

Thoughts for the Thoughtful

When God bids us to watch and pray, He bids us use our strength, and His.

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There will never be a world harvest until there has been a world seed-sowing.

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How pure and absolute the mercy of God! He forgives all, hopes for all. How can we sin against such magnanimity?—W. L. Watkinson.

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In proportion as we forget ourselves in ministering to others, do we foster that character which most nearly resembles heaven.—Bishop Boyd Carpenter.

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Jesus chose humble fishermen to be his first followers, and God, through all the ages, is calling ordinary men to be His witness-bearers and to tell to others the story of His love and grace.—Exchange.

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Christ paints the character of a Christian, as one who shall not seek what concerns this world as if his kingdom consisted in it; but that he should make use of the present world only as a guest, who will soon resume his journey.—Dr. Martin Luther.

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The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light thro' chinks that time has made,
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw nearer their eternal home.
—Waller.

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It is not hypocrisy to pass by the evils one sees in one's fellow man, to speak of the one good thing that may be seen. If there be one real, honest good thing, it will not hurt to allow it to come to the fore, even though there be a whole procession of evils behind.—Exchange.

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Happiness is simple, like a meadow flower. We grasp it with a cruel eagerness, and crush it; we jump beyond it on our mad pursuit, and miss it forever. I look around me and see the silent sky and the flowing water, and feel that happiness is spread abroad as simply as a smile on a child's face.—Selected.

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Constant use is the only means of holding fast what we have. If in our heart there is some measure of love, we must study constantly the means to manifest it toward others; if we have a measure of joy, we must continue to rejoice, and no day must be without its spiritual joy; if we have a measure of peace, we must rest ourselves each day in the quietness and confidence of that peace.—Christian Observer.

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Paul, the apostle, was strong when he was weak in his individual and differentiating type of faith and life. The conscious Paul was weak when the consciousness of Christ in him and over him was strong. When he let himself be only a little member of the glorious Church, the body of Christ, he was filled with all the power of that body, and moved with the momentum of God. So he said, "When I am weak, then am I strong."—Exchange.

DRIFTING

A SERMON TO YOUNG MEN

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"A Double-minded Man is Unstable in all His Ways."—
JAMES 1, 8.

Drifting with the Tide.

THE Apostle's reference here is to the man who lacks sufficient strength of purpose to set his face against current notions and customs, even when he is fully convinced that they are both foolish and sinful, and who falls a victim to the far-too-common habit of drifting with the company that he happens for the time to be associated with. The danger is common to all, but more especially to the young and inexperienced who come to our great centres of population, and who have left behind them the hallowing and restraining influences of pious parents and Christian homes. What their future will be, depends very much upon the influences surrounding them in the office or shop, and in the boarding house. If they are fortunate enough to fall in with a strong religious influence, it is not unlikely that all will turn out well. If, on the other hand, they happen to locate amongst a set of men who are living godless and evil lives, after the first momentary shock is over, they will be likely to yield themselves up to the prevailing current, and begin insensibly but swiftly to drift. It is not necessary at first to commit some flagrant sin, it is enough that they cease to resist the insidious influences around them. The advice therefore that I want to give to the young men here to-night is *beware of drifting*. And first I would say—

Don't Drift Into a Loose Way of Keeping Sunday.

When away from home you do not know where to go on Sunday morning, when the hour for Divine Service comes round. If you enter a house of worship no one knows you, and perhaps no one welcomes you. The familiar faces and voices that used to greet you in the old church at home are missed. You feel that your absence from that congregation, and indeed from any other in the city, would never be noticed, and so when the next Sunday comes you stay away. Thus you begin to drift.

My advice, therefore, to young men who come as strangers to the city is—make up your minds definitely what church you are going to attend. Then go to the clergyman and tell him who you are, whence you have come, and your decision to identify yourself with that particular congregation. Then assume your share of the work and the responsibility that such connection involves. That will be good both for yourself and for the parish. Don't wait, as too many do, for the clergyman to find you out in some chance way, in the meantime complaining that he has not called upon you. Neither go wandering aimlessly from church to church; from a financial standpoint this may be economical, but nothing better can be said in its defence.

My next point is—

Don't Drift Into Loose Companionships.

A man is often made or marred by his friends. As fish take on the mottling of the ground on which they lie, as butterflies resemble the flowers they hover over, so do we become like those we choose for our companions. Do not drift into familiarity with any one till you are reasonably sure he is a man whose companionship will be helpful, not hurtful to you. Beware of the man who talks

lightly of mother or father or home, or of women generally. Many men will ridicule any reference to the tenderness and purity of the home circle, and apparently have no belief that a woman can be other than the toy or victim of men. Give such a man a wide berth; the probability is that he is a rake, who has never enjoyed the privilege of knowing a good woman.

Beware of the man who claims to know too much about science to believe in the Bible, and who laughs at those who do. Bear in mind that it is an easy thing to propound in a moment a question which it might take days of careful investigation to answer, or which might be incapable of human explanation. Destructive criticism is child's play. Any fool can fire a great cathedral which took centuries in building. Any street arab can smash a window which it would cost a fortune to replace. True wisdom is not destructive but constructive. No man has any right to destroy another's faith unless he has something better to put in its place.

And next I would say—

Don't Drift Into Extravagant Expenditure.

Better to live and dress in the simplest way, than spend more than you can afford, and sink into debt. The pleasure of a day's outing, or of an evening's gaiety, leaves a nasty after taste, when for weeks and months you have to avoid certain people because you owe them money which you cannot repay. It is a temptation to all of us to imitate those who are higher in the social scale: It is a miserable sort of life to live, and a very unsatisfactory one, for the reason that we are far more likely to copy their vices than their virtues. There are few things that lead to more unhappiness than the reckless determination to imitate the manner of life and scale of expenditure of those whose incomes are far in excess of our own. A young man will sometimes spend enough in a single evening to fill his heart with anxiety for many a weary day, and is tempted perhaps to take money that does not belong to him to stay pressing demands, in hopes of an opportunity for repayment, which in most cases never comes. An eminent Frenchman, writing about the evils of extravagance, says: "Life among the ancients was elegant but simple. At Athens and at Rome, in the days of their strength, even the man of ease and wealth did not crowd his house with such a quantity of objects as seems indispensable today. Their garments were as simple as those of the religious orders, consisting of a linen tunic and a simple woolen cloak. Changes of fashion were unknown, and their costumes remained the same for 1,000 years." Changes of fashion unknown! What a Godsend that would be to our day and generation, when the continued effort to bring forth something novel results in so many ugly distortions, and when the struggle to keep pace with the ever-changing fashions takes much of the joy out of life.

Speculation with Money not Our Own.

And here let me add a few words about another evil that almost certainly follows on the heels of extravagance—that is the tendency to play fast and loose with money that does not belong to us. This evil is plainly on the increase amongst us. A short time ago a young bank clerk in a neighbouring city committed suicide. He had been "playing the races" with money pilfered from the bank. A few years since the general manager of another bank was tried and sentenced for embezzlement. He had been "plunging" on the stock exchange. A chance to "get rich quick" by the use of other people's money tempts a man. He thinks he is sure to win. Or if he loses now