

The Essence of Salvation.

The real measure of a Christian's life is found in his spiritual experience rather than in his professions or his outward performances. These may be perfunctory or the mere expression of motives not always of a high type, while the spiritual life, though hidden, it may be, from the eyes of men, is disclosed to the eye of God. As it is the highest and most permanent form of life, in fact the real life of the Christian, it is the standard by which he is to be measured by that All-seeing eye. The importance of maintaining the spiritual life in a state that will constantly secure the commendation of God, is self-evident to every earnest heart. Many are the ways in which this higher state may be developed, and by which those who have become new creatures in Christ may come into possession of a larger and more satisfying knowledge of him, and of the things that pertain to his kingdom.

One entrance to this land of pure delight is by the way of meditation. Amid the rush of our material life and the discharge of its multitudinous duties, it is not always convenient to devote even a little while to meditation upon the wonderful goodness of God, our spiritual state and needs in relation to the religious welfare of others, and other themes related to the life of God in the soul. But such meditation is always profitable; the soul grows under it, the spiritual vision expands, God's truth unfolds new meaning, and a determination is formed to attain the loftiest heights of Christian experience, and "to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ." Meditationless prayer and prayerless meditation are like the two halves of a pair of scissors, either is useless without the other. There is much of pseudo prayer uttered by apparently sincere hearts. It is simply the repetition of phrases which may or may not express a real spiritual condition. One helpful element of true prayer is the consciousness of the presence and approval of God, for "the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth;" and in order to emphasize this element it is well to keep in mind the comments made by our divine Lord on the prayer of hypocrites, and the exhortation to his disciples to secret prayer.

The reading of the Word of God does much toward "building up yourselves on your most holy faith." While much valuable information is derived from biblical helps of various sorts, the soul will be wonderfully refreshed by the reading of the Bible without these, by means of marginal references, thus letting Scripture light up itself. It is the Word of God that feeds, that quickens into newness of life. The reading of literature devotional in character helps to open the windows of the soul, and to this sort of reading the Christian should give careful and conscientious attention.

It seems strange that godly conversation has been so persistently ignored as an element in the development of the higher life. Perhaps the fact that spiritual experiences are sacred in their nature, causes hesitation in speaking of them even to those with whom we are most intimate. There is not so much hesitation to confess Christ in public, as to speak in private of things relating to the spiritual life. This should not be so, and is not when "the love of Christ constraineth," and it would not be so if Christians were properly to appreciate the influence of such conversation upon their religious life.

Not less important is service in behalf of those who are seeking the way of life. There is a reflex influence in Christian work of this kind. Every time we try to influence a soul for Christ we are drawn closer to Him ourselves, and as one points the humble seeker to Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," the way becomes clearer to his own spiritual sight, the truth more attractive and more satisfying.

Never was there a time when the inner life of the Christian was so needed in the United States as to-day.

The countless interests which dart like needles into the heart of a citizen of a free republic, are accentuated by the fierce thrusts of those lancinating expressions which are shot out from the "horrid visage of war." The enterprises of the church are themselves sufficient to occupy the mind to the exclusion of the heart. Social life was never so inexorable. Family discipline declines. The reactionary influences upon parents of children not led out into the spiritual realm, though filled with scraps of knowledge, of biblical history, and criticism, chokes religious life, the streams almost run dry in their spirits, and again reacts upon the children, while the eye of many a preacher, correct in words, attitude, and gesture, reflects no light, and is suffused with no tear from the depths within. "Words, words, words" are read and spoken, the images of things are portrayed, music is more exquisite;—but the "still small voice," who harkens for that? Who receives accents from that, and whispers them to inquiring spirits?

Is it a dream that Jesus valued nothing without the spiritual life? Is it a dream that the fruits of that life are perfect in every sphere of philanthropy, and that the fruits that spring not therefrom, valuable though they may be in the field of the world, are unsuited to the gardens of the Lord?—New York Advocate.

EDITOR,

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Prayer Meeting Topic.

