

The Pastor and People.

The Sabbath.

A bright spot, an oasis
Aunt Sarah's dearest dream,
The sweetest bud that blossoms
Upon the rose tree of the year.

Beecher's Yale Lectures on Preaching.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I propose to speak to you this afternoon on repentance, conversion and sanctification; the three steps in the Christian life. What is it to be a Christian? It is to undertake to live as Christ commanded.

It is not right for one to give a full definition of faith, looking only at it as it appears in mature and ripened Christians, and then say one is not converted till he has such faith, for we are not to test the beginnings of life by the phenomena of its maturity.

You must not mistake my meaning and suppose that I mean to say that the transition from a worldly character to a Christian one is very slight. There are no two things so different as the character of a man of the world and the character of the one under the Lord Jesus, but the beginnings of the change are small and must be accepted in hope of the end.

You will ask, "Is not this doctrine of yours the doctrine of gradualism in conversion? Do you not advocate immediateism?" Yes, with all my heart. See that slip tacking on the East River as she beats against the wind.

the New Testament—or practice, rather—is to bring men promptly to the renunciation of every known wrong thing. But its solution is to stop sinning is not necessarily entrance upon the Christian life.

It may be asked, also, in advocating this method of introducing men into the Christian life, I set aside all dramatic experiences. Not by any means. I look upon such experiences with admiration. I strove after them myself for a long time, but never got them.

If it is asked, "How much feeling is necessary that conversion be genuine?" the answer must be, "What is necessary to turn men from wrong to right, and no more." The amount of steam that will carry along a small yacht is not enough for an ocean steamer.

Some seem to think there is a want of dignity, a want of respect for a person's individuality in insisting on immediate conversion. They say that a minister should present his arguments ethically and ethically, laying them at the feet of men and allow them to excuse their own feet will in applying the truths.

After men get into the Church, ministers are apt to think they are safe, and look out for more. They are always dragging their net and never packing down the fish. Yet we are more responsible for men after their conversion than before.

Service for God Rewarded.

There are many things we can do for God. We can publicly declare we are on His side, and show that we are in all appropriate ways. We can commend and associate His truth, support His worship, minister to the wants of His needy friends, lead sinners from the error of their ways to Him, reclaim the vicious, and advance the interests of His kingdom, and if we do so He will surely recompense us.

Too Much Muscle.

The death of a brilliant young Edinburgh doctor, John L. H. M. Farlane, who has passed away within a few months of taking his degree, and at the early age of twenty-three, would seem to furnish a new illustration of the danger of excessive devotion to athletic sports.

Communion with God.

The knowledge of God is gained as the knowledge of man is gained, by living much with Him. If we only come across a man occasionally and in public, and see nothing of him in his private and domestic life, we cannot be said to know him.

Seek their Conversion Now.

The great business of the Sabbath-school teacher is to labor and pray for the immediate conversion of his scholars.

- 1. Because now is God's time, and therefore the best. He says "now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." It is especially so for the young, as the Saviour's example and His teachings show. That they may be early the subjects of His grace, witness Samuel and David, Jeremiah and John, Timothy and multitudes in our own day.

A Contented Farmer.

Once upon a time, Frederick, King of Prussia, surrounded "Old Fritz," took a ride, and espied an old farmer ploughing his acre by the wayside, and cheerily singing his melody.

"You are well off, old man," said the king. "Does this one acre belong to you, on which you so industriously labor?"

"No, sir," replied the old farmer, who knew not that it was the king; "I am not so rich as that, I plough by the day for wages."

"How much do you get?" asked the king.

"Eight groschen (about 20 cents) a day," said the farmer.

"That is not much," replied the king, can you get along with this?"

"Got along, and has something to spare."

"How is that?"

The farmer smiled, and said, "Well, if I must tell you, two groschen are for myself and wife, with two I pay my old debts, two I lend away, and two I give away for the Lord's sake."

