

Christian Endeavor.

TRUE WISDOM. HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

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MAY 7.—Prov. 3: 13-18; James 1: 5-6.

It is well to bear in mind that wisdom and knowledge are not synonymous terms. Cowper says, "Knowledge and wisdom far from being one have oft-times no connection." Knowledge may come while wisdom lingers. On the other hand, a man may have wisdom and yet comparatively little knowledge. The man who possesses both is likely to be a good and useful man. If, however, he has knowledge alone he may be active, energetic, studious and painstaking but he can never be useful in the highest sense. Melzar who was set over Daniel and his three companions in Babylon may have surpassed them in knowledge but they excelled him in wisdom and, therefore, in goodness and usefulness. George Elliot may have had more extensive knowledge than Frances Ridley Havergal, but the latter had more wisdom and therefore was happier herself and did more to make others happy. Few men possessed a greater fund of knowledge than Edward Gibbon and yet the humblest Christian of his time, having this wisdom which Solomon praised so highly, possessed what was far more to be preferred than all the knowledge of the great historian.

"Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."

We should remember also that in the Bible wisdom is used in two different senses. When Luke says that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians he means that Moses had made himself familiar with the scientific and practical truth which was known and taught by that people. But the wisdom which is eulogized by Job, Solomon and others means right judgments and feelings regarding moral and religious truth. It has been defined as the power by which human personality reaches its highest spiritual perfection, by which all lower elements are brought into harmony with the highest. Job says, "The fear of the Lord this is wisdom." True wisdom then consists in the fear and love of God, in the entire surrender of ourselves to Him, and in the complete conformity of our wills to His will. This is the principal thing, and whatever else we get or fail to get, let us give ourselves no rest till we possess this. This is the pearl of great price and we should be willing to sell all else in order that we may procure this.

How can we obtain this wisdom? Men cannot impart it to us. "The multitude of years should teach wisdom" but it does not always do so (Job 32: 17). Great men are supposed to possess it but Elihu reminds us that great men are not always wise (Job 32: 9). Shrewd practical men are supposed to possess it, but Elihu reminds us that this world is concerned, they are, but then the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (Cor. 3: 19). If we desire to obtain it we must go to the Fountain-head of all wisdom. (James 1: 5-6). We must get it from the same source as Solomon procured it. He asked God for wisdom and in answer to that prayer it was bestowed upon him. (1 Kings 3: 12) We must draw from the Fountain from which Daniel and his companions procured supplies.

"There is more wisdom in a whispered prayer
Than in the ancient lore of all the schools."

OUR MINERAL WEALTH.

At the annual meeting of the St. Leon Mineral Water Co. held on Saturday 22nd inst. amongst other pleasing features of the year's business, the president, in submitting his report, stated that the consumption of water from their springs during the year exceeded two million bottles.

According to the best obtainable information this exceeds the consumption of any other mineral water on the American continent, and puts the combined sales of all the other Canadian springs completely in the shade.

After mutual congratulations on the constantly increasing sales from year to year, the following officers were re-elected for the ensuing year. Mr. James Good; President; Mr. J. F. Eby, Vice President; Mr. Hugh Blain, Secretary; Mr. C. E. A. Langlois, Manager.

at Antioch in Pisidia, we see the same means used. He proved from Scripture that the Messiah had actually appeared on the earth, and that he was crucified and buried, but that God had raised him from the dead. He clearly points out that faith in this once crucified, but now risen, Saviour will secure the forgiveness of all sin, and that the rejection of Him will bring swift destruction.

But we have a brighter and more perfect example than that of Prophet or Apostle. Christ Jesus, the great Teacher, opened the eyes of his hearers by showing them their sins and the way of obtaining pardon. This is very clearly illustrated in his dealings with the woman of Samaria, and with Nicodemus. He said to him, "Ye must be born again," and clearly made known to him the way of salvation. The same style, but even more incisive, is seen in the last words which he spoke within the temple. "These last words consist of a withering exposure of the Scribes and Pharisees, and a sharp rebuke of their doctrine and practice." "Ye say and do not. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses, and for pretence make long prayers, therefore, ye shall receive the greater damnation." With the Master's example before them, are His servants to be so recreant to their trust as to expose themselves to the condemnation passed upon false prophets, who were compared to dumb dogs that would not bark? They prophesied smooth things, and the people loved to have it so, saying, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." Many still desire the same kind of teaching. They would have the ambassador of Christ to consult them as to what he is to preach; but how surprised would such people be if their physician when called to prescribe in time of sickness would consult them as to the kind of medicine he should give. Is the body, therefore, to be considered more important than the soul, and the diseases that prey upon it more deadly than that awful malady of sin of which so many souls are dying?