B. Y. P. U. Topic.—The Power of Small Things. Mark. 4:30-32.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday, July 9.—1 Samuel 25:1-21. Of value to his neighbor, (vs. 15, 16.) Compare Ex. 23:4, 5.
Tuesday, July 10.—1 Samuel 25:23-44. The fate of evil-doing, (vs. 39.) Compare 1 Kings 2:32.
Wednesday, July 11.—1 Samuel 26. Profound regard for the Lord's anointed, (vs. 11.) Compare 1 Samuel 24:6.
Thursday, July 12.—1 Samuel 27:1-28:2. Slight regard for the truth, (vs. 10.) Compare 1 Samuel 27:2.
Friday, July 13.—1 Samuel 28:3-25. Saul's desperation, (vs. 5, 6.) Compare 1 Samuel 16:14.
Saturday, July 14.—1 Samuel 29. Well-grounded suspicion, (vs. 6.) Compare 1 Samuel 14:21.

Prayer Meeting Topic—July 8.

The Power of Small Things. Mark:30-52.

Now and then it is worth while to go back to the beginnings of things, in order to gain strength and courage for the battles of today. It is easy to become discouraged because things go slow at the beginning: in our feverish anxiety to see matters move, we become impatient at every delay, and disheartened when clouds gather. Discouragement is usually the result of near-sightedness: the microscopic vision sees too much—near at hand; the telescopic vision gives one the sight of God, who assures us that he will not be defeated in his purposes with men. How striking are the illustrations of Jesus, showing the beginnings of the kingdom, and the great outcome of the plans of God! Let the mustard seed suggestion create within us a mountain-moving faith; it will be well worth while to have considered this subject, then.

A suggested outline for the meeting might be helpful: THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM.

Its promise.—Consider some of the foregleams of the Messiah in the various prophecies. In the darkest days of the Jewish nation, when in exile, with the holy city in ruins, the prophets sang their most hopeful strains. There should be a kingdom that would be everlasting; it should be established in righteousness; a king should reign forever; its dominion was to be to the ends of the earth; to it should the Gentiles come, and kings to the brightness of its rising. Consider the following Scriptures: Psalms 2, 45, 72, 110.

Its beginnings.—Who was to be the King, and how was he to come? In purple royal? Consider Isaiah 53; think of Bethlehem; think of the lowly beginnings in Nazareth, the humble and devoted disciples, the sort of people they were, etc.

Its triumph.—Look about you. Well may one exclaim: "What hath God wrought!" Every blessing in the world today comes from the Gospel of the Christ. Do you know of a school that did not have Christian founders? of an institution for the helplessness of men that did not rise out of love for the Master? None. Under the shield of the gospel the Word has moved on, is still moving on.

Its future.—The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. Jesus will reign till all enemies are put under his feet. This is the glory of the kingdom; it began yesterday in lowly surroundings, but it is moving on grandly today, and will reach the culminating point in the purpose of God—universal conquest.—W. H. Gerstweitz, in Baptist Union.

Your Part in Life's Mosaic.

The crowd was looking at the facade of a fine cathedral, from the upper portion of which the workmen had just removed the screen behind which they had been at work for years, upon one of the most extensive and wonderfully rich and exquisite mosaics to be found upon or within any cathedral of the old world. Here was a picture with all the softness and the wonderful blending of color to be found in an oil-painting, a picture covering hundreds of feet, a most perfect specimen of art which the storms of a thousand years could not tarnish or wear away. It was made of millions of pieces of stone of different hues and shapes, and each carefully and most skillfully adjusted to those about it. A grand picture to stand there for ages, a combination of very trivial things. And each little stone so carefully polished, so nicely fitted, so tastefully adjusted in color, was a most important part of the whole; and so each little stone had in keeping the character of the picture.—The Sunday School Times.

The Power of Littles.