"This is a mystery which I cannot solve," replied the king.

"Then I will solve it for you," said the farmer. "I have two old parents at home who kept me when I was weak and needed help, and now they are weak and need help, I keep them. This is my debt towards which I pay two groschen a day. The third pair of groschen, which I lend away, I spend for my children, that they may receive Christian instruction. This will come handy to me and my wife when we get old. With the last two groschen I maintain two sick sisters, whom I would not be compelled to keep; this I give for the Lord's sake."

The king, well pleased with his answer, said,—

"Bravely spoken, old man. Now I will also give you something to guess. Have you ever seen me before?"

"Never," said the farmer.

"In less than five minutes you shall see me fifty times, and carry in your pocket fifty of my likenesses."

"This is a riddle which I cannot unravel," said the farmer.

"Then I will do it for you," replied the king. Throwing his hand into his pocket, and counting fifty brand new gold pieces into his hand, stamped with his royal likeness.

Family Worship.

To observe stated times of daily devotion is the duty of each and every one. In some retired place where there can be freedom from interruption and observation, each should read the Bible, pray to God, and, if possible, sing a psalm or hymn of praise. This is called private devotion, and it should be engaged in twice a day, morning and night. And many have found great advantage also from stated seasons of mid-day private devotion.

The pious of all ages have likewise concluded that as the family is the greatest of our social blessings, so it becomes the family, as such, to moot and acknowledge this blessing, and thank God for it. This would seem to have been the custom of Abraham, the father of the faithful, of Joshua, and of David. And the prophet Jeremiah denounces a heavy judgment on those who wholly neglect family religion. He says, "Pour out Thy fury upon the heathen that know Thee not, and upon the families that call not upon Thy name."—(Jeremiah 10: 25.)

Such meetings of the family for prayer, praise, and the reading of the Scriptures can hardly fail of receiving the Divine blessing, and of being, in the highest degree, useful. To be thankful for any blessing is the surest way of getting from that blessing all the good that is in it, and of securing the continuance of it. And what ground has any one to expect the continuance and well-being of the household to which he belongs, when that household never meets to beg the Divine guardianship, to be thankful for blessings, and to ask to know and be helped in the doing of duty? It would seem, then, one has just grounds to fear that God will pour out His fury on the families that call not on His name. It may be expected that in such families the servants will be wicked, the children profligate, and property a curse. Such heads of families are also justly chargeable with the guilt of all the evils which follow, since the curses which result of family religion bring could all be averted not only, but the contrary blessings be secured, if the family altar were reared and the mercy of God humbly asked for.

It is said that religion is much revived in many parts of our Church and land. How is it, we ask, in respect to family religion? Is that also revived? Where the form of it was, is there now more than a form? Is it more than the reading of the shortest psalm and the uttering of the short service? Is it felt that household religion is indeed a great privilege and a source of unspeakable good? Then, indeed, there has been a revival, and God be thanked for it. But it is to be feared that there are yet among us many heads of families who neglect family religion: whose children, in the most improvable time of life, are growing up without receiving from a father's prayers for and with them, those solemn lessons which, if learned, would never be forgotten. Nowhere more than at family prayer has Serpiero that eminent characteristic which St. Peter ascribes to it—"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Scripture, read at family worship, liveth and abideth forever in the soul, and becometh the incorruptible seed, by which children and servants are born from above and become the children of God.—N. Y. Christian Intelligence.

Business and Religion.

It is a mistaken idea that a consecrated religious life is not favorable to business success. God's methods never conflict with each other. Business and religion have intimate relations, and in the life of Christian men especially, they cannot be disjoined. Yet Christian business men too often make with safety either to the one or the other. Yet Christian business men too often make business a mere plea for non-attendance upon the weekly social services of the Church. It is true that prompt and continued attention to business is one of the elements of success. But business is not outside of God's providence or care. With religious men, we believe that religion has something to do with their worldly prosperity. The true Christian man has religion in his business, and business in his religion.

