such a point of vantage we hear His call "Follow Me," and in obedience thereto the soul enlarges to take in the new life as seen in a new person and the ascent begins from narrowness and littleness to breadth and greatness, until at last the ever trustful soul becomes filled with all the fullness of God.

GREATNESS OF THOUGHT AND GREATNESS OF HEART

"All ye who possess the power of thought prize it well! Remember that its flight is infinite; it winds over so many mountain tops and so runs from poetry to eloquence; it so flies from star to star, it so dreams, so loves, so aspires, so hanges both over mystery and fact that we may well call it the effort of man to explore the home, the infinite palace of his Heavenly Father." "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver and the gain thereof than fine gold." While we thank God for greatness of thought we thank Him more for men with greatness of heart. For men whose sympathies help to remove the chill from human life and make men to feel the brotherhood of man. That divinest sentiment of the human heart, that reflection in the human of the Fatherhood of God. Where God would order a great upward movement for society He drops a great idea into the mind of some leader. We can not forecast the

future, for we cannot tell what great idea God will drop into the soul of some man ordained to be its voice and prophet. Man is the child of genius, because he is the child of God. "made in His image," said One, and we learn that our human mechanism is patterned after the Divine. Not in physical outline, but in those lineaments of the soul where hope and love, and moral greatness are ever born.

THE VIRTUE OF SELF-DENIAL.

Self-denial is not essentially a Christian grace, but it is a strong tenet of Christian doctrine, and a strong element of Christian life and experience. While a work of Grace within is a great essential, there is often a forgotten fact that self-denial is necessary, touching things without. The rise of the bodily forces will at once destroy the harmony of our being, hence we need to "smite our body down," and maintain a holy jealousy for the spiritual interests of our life. The body contains no inherent evil, but if our sensuous capacities so develop that they demand the attention while the higher spiritual instincts lie dormant we defeat the purposes of God. While the ascetic who deals with extreme severity with the bodily desires may be an extremist, we must not forget that the esthetic and poetic and philosophic tendencies may lead to an extreme where man can see naught but nature and her moods, or mind and its intangible forces. These may lead, say some, to God, and to such we assent, but to one it will be to a God of Nature, hardly removed from the most materialistic Pantheism, while the other will leave our God a cold and bloodless abstraction, arrived at by some syllogistic process. God is in Nature, but God is not Nature. God is revealed in Mind, but God is not Mind. God is Life, and beyond what we know as nature, and beyond what we can conceive a man. He sits a Living Personality, the throned Monarch of a Universe. Art is noble, but the highest art is that which seeks to realize in life the ideals of God. We are to live, to fulfil the plan of God in our life, and if our sensuous tendencies impede our onward progress in this great march of fulfilment, we are to smite them down with the strong hand of spiritual resolution.

DESULTORY SERVICE.

Desultoriness is the curse of modern church life. A stable and punctual Christian is a rare man. Too many church members do their duty by fits and starts. Their enthusiasm is spasmodic. Their devotion is intermittent. Their church attendance is desultory. Their service is ragged. They cannot be depended upon. They say they will do a thing, and they do not do it. They attend public worship one Sunday, and miss two. They are visible at prayer meeting one Wednesday evening, and then remain invisible for a month. They read the Bible one morning, and skip it for a week. They take a Sunday school class, and run away from it whenever it suits their convenience. It is this desultoriness which is accountable for many of the things which all the friends of the church lament.—Charles E. Jefferson, D.D.