

God gives you a task, you can count on Him to provide the power and the message.

It is of absolute importance that a minister should not let his own inner life get low in his search for the lives of others. There is the need and cry to-day for energy—enterprise, tact, earnestness; but this may be carried so far as to merge the whole work of the Church into that of philanthropic benevolence—to make the Christian minister nothing more than a machine for the social and sanitary amelioration of the lives of the multitude. The cry is for muscular Christianity, popular preaching on political economy and the like. Church work may thus easily leave the heart out of the Gospel—to know nothing save Christ and Him crucified.” The clergyman of to-day wants to be intensely practical, but he wants at the same time to carry into every detail the very life of Jesus—a real spirituality which comes alone from abiding in living union with the Saviour.

This is the cure for professionalism—that Jesus be a personal reality, get into His presence every morning, realize that He loves you with a personal love: go to your work with the consciousness that you have met Him, and carry His presence with you.

Take time to meet God thus in “the morning watch”—get up early enough to have unbroken time with God. The essence of prayer is to meet God, so with reading and studying the word. Sit in God’s presence to hear what He has to say to you.

Realize that your life depends on Christ. Pay the price—a full and absolute giving up of self. No longer I—I” crucified—death to self is a real thing.

Understand what the Holiest place is into which we enter through the Blood of Christ—the veil is rent and I can enter into the very presence of God.

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St. Matthew xi, 28: “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Stoics and the world believe in such virtues as bravery, zeal, laboriousness, indifference to pain, self-sacrifice: but, Christianity alone exalts such virtues as poverty of spirit, meekness, humility, lowliness. These are specially and peculiarly characteristics of the Saviour, and should be of His followers. Pride is the last thing that should be seen in a minister. It is said to be the root of every sin—the soil in which all sin roots itself. To come back to God, the first thing needed is humility and contrition.

On the contrary, humility is the soil in which all graces grow. Yet it is so little sought. This is the distinguishing feature of those who have the “mind” of Christ—to be the servant, the minister of others (Phil. ii.)

Ministers are much read; this should be characteristic of the epistles of Christ. An old saint has said, “Have a keen eye to God’s honor, and have no honor of your own to have an eye to.” This is a hard lesson to learn. There are eight separate records of our Saviour’s teaching this lesson to His disciples. As long as this humility and crucifixion of self is hard, there is something wrong in the way we are going about it. We don’t obtain by our effort, but by faith we

claim it. We reckon ourselves dead. It is the fruit of the Spirit we ask for, and believe we receive it. Religious pride is the worst kind of pride. Christ’s humility never thinks itself humble.

Only as we are humble can Jesus dwell in us—“The High and Lofty One that inheriteth eternity.” The holiest must be the humblest; the least of all is the greatest. Faith and humility go hand in hand. Think of the Syro-Phoenician, who was content to be called a dog, and the centurion, who did not think himself worthy to have Jesus in his house. These were more commended for faith than any.

Pride hinders faith. “How can ye believe which receive honor one of another?”

If self is dead—crucified by faith—temptation has nothing to work on, and so sin cannot be conceived.

Pride makes us unhappy. It makes us mind hurts and slights, and resent things—it makes it hard to forgive those who offend, and this destroys our communion. The Saviour’s Incarnation was the greatest act of humility. His life was humility clothed in human flesh. Because of His humility God highly exalted Him.

All want of love, indifference to needs of others, hasty judgments, loneliness, bitter feelings, estrangements, and the like, may be traced to this source.

“Learn of Me.” It is a genuine lesson. Note how often Jesus says: “He can do nothing,”—as man He had no power. He depended on God in perfect humility.

The only ladder to exaltation with God is humility—real death to self.

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I St. Peter, i, 16—“Be ye holy, for I am holy.”

God demands from us a positive life of holiness. When God tells us to do anything, He gives us the power and grace to do it. To live below one’s privileges dishonors God, and is sinful and wrong.

The Bible draws a strong distinction between the carnal and the spiritual life. The step from the one to the other is a definite one, and is not necessarily the growth of years. Compare St. Peter before and after the Day of Pentecost. The carnal Peter loved Jesus, but presumed to take him to task. He slept in Gethsemane instead of watching. He forsook Him and fled, followed Him afar off: then denied his Master. God has clearly ordered that a man cannot live aright but in the spirit. It was expedient that Christ should leave His disciples, in order that the Holy Spirit might come. We must have the gift of the Holy Spirit, if we are to have power, and witness. Acts, i, 8.

How many mourn constant failures. They pray, and try, and fail, and make almost no progress. They live the wilderness life instead of enjoying Canaan victory, because they don’t claim the power of the Spirit.

God wants a perfect heart. This He alone can give. True, the flesh will always lust against the spirit, but if we let the spirit have possession, the spirit will have victory. Study Romans vi, and see how clearly we are taught that sin shall not have dominion over us. Jesus dwells in us by the Spirit. It is not a special and momentary gift of grace, but an indwelling power—“The power of His endless life.” Christ’s