The servant of Christ is commanded to go to all classes, to high and low, rich and poor. He is to lift up his voice like a trumpet and show the people their sins. If sinners are to be saved the teaching of the pulpit must be of such a kind as to penetrate the heart and touch men at the very core of their being. There must be no sham, no trickery. As Dr. Cunningham Geikie says, "What good is it to talk of bringing in multitudes by make believe, on a large scale, when well-to-do sinners have bows and smiles from parsons in private, and are not troubled with any pulpit allusions to their short-comings, while the air is shrill with denunciations of poor gutter leaders? Call the devil by his own name wherever you find him—in Wall street on the stock exchange in "syndicates" and "corners," in death trap houses for the poor, in the utter want of principle in party politics, in the thousand forms in which he masquerades in our midst." With this we entirely agree, and add that whatever the consequence may be, a minister should not be silent when such monster evils as these, and many more of a similar kind, are stalking throughout our land. We are not ignorant of the fact that maledictions are likely to be poured upon his head by those whose wrong doings are exposed. But let them pour, for he has not only the right to speak on any or all of these subjects, but is under the most solemn obligations to enlighten the people in regard to them. To speak of the want of principle in party politics. To speak to the people about the moral qualifications of those whom they appoint to office. We say the moral qualifications, such as clearly treated in the Word of God. The people's attention may surely be called to Hobab's advice to Moses, without exposing himself to the charge of preaching politics. "Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth hating covetousness." David also speaking under the direct influence of the Spirit gives instruction in this matter: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

Is there not much need to have people enlightened on this subject? If the qualifications here specified had been considered absolutely necessary for those who sought appointment to office, our country by this time, would have stood out prominently as a nation exalted by righteousness. Our legislators would have but little difficulty in carrying a bill through parliament to prevent Sabbath desecration. Neither would we have the solemn farce enacted, year after year, of having a day of thanksgiving appointed and on the same day have our volunteers called out to fight sham battles. The whole affair is a sham in the name of religion, and the sooner the eyes of the people are open that they may see more clearly, the better will it be for all concerned, both rulers and ruled.

There are others who are in great need of having their eyes opened but the sins

of which they are guilty are of such a kind as to make it especially difficult to refer to them in a public audience. Hence many guilty ones are going down to perdition unwarned. A Roman Catholic Priest a few years ago referring to the prevalence of this awful sin in the New England states, declared "if it were not checked, that in a few generations the only specimen of a Yankee to be found would be a preserved one in some museum." But this sin is not confined to one country. There are fiends in human shape, in this country who sell their skill not to preserve life, but either to prevent or destroy it. Let all such know that they and their accomplices are on the broad way to eternal ruin. Abel's blood cried to God from the ground for vengeance on the murderer, and there are homes where children are considered an incumbrance from which a similar cry is daily ascending. Herod is always spoken of as a monster of wickedness for slaying the innocents, and why should others with the same stain upon them be considered less guilty? In one of the grandest tragedies that Shakespeare ever wrote there is a scene in which Lady Macbeth is brought in while in her sleep and continually rubbing her hands as though she were washing them crying ever and anon, "Yet here is a spot. What? will these hands ne'er be clean? Here's the smell of blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." Macbeth cries out "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? No! this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red."

And there are some men and women now with hands so stained with blood that all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten, nor the waters of the ocean cleanse.

There is another sin about which there is no difficulty in speaking, and far more prevalent, and ruining more souls than any or all of those already mentioned. A sin so deceptive in its nature that multitudes are not the least ashamed to be charged with it. If charged with dishonesty, falsehood, or impurity they would resent it, but are not the least ashamed to confess that they are guilty of the sin of unbelief. It is simply the sin of omission in thought. The sin consists in not having right thoughts of God. But simple as it appears, it is the parent of all other sins. Christ told His disciples that when the Spirit would come He would convince the world of this sin. Unbelief is the great sin of the world, and the Ambassadors of Christ have a duty laid upon them to open the eyes of the people in regard to this and all other sin.