Active business men are among our most efficient Church workers. We know of brethren full of worldly cares and enterprises taxed incessantly with business pressure, yet they have time for an hour in the weekly prayer and class-meeting, and are ready to strike strong blows in time of revival. Such men bring life, and power, and energy into the work of the Church. The sacrifice they make for the cause of Christ is seen and felt. It carries conviction to men. These men honor the cause of God, and God in return honors them with positive rewards even in temporal things. Consecration to God is not a source of business failure or of poverty. Satan not only cheats thousands of men out of their spiritual inheritance, but he leads multitudes to bankruptcy. Sad mistakes for business men, when business is allowed to appropriate that which ought to be given to God and his service.

Business men go to the club room and onto late and costly suppers, and influence themselves with wine. Many such go down. Dissipation is costly business. It takes much time, it steals away the choicest energies of mind and body. The fascinations of the theatre tell on business men. Young men especially come to disaster in business from loose habits engaged by this practice. Alas, how many go to the great cities with fair prospects for wealth and eminence, and enter the countless list of business failures.

The world almost altogether overlooks the fact that wealth is one of God's great provisions for men. He meant it for a blessing. The Gospel of his Son is calculated to increase its facilities and multiply its benefits. He has put its growth and development under positive law. The true attainment of wealth is not a grab game. It is a grand business process under a great practical law, which, if observed, brings its great general results. Fortune building may be a religious work; more, it should be such. Consecration to God entire, is no drawback to a business man; it may be the means of his more rapid success. The prayer-meeting brings no danger to the business man. The true Christian will find time in the pressure of daily life to honor God, and to help his cause. The Harperts, the Lawrences, the Wolcotts and the Hemingtons, present noble instances of success in Christian men. God is honored in the use of wealth that is wrought out by men who recognize him, and do not fail to identify themselves with his evangelical work.

Consecrated business life is one of the great needs of the Church. It is an age of business. The business man is really the prince of our times. From business ranks come most of our public men. They make good congressmen and senators. Our practical age has need of them everywhere. So the Church needs her business talent brought into earnest consecration to Jesus. We need our business men at our altars, we need them in our Sunday-school, teachers-meetings, at our missionary gatherings, and in every place where strong hands, vigorous brains, and warm hearts may give help to our Christian work.

In fact our great evangelism is emphatically business. It is systematic work for God and souls. We need in it such dispatch and skill. History is making faster. The world accelerates. Satan multiplies his agencies. If Christ is to take the world, and he will, then must the Church summon her strong, her brave and true men from the hot haste of the market, the warehouse, the shop, the mill, and the store, and they must join hands and hearts for Christ. God waits even now to show what he can do with consecrated men of business. Christ wants the best talents for his cause. He chooses the best orators. He calls the best writers. He has drawn the world's best scholars into his service. He has a special demand now for the men who stand at the very forges of the world's power and progress.

If the Church can have the advantage of her business endowments, she need not fear for the future. Her business men must tell how slow or rapid shall be her victories. We have to thank God for many noble examples of consecrated business. The time and the gain of these men are laid under contribution to Jesus. They speak and give for God. Their consecration has not made them poor but the God of all bounty, and has crowned them with success and honor.

The relation of business and religion presents an interesting subject of study. If they were better understood, the Church would be the gainer in financial and spiritual power. Our brethren in the heat and care of business life, would find the joy of Divine help, and discover new secrets of success and lessen the charms of failure. We greatly desire to see the business power of the Church more fully utilized for God.—Zion Herald.

A man who had ague for a long time, and had become so reduced by it that his life was despaired of, was advised to read his will. One of his bequests was: "I give and bequeath unto Mr. —, the parson of this parish, these plagues fits of the ague. This legacy so tickled his fancy that he burst into a loud and long-continued fit of laughter. From that time the ague left him."