As the sublimest symphony is made up of separate single notes; as the wealth of the cornfield is made up of separate stalks, or rather of separate grains; as the magnificent texture with its gorgeous combinations of color, its pictures cunningly interwoven by the hand or the shuttle, is made up of individual threads; as the mightiest avalanche that ever came thundering down from its Alpine throne, uprooting villages and forests, is made up of tiny snowflakes—so it is with the spiritual life. That life is itself the grandest illustration of the power of littles. Character is the product of daily, hourly

The Young People

actions and words and thoughts—daily forgivenesses, unselfishness, kindness, sympathies, charities, sacrifices for the good of others, struggles against temptation, submissiveness under trial. O, it is these, like the blending colors in a picture the blending notes of music, which constitute "the man!" It is when the whole being is in divine harmony with the divine will—this, this is the true "Psalm of Life."—Macduff.

Poetry should have a larger place in our lives than, alas it has with most of us. It ministers to the noblest things of life. The poet is the true seer and very often he is the true theologian. We have tried to obtain articles for this department dealing with the poetry of the Bible, and also with the stimulus brought to young life by the great poets. In this effort we have failed. This but emphasizes the old lesson that if the best is to be had it must be paid for. When our young people learn this lesson they will no longer ask for the cheapest possible paper. There will arise a generation of readers willing to pay such a price that the best possible paper may be published. Here and there one may be found—and we have found a number of them during the past year—willing to give of their best thought and severest toil for the good of the public, without financial remuneration. But the higher good of the public would be served if the publisher could fairly remunerate the contributor. The MESSENGER AND VISITOR will be able to do this if the readers will increase, by one-half, its circulation.

The Starless Crown.

Wearied and worn with earthly cares, I yielded to repose, And soon before my raptured sight a glorious vision rose; I thought while slumbering on my couch, in midnight's solemn gloom, I heard an Angel's silvery voice, and radiance filled my room.

A gentle touch awakened me; a gentle whisper said, "Arise, O sleeper, follow me;" and through the air we fled.

We left the earth so far away that like a speck it seemed, And heavenly glory, calm and pure, across our pathway streamed.

Still on we went; my soul was rapt in silent ecstasy; I wondered what the end would be, what next would meet mine eyes.

I knew not how we journeyed through the pathless fields of light, When suddenly a change was wrought and I was clothed in white.

We stood before a city's walls most glorious to behold; We passed through gates of glistening pearl, o'er streets of purest gold;

It needed not the sun by day, the silver moon by night, The glory of the Lord was there, the Lamb himself its light.

Bright Angels paced the shining streets, sweet music filled the air,

And white robed saints with glittering crowns, from every clime was there,

And some that I had loved on earth stood with them round the throne, "All glory is the Lamb," they sang, "the glory his alone."

But fairer far than all besides, I saw my Saviour's face, And as I gazed he smiled on me with wondrous love and grace.

Lowly I bowed before his throne o'erjoyed that I at last Had gained the object of my hopes; that earth at length was passed.

And then in solemn tones he said: "Where is the diadem

That ought to sparkle on thy brow, adorned with many a gem?

I know that thou believed on me, and life through me is thine;

But where are all those radiant stars that in thy crown should shine?

"Yonder thou seest a glorious throng, with stars on every brow;

For every soul they led to me they wear a jewel now. And such thy bright reward had been, if such had been thy deed,

If thou hadst sought some wandering feet in paths of peace to lead.

Thou wert not called that thou shouldst tread the way of life alone,

But that the clear and shining light that round thy footsteps shone

Should guide some other weary feet to my bright home of rest,

And thus, in blessing those around, thou hadst thyself been blessed."

The vision faded from my sight, the voice no longer spake,

A spell seemed brooding o'er my soul which long I feared to break;

And when at last I gazed around in mornings glimmering light,

My spirit felt o'erwhelmed beneath the vision's awful night.

I rose and wept with chastened joy that still I dwelt below,

That yet another hour was mine my faith by works to show;

That yet some sinner I might tell of Jesus' dying love, And help to lead some weary soul to seek a home above.

And now while on the earth I stay, my motto this shall be:

"To live no longer to myself, but Him who died for me,"

And graven on my inmost soul I'll wear this truth divine.

"They that turn many to the Lord, bright as the stars shall shine."