

## Thoughts for the Thoughtful

Patient waiting is often the highest way of doing God's will.—Collier.

\* \* \* \*

If thou wouldst find much favour and peace both with God and man, be very low in thine own eyes, forgive thyself little and others much.—Archbishop Leighton.

\* \* \* \*

The kind and chief design of God, in all His severest dispensations, is to melt and soften our hearts to such degrees as He finds necessary in order to accomplish the good purposes of His grace.—Bishop Atterbury.

\* \* \* \*

Self-resignation—the having no will but God's—is hard to learn; but in proportion as we learn it, we have a peace (whatever our outward trials may be) which cannot be explained, because it "passeth all understanding."—R. A. J. Suckling.

\* \* \* \*

Overcoming evil with good is the only way to overcome it at all. In our own hearts and lives, and in the world around us, the only way to get rid of what is faulty is to supplant it with something better. The bad habit, the bad custom, the bad influence must be crowded out by one that is good.—Forward.

\* \* \* \*

Oh, common are sunshine and flowers,  
And common are raindrop and dew,  
And the gay, little footsteps of children,  
And common the love that holds true;  
So, Lord, for our commonplace mercies  
That straight from Thy hand are bestowed,  
We are fain to uplift our thanksgivings—  
Take, Lord, the long debt we have owed!  
—Margaret E. Sangster.

\* \* \* \*

The mantle of Divine providence is thrown over the entire world. It shields not only the great oak, monarch of the forest, but also the sprig of grass, a tiny shred of the earth's carpet. And if in His infinite watch-care God is so vigilant of these least things, will He be unmindful of man, whom He has made the crown and glory of His creation? If He clothes with the beauty of the lily the vegetation of the field, which to day blooms and tomorrow burns, shall He not much more clothe us who are made in His likeness?—Biblical Recorder.

\* \* \* \*

Happiness dwells in duty performed. It will never yield its blessed treasures to the selfish seeker, nor can it be grasped with a greedy or unwashed hand. Happiness is a mosaic, composed of the tiny stones of daily duty, love to God, love to our fellowman. Viewed singly, they seem of small value; but when they are grouped together, and combined in Christian character, they constitute that costly jewel called happiness. And we retain this jewel by bestowing it, for "all who joy would win, must share it—happiness was born a twin."—The Evangel.

\* \* \* \*

Humility among Christians is a practical virtue, not a self-suppressing pose. It is not so much making ourselves small, as seeing how small we are. But smallness implies contrast. If everything in the universe were small, nothing would be small in any real sense. For we should have no sense of smallness or bigness. If we find our tasks mean, it is because we have within us the promise of tasks that shall be mighty. If we feel within us the sense of sin, it is because there is growing there the conquering sense of the Presence of God.—W. H. Blake.

## Moral Builders

Address for Sunday School Associations

Rev. A. E. Ribourg,  
St. Alban's Cathedral, Toronto.

"For we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—2 Cor. 5:1.

SINCE the beginning of time man has been a builder, and nowhere has he revealed himself more significantly than in the buildings he has erected. When we stand before them, whether it be a Pyramid or a Parthenon, a Pantheon or a Westminster Abbey, we seem to read into his soul. In these monuments of his genius man has left something of himself—his hopes, his fears, his ideals. In them can we read the history of his faith, of his sacrifices and triumphs. But man is not only a temporal builder of earthly monuments; he is also a moral builder of spiritual edifices. He is the builder of his own character and of that of his fellowmen, "Ye also," says St. Peter, "as living stones are built into a spiritual house."

St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, describes for us the spiritual temple, "Founded," he says, "upon the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief corner-stone."

And thus the pure and the good of all the ages, who have accepted the Christ, have been built into the Temple, until to-day, the men of the twentieth century are being built together into this same glorious Temple for an habitation of God in the spirit.

