

For Dominion Presbyterian.

The Secret of True Life.

By Rev. B. B. Williams.

There is nothing in which men are more painfully deficient than strength—moral and spiritual. How easily tempted! How feeble the resistance offered! How soon overcome!

Many with rich mental gifts are well known to be the veriest slaves of the most degrading vices—led captive by the Evil One at his will. Is it possible, then, for men to get moral and spiritual strength—strength to rule the spirit, to master the sinful tendencies of their nature, to subject the passions to reason, reason to conscience and conscience to God? The best way of answering these questions is to state explicitly that myriads have become possessed of this strength. Yes, men frail in body, naturally impulsive and yielding, have become wondrously strong, firm in the avowal of the right, steadfast in the discharge of duty, brave and calm in the face of the sternest opposition.

They are maintaining a successful resistance to temptation. They bear up without fainting under a weight of trials to which men, constitutionally far stronger, completely succumb.

Where did these morally and spiritually strong ones get their strength? Just where Paul got his. This distinguished servant of the Lord was in a position to say of himself, "I can do all things." That was a large statement to make. We naturally ask, "What, all things? Even so. How? "Through Christ who strengtheneth me." Here, then, is the secret of true strength—Christ—Christ with us—in us, energizing every power, sustaining by His presence and grace, moment by moment.

A child of tender years in the very article of Death, grasped his minister's hand, and looking him right in the face, said, "O, sir, I am strong in Him." What of that child? He had the secret of the Lord—the secret of strength.

Here is a young man, exposed day by day to the most scathing ridicule, but he bravely holds on his way and leads a godly life. Here is one upon whom the reproaches of a bitter tongue are showered, but he bears all in uncomplaining silence; or if he speaks, gives only the soft answer that turneth away a wrath.

Here is a mother, called upon to give up her only child, and as she sees the grave close upon her dearest earthly treasure, says, though with tear-blinded eyes and a bleeding heart, "The Lord gave, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

What shall we say of these? They had the secret of the Lord; the secret of true strength.

There are circumstances in life for which the natural strength of the strongest is insufficient. "Even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young

men shall utterly fail, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength"—and they only.

This is no dream or fancy, but a sober reality, a matter of actual experience in the case of a great multitude, who out of weakness have waxed strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

A Human Biograph.

We were watching a child at play the other day. There was something unchildlike about certain actions that greatly puzzled us for a time, till we suddenly remembered certain peculiarities of action for which the father was well known. The child was imitating them, faithfully reproducing in play the characteristic movement by which the father was distinguished. We studied the child more closely, and thought we could see the unconscious reproduction of certain traits of character also to be seen in the father. Some of these had made him unfavorably known among his conferees, and we seemed to see the little one, just tottering upon the race-course of life, terribly handicapped in the race by these unfortunate traits.

That human sensitive plate was receiving impressions with terrible rapidity and definiteness. Later in life, we knew that, at times, the shutter would be closed upon certain objects of which it was not desired to receive impressions, but now there was no thought of discriminating. All scenes, the good and the bad alike, were being transferred, and the impression was sharp and clean in each instance. There was not one blurred impression among them.

Is this the record that unrolls when "the books are opened?" If so the responsibility for its character in these earlier years will not rest upon the little shoulders that seem so care-free now. God has given the keeping of this sensitive plate of His into the hands of others, and He will hold them responsible for the character of the record. To allow a child to grow up unshielded is only less criminal than to teach a child to sin. Remember that there will not be a single blank in the record of those early years.

Expository Preaching.*

By Rev. Prof. Ross, D.D.

Expository means exposing the truth to the reason and hearts of men. The question of the preacher is, "How may I make the truth of Scripture clear and profitable to the hearers?" For the ordinary hearer expository preaching is a necessity, if he is to know the truth of God. It is not the common kind of preaching of to-day, but the tide is turning back to it. It fell into disuse through its abuse—the people thinking it a device of the preacher to escape hard work.

*From notes of paper read before Montreal Ministerial Association.

Among the advantages of expository preaching are: It saves the time lost in looking for a subject. It ensures a more thorough knowledge of the Scriptures on the part of preacher and people; it gives the Scriptural proportion of time and emphasis to the different subjects of the Christian faith; it secures a many-sided presentation of the Gospel themes; it prevents any one thinking a sermon contains personalities.

The qualifications for expository preaching are: Sympathy with the word of God; hard work, learning the word of God by diligent study.

How shall it be done? Is it remembered that exposition is not comment; commentary is not a sermon. Exposition is not a system of word parsing—making a word to mean what the writer never thought of. An expository sermon is not a discussion of the literary and historical relations of the texts.

On the other hand, an expository sermon should be the development of a single wisely-chosen theme. Details are to be gathered in such a way as to make the deepest impression on the heart. The exposition ought to speak the language of to-day and bring a message to the men and women before us. The plain, common-sense meaning of the words must be given, and not some allegorical conceits. Regard must also be had to the progress of doctrine in the Bible, and a due perspective of revelation be maintained.

He who sets himself to the task of expository preaching must make up his mind to hard work. Extempore preaching, purely, will be found impossible to the expository preacher. Good models of exposition are found in the Expositor's Bible, especially the volumes by Marcus Dodds, George Adam Smith, and Alexander McLaren.

Business and Religion.

Business is not favorable to piety. As conducted in our struggling, competitive age, it is hard and practical, and destroys the sense of the spiritual and the unseen. The temporal seems stronger than the eternal. Those devoted to money-making, as well as those working for others, see only the gain to be derived. God enters not into the calculations. A sort of agnostic spirit is developed. Religion is remanded to the rear. Atheism is often the outcome. He who would not be led away under the influence of the fierce exactions and everyday struggles in commercial life must seek special grace from on high, and utilize the Sabbath and week-day services of God's house to the best possible account.—Philadelphia Presbyterian.

God wants iron saints; and since there is no way of imparting iron to the moral nature other than by letting his people suffer, he lets them suffer. The iron crown of suffering precedes the golden crown of glory.—Rev. F. B. Meyer.