

THE FORGIVING SPIRIT.

Christ taught his disciples specifically that "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses," and yet how many professing Christians disregard this teaching. We all at some time or other offend our fellow-man. We may go to him and confess our offense and ask for forgiveness. But how often do we receive the answer, "I can forgive but not forget." Do such persons really forgive? Can you imagine Jesus saying to any one who comes to Him and confesses his sin and asks for forgiveness, "Yes, I'll forgive you, but I will always think of your sin whenever I see you?" And yet that is the way Christians—those who profess to be living a life in accordance with Christ's teaching—often meet the appeals of those who have offended them. No matter how great the offense or how grievous the wrong, if the offending one comes, truly repentant, and asks for forgiveness, the Christian must, by Christ's command, forgive. Yes, though the offense be repeated until seventy times seven. Does this seem hard? At first it may, but when one has fully realized how much Christ has to forgive even the best of his followers, and then remembers that he asks us to do it all out of love for him, the hard task becomes an easy one.

How many have been driven almost to despair because of the unforgiving spirit of those who may not have been so unfortunate as to have offended in like manner and therefore feel it to be almost impossible to forgive. Then there are those who forgive, in a manner, but who by their bearing recall to the mind of the offender the fact that they have been so good as to forgive them. Is this in accordance with the Spirit of Jesus? We do not believe that He ever made Mary Magdalene feel that He thought of the seven devils which He had driven out of her, when she chanced to be near him afterward. Or the woman who had been a sinner and whom He forgave. We do not read that He reminded the forgiven of their forgiveness whenever He met them. But how different are many Christians. Let us then really forgive when some one who has offended or wronged us truly repents and asks our forgiveness. Forgive and treat as though the offense had not been given and our joy will be greater even than the joy of the forgiven one.—E. J. R. in Lutheran Observer.

WORK.

Let me but do my work from day to day,
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
In roaring market place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
"This is my work; my blessing, not my doom;
This work can best be done in the right way."

Then shall I see it not too great, nor small,
To suit my spirit, and to prove my powers;
Then shall I cheerful greet the laboring hours,
And cheerful turn, when the long sabbath ends fall
At eventide, to play and love and rest,
Because I know for me my work is best.
—Henry Van Dyke.

All that goes to constitute a gentleman—the carriage, gait, address, voice; the ease, self-possession, the courtesy, the success in not offending, the lofty principle, the delicacy of thought, the taste and propriety, the generosity and forbearance, the candor and consideration—these qualities some of them come by nature, some of them may be found in any rank, some of them are a direct precept of Christianity.—John Henry Newman.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

Many helps have been provided for those who are trying to live a spiritual life. But they will do no good except to those who make use of them. To grow in grace it is necessary to use the means of grace. Many professing Christians are indifferent to these institutions of religion. They not only become weak and sickly themselves, but also hinder the progress of religion in the community. Many have no conscience about this matter. When admonished that they are neglecting duty, they laugh at the admonition, and count it a joke. But it is no joke. It is an exceedingly serious matter.

Many years ago a young minister went into the country one day to call on a member of his church who was ill. She belonged to a highly respectable family and was herself highly respected in the community, but she had been quite worldly and very negligent in her attendance upon the ordinances of religion. The pastor saw that she had but a short time to live, and asked her about her faith and hope in Christ. She said she had faith in Christ as her Saviour, and believed she had a hope of heaven; but she said she was exceedingly sorry that she had neglected her religious duties for several years. As she uttered these words her voice trembled, her lip quivered, and tears rolled down over her pale face and fell on the white pillow. It was a picture never to be forgotten.

Everyone is near the valley, and none knows how near he may be. Will it be a dark valley, and will the river be chilly? To those who make good use of the prayer meeting, the Bible, the Lord's Supper, and other holy ordinances there will be no dark valley and no cold river. Not that outward ordinances will save us, but the proper use of them will greatly enrich the soul with refreshing grace. But to those who neglect these spiritual helps the valley will be dark and the waters cold and chilly.

