

Spurious Christians.

One of the commonest snares which retard approach to Christ is the perception that the members of Christ's Church are not always exceptionally good men. Many so-called Christians are found to be greedy of gain, full of spite, envy, and all uncharitableness. They act as a kind of deterrent on those who would, but for them, seek to live as Christians. Many who have had the misfortune in their early years to become acquainted with this spurious kind of Christian, and have never been brought into close contact with genuine Christians, have their minds so prejudiced against the Christian religion that they never can free themselves of these prepossessions. This is unreasonable, but it does notwithstanding delay many who, if they were day by day in contact with incontestably good results of Christian faith, might themselves be Christians. Few men independently enquire into things for themselves; they allow unreasoned impressions to be made upon them by what they meet in life. But as soon as a man does look at the matter with an unprejudiced intelligence, he perceives that, in order to judge of the efficacy of Christ's salvation, he must examine those who use it, not those who merely say they do. Many who bear the name of Christ have as little resemblance to Him as the men who parade the streets with boards resemble the picture they advertise. The mere name of Christian or profession of faith in Christ works no charm. We can measure His influence only by observing the lives of those who faithfully put themselves under it. It is senseless to judge the religion of Christ by the conduct of men who have nothing Christian about them but the name.—Professor Marcus Dods, D.D.

A Prayer.

Father in heaven, we thank Thee for the compassionate love in which Thou dost call us Thy children; and for the spirit of charity and mutual affection which Thou dost breathe upon us, and which alone can make us truly Thy children. Help us to receive Thy Spirit more worthily; to be more diligent, painstaking, and loving in the work that Thou givest us to do; more faithful in the care of that which Thou dost entrust to us; more gentle and humble in the errands of mercy which Thy love shall require of us. Bless our efforts to live as Thy children, unite us in Thy love, and comfort us with a sense of Thy Fatherly presence. Of Thy mercy we ask it for Thy name's sake. Amen.

Be Not Discouraged.

To the over-sensitive, who say, "I have tried and failed." The people who have tried and not failed have yet to be born. The names that shall endure longer than sun and moon had conspicuous failures in their life histories. Moses, David, Solomon, Peter, John, Paul, were great failures at various points of their characters. Do not let the devil dishearten you. Let failure call you to ever increasing courage, and to strengthened determination that, God helping you, you will do what he calls you to do.—The Rev. Gordon Watt.

When Christ called his disciples to follow him, he did not have to call twice. Not one of the twelve, so far as we know, had to have the invitation repeated. The great disciples, through all the centuries, have been the obedient disciples, loyally responding to the first claim made by Christ upon them.—J. R. Miller.

Our Young People

Feb. 14. Real Friendship.

Some Bible Hints.

A friend will help a friend when his life is in danger (v. 1). And what peril is so great as peril of one's spiritual life?

A true friend will do for his friend anything whatever that he needs (v. 4), but not everything, necessarily, that he wants.

What can I do better for my friend than to strengthen his friendship with a third friend, or restore it if it has been interrupted? (v. 7)

The covenant of friendship is a very sacred one (v. 17) and it is to be held equally sacred whether it has ever been put into words or not.

Suggestive Thoughts.

"I have called you friends," said Christ. Those who are Christ's friends will be friends of one another.

We are Christ's friends, if we do whatever He commands us; and not until then can we be the best possible friend of any man.

If you want to learn how to maintain friendship, study the life of Him who "sticketh closer than a brother."

Some men will lay down their lives for their friends, and the more they are like Christ, the more ready are they to lay down their lives for their enemies.

A Few Illustrations.

Friendship depends much on being close together. Two branches crossing each other, and pressing hard, will finally join.

Friendship is like a ship which separates those upon it from the world around it, and carries them safely through it.

Friendship is like a crystal, likely to be more perfect when it forms slowly.

Friends are like mirrors, which tell the absolute truth to each other.

To Think About.

What am I sacrificing for my friends?

Is Christ the model of my friendships?

Will my friendships help me toward the heavenly friendships?

A Cluster of Quotations.

Friendship, which flows from the heart cannot be frozen by adversity, as the water that flows from the spring does not congeal in winter.—J. Fenimore Cooper.

Associate not with the wicked man, even if thou canst learn from him.—Talmud.

Think not that any friend is truly thine,

Save as life's closest link with Love divine.

—Lucy Larcom.

The power of making friends is, above all, the power of coming out of one's self, and seeing and appreciating whatever is noble and loving in another man.—Thomas Hughes.

Our Monthly Trial Balance.

It is the business meeting. These meetings furnish the best possible test of the condition of a society.

Insist on written reports from every committee and officer. Pass a resolution that no verbal reports shall be received, and that if any one is unprepared to report in writing, his report will be postponed to the next meeting of the society.

Furnish uniform paper on which these reports may be written, and bind them together each year in a permanent volume.

The report of the executive committee will contain the propositions for new business which the committee wishes to bring before the society. These will be taken up, dis-

cussed, and acted upon; after this any member may present whatever plan he desires to propose.

It is best to hold the business meetings in connection with a monthly social. Half the evening is enough for the fun; fill the other half with earnest work.

Too many business meetings are simply reports of what has been done. On the other hand, the success of these meetings depends upon the introduction, at each of them, of some one good, attractive plan for advance work.

Daily Readings.

Mon., Feb. 8.—Faithful friends.	Prov. 27: 6-10
Tues., Feb. 9.—Sympathetic friends.	Job. 2: 11-13
Wed., Feb. 10.—How to win friends.	Prov. 18: 24
Thurs., Feb. 11.—Gain of friendship.	Ecc. 4: 9-12
Fri., Feb. 12.—A friendship begun.	1 Sam. 19: 1-7
Sat., Feb. 13.—The best of friends.	John 15: 13-16
Sun., Feb. 14.—Topic—What will real friendship do?	1 Sam. 20: 1-23

It is not always wise to speak the things that are true. It is safer to dismiss the audience before crying "fire!" than after it.

The revenues of the future are the dividends on present investments. He who squanders to-day has thrown away to-morrow.

The oil of joy is very cheap, and if you can help the poor on with a garment of praise it will be better for them than praise.—Drummond.

Friendship cannot be permanent unless it becomes spiritual. There must be fellowship in the deepest things of the soul, community in the highest thoughts, sympathy with the best endeavors.—Friendship, Hugh Black.

Just as when great princes go abroad they must not go unattended, so it is with the believer. Goodness and mercy will follow him always—the black days as well as the bright days, the days of fasting as well as the days of feasting, the dreary days of winter as well as the bright days of summer. Goodness supplies our needs and mercy blots out our sins.—Charles H. Spurgeon.

The grace that liberates also illuminates. The grace that brings "redemption" also confers "wisdom." Our opened eyes are to be fed and feasted with ever more glorious unveilings of the Eternal. We are to obtain more and more spacious conceptions of truth, richer and profounder knowledge of God.—J. H. Jowett.

"I suppose that for one Christian who fails in prayer, there are four Christians who fail in praise," Mr. Ralph Wells recently said. We are sorry to think that he was about right. One of our pastors says he is asked to offer the prayers for "persons going to sea," or dangerously sick, fifty times to once that he is asked to give thanks for a safe voyage or a recovery from illness.—Episcopal Recorder.