

NEGLECTED DUTY.

By W. S. Danley.

It is painful to note the number of professing Christians who abstain from observing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Not a few appear to regard it as optional whether they observe this ordinance or not, and some seem to think it a sign of humility to absent themselves altogether from the Lord's table. The writer's attention was recently drawn to this subject by the spectacle of a whole pew of young church members rise in a body and retire from the house of God when the Lord's Supper was about to be celebrated.

Now this sacrament was instituted by our Lord for all of his people, not a part of them, and for the poorest and worst, as well as the best of them. None are so good that their piety entitles them to this privilege, and no Christian is so unworthy that he may not sit with his brethren at the Lord's Supper. The sacrament was made as a means of grace to aid in life's struggle all weak and imperfect, but sincere and earnest people who lament their imperfections and cherish an honest wish to make progress in the divine life. Any others should speedily get their names taken off the church books and cease to hurt the cause of the Master by their hollow pretensions.

The sacrament is called the Lord's Supper, probably because our Lord was its author, and because it was instituted at night. It may be wondered why it is not more frequently celebrated in the solemn stillness of the night, but one thing we know, and that is that the occasion was designed to bring God's own people more closely together in an act of Christian fellowship. Our presence at the Lord's table makes it more easy to love tenderly our communing brethren, and to forgive any of them against whom we may have held any ill feeling. No place is more appropriate for that hymn,

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love."

and to sing the song without cherishing the appropriate sentiments of fraternal tenderness and sympathy is to make a mockery of the most sacred things. Two ministers were observing the communion together who had been estranged from one another for some time, and one of them approached the other with the wine and said, "My brother, let this cup be the cup of reconciliation between us," and amid many tears the offer was accepted, and old friends were reunited after a separation in a sweeter affection than they had ever known.

The Lord's Supper was specially ordained to quicken our memories regarding the great sacrifices that were made for us when Christ taught and suffered on the earth. His own command has been worded thus:

"Do this till time shall end
In memory of your dying Friend."

This sacrament quickens the memory to recall many things of tenderest interest, but the life and death of Jesus Christ are the great memory. Truths recovered by an aroused memory are new discoveries that enrich the soul with untold spiritual wealth. The Lord's Supper not only has a finger to point back to the cross, but it throws the searchlight of the Holy Spirit over those sacred days when the Lord Jesus lived and suffered on the earth for our salvation.

Another important function of this sacrament is its use in exciting powerfully our gratitude for the infinite blessings of our Lord's sacrifice and the love of God in sending his dear Son into the world to save us from the evil consequences of our sins. The broken bread and the wine poured out suggest treasures of heavenly grace which we cannot fully estimate and appreciate. It has been said that Cleopatra dissolved a

jewel in a cup of wine worth millions of dollars, but in the cup of the communion is life represented given for us which the wealth of all worlds utterly fails to express.

If this and much more be true, how promptly and reverently we all should embrace the privilege of celebrating the Lord's death in observance of this ordinance, and how careful also we should all be to testify our love by a faithful discharge of every Christian duty for our Lord's dear sake! Perhaps most of our readers have already reflected that the very word "Sacrament" comes from a word denoting "a pledge," "a vow," and that it was intended to stir us up to watching and waiting and working till our Lord comes again.

It has a finger to point to the future too, and to such a time as that when we shall sit down with our Saviour and all our redeemed brethren and observe the communion of the Lord's Supper anew in our Father's Kingdom in heaven.—Philadelphia Westminster.

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL.

A naked house, a naked moor,
A shivering pool before the door,
A garden bare of flowers and fruit,
And poplars at the garden foot;
Such is the place I live in,
Bleak without and bare within.

Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomg of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud galleons chase,

Your garden blooms and gleams again
With leaping sun and glancing rain;
Here shall the wizard moon ascend
The heavens, the crimson end
Of day's declining splendor; here,
The army of the stars appear.
The neighbor hollers, dry or wet,
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
And oft the morning muses see
Larks rising from the broomy lea,
And every fairy wheel and thread
Of cob-webs, dew-bedimmed.
When daisies go shall winter time
Silver the simple grass with rime;
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool
And make the cart ruts beautiful.
And when snow bright the moor ex-

pands,
How shall your children clap their hands!
To make this earth our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeable page,
God's intricate and bright device
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

—R. L. Stevenson.

PRAYER.

Almighty Creator, God of our life, in whom we live and move and have our being, we again lift up our souls unto Thee in prayer and praise. Our weaknesses and our needs so great are all known unto Thee. We thank Thee for the promise that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Father, help us to live the true life. Hold Thou us up and we shall be safe. Give us light to follow Thee, and strength to serve Thee. May it be ours to inherit the promise given to Thy people in olden days—"Satisfied with the favour, and filled with the blessing of the Lord." May we not take anxious thought about the meat that perisheth, but labor rather for that which endureth unto everlasting life. Amen.

Every morning God puts into our hands anew the mystery of our existence. The chance to do brave and kind deeds, to love him—these, the great chance of the soul, the "long life even forever and ever," he gives us each day when we ask for life.—Phillips Brooks.

GOD'S OMNISCIENCE.

God who is everywhere knows everything. "All things are naked and opened," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight." All outward things are under His sight. "Thou art a God who sees things," exclaimed Hagar. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place," says the Book of Proverbs. "His eyes are upon all the ways of the children of men," declares Jeremiah. And not only all our acts and ways, but our inner thoughts, are open to God. "For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart." "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me," cries the Psalmist. "Thou knowest my down-sitting and my uprising. Thou knowest my thought afar off." And not our thought only, but all our inner character, which indeed our secret thoughts betray, is open to God. "His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men," God knows all.

This is part of the shame of sin. God sees it all. We think no one is looking, that so long as it is dark no one sees, or that so long as it is within our own imagination, we have it guarded securely. But God knows. No darkness hides from him, and from him no secrets are hid, and it is this which makes us ashamed. Because sin cannot look God in the eyes. It hides as far as it can from man's view, but its shame comes because it cannot hide from God. To escape from any chance of God's knowledge of our wrong-doing or wrong-thinking, we must refrain, by His grace, from what would make us ashamed.

God's knowledge of sin carries judgment. "The eyes of the Lord are upon the sinful kingdom to destroy it." "I will open my eyes and smite every house with blindness." "Mine eye will not spare." These are God's declarations through the prophets. He will not let any sin go without its consequence. However successfully it may appear to have escaped, God will prevail against it.

But the thought or God's knowledge is a thought of comfort and joy. He understands all our sorrows and struggles, and is ready with his sympathy and love. In our struggle we may say, "I am all alone. The world sees my failure and defeat, but it does not know how hard I tried, or the bitterness of my anguish. No one knows. The battle was all in vain." But God knew all the time. Christ's understanding is in God.

"Well I know thy trial.

O my servant true,
Thou art very weary,
I was weary, too."

He knows, and judges not by the result but by the effort and the trust we put in Him.

And He knows our need in order to help us with His great strength. "The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him to deliver their soul from death."

"The eyes of the Lord," said Hanani, the seer, to Asa of Judah, "run to and fro throughout the earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." He is no mere spectator of our needs. He is our great helper, our strength, our redeemer. We may live in fear and joy and confidence in the new knowledge that he knows all our life, and is living it in us and with us.

"Thou God seest me," ought to be to us a word of great joy.

Daily Reading for Preceding Week.

MON.—The deep things (Job 12:22-25).
TUES.—No hiding from Him (Job 34:18-20).
WED.—Looketh from Heaven." (Psa. 34:12-22).
THURS.—"In every place" (Prov. 15:1-3).
FRI.—Gives wisdom (Dan. 2:19-22).
SAT.—No escape (Amos 9:1-4).