A young minister who took his congregation on his heart, labored diligently to persuade them to attend prayer meeting and other religious services. His utmost endeavors failed. He brooded over his failure, and in that depressed state of mind became an easy mark for any fatal disease that might come along. He became ill and died. At the funeral the minister who spoke said that this young man was a victim of grief and sorrow over his failure to persuade the people to attend upon the means of grace. It is a little thing for a minister to lie down at night with a heavy heart, and toss upon his pillow because he has failed to lead the people to do their duty; but it is not a little thing when the Great Shepherd of the sheep who died for us on Calvary is wounded in the house of his friends, crucified afresh by his own people, and put to an open shame before the world. This is what happens when those who are known in the community as disciples of Jesus frame vain excuses for neglecting the means whereby they might become strong in the Lord.—Christian Advocate.

PRAYER.

O Lord, we would enjoy Sabbath in the wilderness—rest-time immediately before war, so that in the light itself we may know the mystery and benediction of peace. We thank Thee for all the comfort of the week. Thou hast caused the light to drive away the darkness, and this is Sabbath day. The very clouds are filled with light, and Heaven heightens itself for very gladness. Behold the time of the singing of birds has come. May there be music in our life, sweet and noble psalmody in our hearts. May our whole being be lifted up in solemn praise, so that we may live the truly Christian life. Amen.

Never esteem anything as of advantage to thee that shall make thee break thy word or lose thy self-respect.
—Marcus Aurelius.

A NOBLE LIFE.

By Robert E. Speer.

Sixty years ago an immigrant caravan passed through Chicago on its way from Oberlin, Ohio, to Janesville, Wisconsin. Chicago was then a town of "about four thousand inhabitants, on the main streets of which were posts driven into the mud holding signs which read 'No bottom here.'" The caravan consisted of three canvas-covered wagons transporting the Willard family, which included two little girls, Frances, and Mary. The new home was on a farm on the edge of a forest on the bank of the Rock River.

Here Frances Willard spent her childhood. She had a great aversion to sewing and dish washing, but she trained a cow to be ridden and driven. She was fond of birds, but did not hesitate to help to drown out the gophers who ate up the corn. "Father told us," she said, "that the poet Cowper, who writes so well about kindness to animals, says, 'Our rights are paramount and must extinguish theirs'; that is, when they spoil our work, we are obliged to spoil them, for the general good."

She grew up in a clean, Christian home with Puritan standards. The following lines cut from a story paper were pasted in the family Bible:—

"A pledge we make no wine to take,
Nor brandy red that turns the head,
Nor fiery rum that ruins home,
Nor whiskey hot that makes the sot,
Nor brewer's beer, for that we fear;
And cider, too, will never do.
To quench the thirst we'll always bring
Cold water from the well or spring.
So here we pledge perpetual hate
To all that can intoxicate."

Schools were soon opened near her home, and she and her sister entered. She began to write essays, and great was the triumph when an essay of her's on "Embellishment of a Country Home" in which she took her own home as subject, won a prize from the Illinois Agricultural Society. She was full of thoughts of woman's rights. When her brother went to cast his first vote, she said to her sister, "Wouldn't you like to vote as well as Oliver? Don't you and I love the country just as well as he, and doesn't the country need our ballots?" From Janesville she went to the Milwaukee Female College for one year, and then to Northwestern Female College at Evanston, whither the family soon moved, and where Frances had a brilliant college course and openly confessed Christ.

After leaving college Miss Willard became a teacher. In a few years she became head of the "Evansston College for Ladies" and when it was merged with the Northwestern College for Men she was elected Professor of Aesthetics. She resigned her post soon and went abroad to travel for two years. Upon returning she abandoned the work of the school for the great work of temperance reform with which her life was henceforth identified. She became president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and lectured all over the land in support of two ideas (1) that women ought to vote, and (2) that they ought to vote against the saloon. She did her work with great power, and became the best known woman in America. After hearing her lecture, a Southern woman said, "The first time I heard her I lay awake all night for sheer gladness. It was such a wonderful revelation to me that a woman like Miss Willard could exist. I thanked God, and took courage for humanity."

I think it is a sweet thing that Christ saith of my cross, "Half mine," nay, that I and my cross are wholly Christ's.
—Samuel Rutherford.

Cast forth thy seed, thy word, into the ever-living, ever-working universe. It is a seed grain that cannot die.—Carlyle.