

large proportion of this knowledge limited to things that are seen and temporal? Some who stand in the front rank in their respective professions are lamentably ignorant when it comes to things Divine, and such as do know will appreciate the message none the less when presented in simplicity.

The devil's connection with the preacher's message makes it all important that the message be understood, for "when any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." Other things being equal, God will use the man most that makes his message plainest.

How can we attain to this simplicity of style so well as to sit at the feet of Jesus, our Great Model. Study his sermons. The profundity of his thought is equalled only by the simplicity of his expression. An attempt to imitate his style will soon reveal to us that in this as in every other characteristic of his wonderful nature, he is inimitable, and will lead us to offer the prayer ere going to the service:—"Dear Lord, fill us with thy fullness and speak to us and through us thyself with thine own beautiful simplicity and Divine power," and so becoming, fully Christ possessed, we shall not only have his passion for souls but also his style in preaching.

3. He whom God will use must stand by his Bible as his text-book and his proof. This may properly be called the drifting age. In certain influential quarters there is a tendency to cut away from the solid old moorings of our fathers and drift upon the unsafe sea of speculation, criticism, doubt and uncertainty. The "higher" (?) critic thrusts in his knife here and applies his scissors there until a considerable portion of the Holy Book is relegated to the level of the writings of Homer and of Shakespeare, and what remains is left under the shadow of a cloud.

I presume it would be possible to get one hundred preachers in America to-day who, between them, would cast doubt on the authenticity of every page of the Book. No. 1 would tear out a page here and No. 2 would expunge a passage there and by the time the 100 would take away the portions they reject respectively, you would have little left but the covers, and, even upon these would be left the marks of their audacious fingers.

I am not going to enter upon a defence of the Bible here. It needs none. I simply say to my brethren that we are perfectly safe in taking the Book as we now have it,—every chapter of it,—Jonah, Job and Canticles included—as the divinely inspired and consequently, infallibly authentic Word of God. It has stood the assaults of 19 centuries and should the Lord delay his coming 19 centuries more it will stand as firmly as it does to-day, and should increasing vigor in the attack of its critics make human support necessary, it shall have that support in abundance from the discoveries of spade and pickaxe now going on in Oriental lands. Let us stand by the Book in our ministrations. "Preach the Word." "My Word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." "The entrance of my Word,—not our philosophies—"gives light"; therefore preach his word. And as all truth radiates from Christ as its centre, let us make Christ the centre of our theme:—

Where'er I'll go I'll tell the story  
Of the cross,  
In nothing else my soul shall glory  
Save the cross.  
Yes this my constant theme shall be  
Through time and in eternity,  
That Jesus suffered death for me  
On the cross.  
Let every Christian come and sing  
Round the cross,  
Let every monarch come and cling  
To the cross,  
Here let the preacher take his stand  
And with the Bible in his hand  
Proclaim the triumphs of the Lamb  
On the cross.

### How Shall I be Thankful?

One of the most marvelous things that was ever done by man was the first step taken toward the invention of the alphabet—the beginning of all the world's literature. Who was it that took this step? We do not know. The invention of the printing press was not so important as this unremembered service of an unknown man. How I should like that he should stand in this modern world, and look over it and see the fruitage of this good that he conferred upon his race, and receive the gratitude of all the world!

But is there, then, nothing we can do because we cannot do this? These two things we can do. We can use the results of this benefit which he has conferred upon the world to make ourselves as noble as possible; and, then, we can use these forces to help on the good of the world. It was for this that he labored; and we can honor and praise and thank him in the truest way, by helping to carry out, ages after his death, that which he began. We can do another thing in the way of proving our gratitude to this wondrous humanity of which we are a part. We can try, at any rate, to see to it that we pay

back into the common fund of the world's wealth and well-being at least as much as we take out of it.

I am receiving, every day I live, unspeakable good and blessing that have come to me as the result of the power of thought, the heartache, the tears, the labor of humanity. I am taking out all the time. I can show my appreciation and gratitude for all these by trying to put back into the common reservoir of human good and well-being at least as much as I take out. In this way I shall show that I understand how much I owe. I shall try to pay my debt; and I cannot conceive any nobler thing being written on the monument of any man than this: He left the world a little richer, a little better, a little happier than he found it; he did something for which humanity ought to be grateful.