My brethren, in the spiritual, as well as in the material building, the most important part, and often the most expensive, is the foundation. It has often been said that the most important part of a building is that part which we cannot see. Two buildings may appear alike, equally handsome and safe, yet the one may be firm and safe, the other flimsy and dangerous. It all depends upon the foundation. "A wise precaution," says Dr. Miller, "which a wise builder never forgets, is to dig deep. He must get at the bottom of all the loose earth, so that he can build on solid ground, and preferably on the rock." So must we do, brethren, in the erection of our moral edifice. As the foundations of a house are hidden in the earth, so the foundations of the edifice of our life must be hidden with Christ.

The foolish builder begins on the sand, and cares only for what meets the eye. So the religion of some people is all to be seen of men. There is no depth of character, no firm foundation.

The foundation on which the Christian is to erect the spiritual structure of a good life is Truth and Love, as expressed in Jesus Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," says St. Paul. The long story, both of men and of the nations, confirms this great verity. All through Christian history we find that only that nation can stand which rests upon the truth as it is in Jesus. Napoleon said that he, like Alexander, had built an empire upon love of power, and it had crumbled like sand, but that Jesus built upon the power of love, and that His Kingdom endures and grows. At last men will come to see that the Golden Rule, so far from being the idle dream of a wandering idealist, is the only possible basis for an enduring social, political and economic life. Other foundation there is none, and there never will be while the world stands.

Germany and other nations, which laid the foundations of their empires upon might and

brutal force, are discovering to-day that in this great universe of God, love, righteousness and justice constitute the only firm and lasting foundations of civilized society. Yes, until we all learn that righteousness is the best common sense, and that love is the only everlasting rock, our temples, no matter how high, will come tumbling down.

Looking back down the ages, we see a few great pillars still standing, despite the ruin wrought by time. Socrates and Plato stand under the blue Grecian sky, half-buried in the rubbish of their civilization. Their lives were founded upon righteousness as they understood it. Only those lives built upon the everlasting realities outlast the ravages of time and death. What pillars of righteousness were Moses, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel among the Jews, or Chrysostom and Augustine among the early Christians! What towers of strength the lives of Shaftesbury in England, of Lincoln in America were and always will be to their respective countries, while others, more showy and brilliant, have faded or fallen! These noble characters, resting upon the homely old moralities, tower aloft in the majesty of simple nobility.

Sunday School teachers, you are not only the builders of your own characters, of your own spiritual edifice, but also the builders of the spiritual edifice of those whom you have the privilege to teach. The young minds and souls that are in your care on Sunday are the stones which you must prepare, so that they may enter in a fitting manner in the great edifice of the house of faith, which the Church of Jesus Christ is erecting on this earth. Therefore, you will permit me to lay before your consideration a few suggestions that may be helpful to you in your great work as moral builders.

In the first place, teachers must be joyous. Joy brings joy. Many of the children have come from sad homes, or if not actually sad, homes where there is some pressing trouble, or where the parents do not get on well together, or where somebody is a social failure. Do not let them see you fretful or low-spirited.

Let the thanksgiving note be struck clearly as soon as you arrive; "Christ is risen," imprinted in letters of gold on all you do and say. "This is the day the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Do not throw a shadow on the Lord's Day's brightness by any moods. If you have any private sorrow, worry or vexation, leave it at home before starting for Sunday School. The early Christians attracted all with whom they came in contact by the light of the glorious Gospel shining in their faces.

They went about, rescuing, teaching, comforting, healing and delivering. Let the class see the good news in your face. The thought that you are the hewers in the mountains of the Lord, preparing the stones for the great building of Christianity, ought to fill your souls with joy. Arm yourselves with the joyful patience that can endure, remembering, as you grapple even with a rough specimen of childhood, the words of Michael Angelo, "There is an angel in that block of marble, and it is my business to get it out."

Then there is the study of the child nature. You must not aim merely at telling children Bible stories, teaching and explaining hymns, but you must arouse in them ideas of the Divine, and foster religious feeling, even before the minds can grasp religious truths.

The foundations of religion and character must be laid early in the child's mind and the child's heart, and that by the most attractive methods.

But in order to accomplish this task successfully, teachers must be filled with the spirit of