II. The duty of the hearers. "That they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God."

This is a change, not of outward conduct merely, nor of mere acts of the mind but of character. This change is absolutely necessary, for without it there can be no salvation. The duty of the hearer is made so plain that he cannot plead ignorance as an excuse. He must know that he is summoned to action. Too many think that a respectful hearing is all that is required of them. Others do not admit this much, but consider themselves under the obligation as to how the message is to be received. They are ready to criticize, and sometimes get so emboldened in sin that they presumptuously arraign the Holy One at the bar of their puny reason, and dictate to Him as to what He should say or do. He says to them "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" but they pay no attention. How different their conduct from that of the Psalmist. "I thought," said he "on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies." He had been going in a wrong direction and he was led to think what the end must be. Before him an unknown eternity, and within him an awakened conscience to remind him of an angry God. He knew if he staid where he was he must perish, and if he went forward he must be lost; his resolution was formed and speedily carried out. "I turned my feet unto Thy testimonies." The Bible everywhere presents this alternative. The sinner must turn or die. But he is not only warned of his danger but encouraged to turn from his way that he may live. Life is held out as an inducement, not that there is any merit in his turning so as to procure life thereby, but God proclaims mercy to man on these terms. He tells them that he has no pleasure in their death, but "rather that they would turn unto Him and live." There must be a turning or sin will bring its punishment. No power on earth or heaven can make an impenitent sinner happy. It is a terrible delusion for a sinner to cherish the belief that he can with safety remain under the power of sin and Satan in this life, and expect to go to heaven when he dies. One of the principal characteristics of those whom John, in vision, saw on Mount Zion was that they were redeemed from the earth, redeemed from among men. We must be redeemed from the power of Satan unto God. The necessity of separation from the world is clearly set forth in the parable of the prodigal

son. The prodigal is represented as having gone astray, then coming to himself, returning, confessing to his father and is forgiven and restored as a son to a place in the home.

III. The great encouragement held out to those who return that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified.

While ministers and hearers have very important duties to perform, neither one nor the other can procure forgiveness by what he does. Who can forgive sins but God only? His agency must always be recognized in the salvation of sinners. He begins and completes the work. It is He who sends forth ministers to preach, and in the day of His power makes the hearer able and willing to return. It is the sad experience of many a sinner that though he tries at times to turn from sin it still follows, it still clings to him, God only can separate sin and the sinner. He grants the dismissal of all sin to those who return to Him. That which the law could not do, that of which Nature could give no hope God through Christ is very willing to do. He has forgiven, He has dismissed sins—He removes the soul from the burden of it. Even under the former dispensation this precious truth was clearly revealed. The man who came with his offering to the altar virtually said "I confess that I am a sinner, but desire to turn from my sin that I may obtain pardon," and having done so, it was his privilege to know that the Lord had put away his sins. But even forgiveness is but a means to a further purpose. He forgives our sins with the design that we may become holy. The inheritance here promised is among the sanctified. The situation enhances its value. The unclean cannot enter there, and the redeemed are made meet for it by being made holy. Many parts of this world have become so vile that a pure soul would not accept an inheritance in them. The surroundings and associations destroy the value. It is sometimes said that heaven is described by negatives, but this is a positive description. The place is holy. It is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." It is reserved for the heirs of salvation, and they are kept by the power of God for it.

IV. Lastly, the conditions upon which the blessings are granted, "By faith in me."

In order to be saved man requires to be delivered from the guilt, power and pollution of sin. Redemption is needed, but how can it be obtained? Law knows nothing of pardon. It rewards the obedient and metes out merited punishment to the transgressor. Hence the necessity of faith or trust in him who has borne the penalty of a violated law. The exercise of faith is our own act, but faith itself is a grace wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. It is a bond on the part of the sinner by which he is united to Christ, and made a partaker of the divine nature.

However it is not a definition of faith we have in this passage, but a clear statement by Christ Himself as to how a sinner is to be saved. Man became a sinner and was lost by departing from God. He lost confidence in his Creator, and if he is ever to be saved that confidence must be restored. There can be no salvation for him while he refuses to trust God. The very essence of all sin lies in a will opposed to God, but to trust in Jesus is to give up our own will for God's, and this is what we are required to do. To trust in Jesus is the condition upon which forgiveness and the inheritance are bestowed. To open the eyes and to turn from darkness to light are but means to an end. They are not salvation, nor the ground upon which it is granted. There is nothing in man to entitle him to those blessings. Sometimes we sing in the words of a well-known hymn, "All the fitness He requires is to feel our need of Him." But Christ never said so. He never conditioned salvation upon such terms. What about those who do not feel their need? Are they to be shut out from all hope? Are they to be told that up to the time they feel their need, the invitations of the Gospel, have no reference to them? That is the way this subject is sometimes presented, and as a consequence many anxious sinners have vainly striven for months and years to work themselves up to a right state of feeling, so as to be fitted to come to Christ. They are constantly looking to themselves instead of looking to the Saviour. They overlook what is said for their encouragement in the word of God, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." It is not said that He came into the world to save sinners that feel their need of Him—that are penitent. Sinners are invited to come to Him just as they are. We are well aware that none will come but those who feel their need of Him, but feeling must not be the ground of their confidence.

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling."
"Whoever will let him take of the water of life freely."