Again, we have received the church, the spiritual heritage of all the race. A man who speaks contemptuously about the church in the modern world simply shows that he does not understand the force or the results of human history. The church as we have it to-day is the finest outcome of the age-long endeavor of man to put into form his religious aspirations and hopes. Take it, then, as one of the mightiest powers for the moulding of human nature and life, and make something still better out of it. Show your appreciation of this struggle of ages by taking this gift, and making it a little sweeter, a little nobler.

You have received the home. It took this human race thousands and thousands of years to invent the home. It is still imperfect. The newspapers are full of sneers in regard to our social relations. The difficulties between husband and wife are turned into perpetual jests. But yet the home, such as it is, is the transmitted heritage of the social experience of the world for two hundred thousand years, at the very least; and it has the promise of something better in the years to come. Take, then, this heritage, and show your appreciation and gratitude by making your own home finer, sweeter, better.

Let me come to the last thought which I have to offer for your consideration. I have kept this for the last, because I deem it to be the logical climax of all that has gone before, the most important point of all. God is infinite, complete in himself. He does not need that we should make him any presents or gifts. He is not hungry, as primitive man used to think his gods were. He does not care for that sort of recognition. But is there nothing we can do for God? There is something we can do for him that is so important that without it even the Omnipotent is helpless concerning that which we have a right to say is the one thing about which he most cares. Luther said, and said it with the grandest possible significance, "God needs strong men,"—needs them. I take not away from the emphasis of Luther's saying one single particle. With the conception that we have of the universe to-day, it is only heightened and deepened in its meaning. God needs you and me, in order to carry out that which is the best result of all worlds.

God needs strong men. Can we see anything yet as to the outcome of this universe which would justify us in saying that there is any intelligent purpose in it? Is God reaching out for any culmination? If he is, can we get a glimpse of what it is? I believe he is, and that we can.

God cannot pour goodness into human souls. It is the result of development and experience through their own thinking and feeling and activity. God cannot pour knowledge into a human brain. The very definition of knowledge implies study and experience on the part of him who acquires it.

For the accomplishment, then, of the highest results of this universe, God needs our co-operation and help; and he waits for it. I believe that the present stage of civilization might have been attained thousands of years ago, if humanity had been a little wiser; for we can accelerate or we can retard the processes in our case or in the case of others.

Here, then, is a field for appreciation, for recognition, and for that which is dearest of all things to the infinite heart—an opportunity to co-operate with God and be lifted up, until we become creators of character with him; an opportunity to attain that magnificent position which was attributed to Abraham, when it was said of him that he was "the friend of God."—Christian Register.

### The Power of the Gospel.

BY REV. A. T. KEMPSON, FITZBURG, MASS.

For four years I have known a man who has lived a most varied life. A few times I had seen him in the church service, and at one time thought that possibly he might be somewhat interested. When a young man, for four years he followed the occupation of a variety theatre actor, and during those four years grew exceedingly familiar with the haunts and sights and scenes of sin and crime. For three years he spent a peculiar existence indeed in a secret service of the United States, as a special detective. He knows railroading from the beginning to the end, and has served on freights, specials and passenger trains, from one end of the train to the other. Many times in the storm and darkness he has just escaped with his life in scenes and experiences that to ordinary men would mean death. But this bright, active, alert young man seemed to have been saved by a divine purpose for something better than sin.

By a strange outcome of circumstances, the committee of my church sought him out to be our janitor. It rather struck us comical all around at first, but he was faithful and efficient as a janitor and left nothing to be desired in that respect, though he constantly avoided the service.

After having been with us some months as he himself speaks of it, he grew interested even at hearing the

gospel service in the distance, while in another part of the church. At work he would creep out in the hall-way and listen to the service preaching and singing. In his youth he had heard the Gospel and accepted it too, at that time at a Methodist Camp Meeting, but had long ago left all that behind. But the gospel message had not lost all of its power on him.

As he sneaked about in the darkness and listened unobserved to the service a message from the lips of the preacher went to his heart. In a week or two he came and took his place in the meeting and to my joy and delight sprang to his feet and with heart overflowing and voice breaking, told of his desire to return to his Lord. It was a prodigal's return, a genuine and joyous one. Both the Father above and the penitent son down here must have been glad.

Smith is now not only a believer but a diligent worker. Last Sunday evening it was my pleasure and delight to lead him into the baptismal waters and while he stood upon my left hand, his wife entered also, and stood upon my right. I took their hands while the audience joined in that beautiful hymn, "Blest be the tie that joins our hearts in Christian love," then I baptized the wife and after that the husband. It was a scene never to be forgotten. This man of the varied life and experiences in sin snatched like a brand from the burning to be "kept by the power of God," we trust for the remainder of his life a useful Christian.

Yes: A night or two after his baptism I find him with his arms about a young man who is a backslider, pleading with him to return to his Father too, while tears glistened in each of their eyes, and as I drew near them I heard the backslider murmur, "Yes, Smithy, I will."

The old gospel has power to bring men who have been deep in sin to that saving knowledge yet. This is but another one of its victories over the enemy of all souls.



### Is Luxury Necessarily Perilous to the Soul?

Luxury means different things to different people. What is luxury to one man or woman is practically a necessary of life to another. To one, for instance, pictures of a certain grade of excellence, or books of special kinds, are necessary for proper mental development, and even daintiness in the cooking and serving of food may be essential to the maintenance of health. To another person, equally worthy morally, these things are only luxuries, and that any one actually should be dependent upon them causes surprise.

A luxury is something which we enjoy but do not need, and many seriously believe that all luxury involves moral peril, and that the noblest life is that which is reduced to its lowest, simplest terms. But this is an extreme position. Simplicity and independence of material surroundings are commendable and ought to be cultivated, but the question involved is one of degrees. An ascetic life is not apt to be the noblest, richest, most generous and fruitful.

The peril in the case lies in the danger of being mastered by the desire for luxuries. As soon as they are allowed undue importance, and the effort to obtain them is given precedence over that to live unselfishly and usefully before God and man, they have become dangers, no matter what they are or how much or little endeavor they demand. He who so enjoys and uses luxury as to make his example and influence more elevated and his sympathies broader, who because of them is truer, nobler and more Christlike, is benefited by them instead of being injured. But he whom they render narrow and self-centred, indispensed to consider others and concerned only for his own comfort, in being warped and fettered by them and in grave peril. At the most they are only of secondary importance, and one of the most impressive lessons is taught by the ease with which some who have been used to luxuries during their whole lives, but suddenly have been deprived of them, adjust themselves to the absence of them, grateful for having had them and fully appreciating what they mean, but serene and cheerful in spite of their loss. He who has Christ for his Friend does not much miss the luxuries which may have been withdrawn from his own daily life.—Congregationalist.

### Comforting Voices.

In summer days, through open windows, the voices of nature enter and bring to those shut in, peace and comfort. They seem ever to be singing songs of praise and thanksgiving. In the morning hours, the breeze, as it passes by, touches the face of some weary one with a breath of refreshing coolness, brought from some shady nook far away; and perchance it awakens thoughts of cool streamlets dashing down the mountain sides from the parent springs, and then the Holy Spirit whispers the precious promise to God's true child: "And thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Hope and faith are strengthened to believe that God's Word cannot fail, and the "prayer without ceasing" spirit bridge the chasm between earth and heaven with songs of praise. When the noon hour comes and there is a lull in nature, as the sun pours down his rays making the shade of the trees a refuge for men, birds and cattle, again there comes a whisper to the heart: "The Lord calls thee apart to rest awhile, while he talks to thee." and the noon hour can be a peaceful one and prayer can ascend to the throne that will turn to blessings for those dear, true children who are working for the Master all over the world, and from the stillness of the hour comes power.

The long summer day passes away through the glory of the cloud world as the sun sends back again and again his good night message, and it seems a foretaste of that homeland of beauty and glory that eye hath not seen; all around the birds are singing their vesper song of thanksgiving to the God of the universe, their sweet notes are full of hopefulness for the morrow, and as the sounds grow fainter and fainter, and the shadows of night deepen, while the far away stars begin their quiet shining, again the Spirit comes and talks of the things of God and whispers, "Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray," and the blessed reward comes as an echo, "Whatever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye will receive."—Presbyterian Banner.