

We live in days of busy action, of much excitement and restlessness. There is restless activity in money-getting and in pleasure-seeking. There are more books written than ever before in the world's history. There is much—although often not deep—reading. And, we are thankful to say, much more church-going than there was a few years ago. There is a tendency, even in our religion, to live too much upon sensation. But is there much calm, steady, deep, religious thought? We fear not. We think about our business—about our families—about our pleasures—about our amusements. But, although many of us pray, and read our Bible, and go to Church, and are Communicants, do we think often and deeply about our souls? Do we meditate? Let this be one use of this year's Lent.

2. Self-examination.—We should read our hearts as well as our Bibles. Heart-reading is hard reading. Our hearts must be read closely, if they are to be read truly. They are deceitful. And sin is deceitful; deceitful in its rise and workings, no less than in its issue. This duty of self-examination is specially laid upon us before coming to the Holy Communion. But it is not for that season only. Of what use is Bible-reading, of what use sermon-hearing, if what is read and heard be not applied to ourselves? Too many go to their Bibles for comfort only. We should read them as giving us not only God's message of mercy in Christ, but also the standard by which we are to live and rule our words and doings.

First the Ten Commandments. And these not in their letter only, but in their spirit. This our Divine Master teaches us in His Sermon on the Mount. Self-examination must be not of the outward life only, but of the inward life—what passes in the heart—of our motives, desires, tempers. God sets "our secret sins in the light of His countenance."

Our Bibles give us, too, the examples of holy men. Above all, we have the perfect life of our Lord Jesus Christ—His zeal for God, His love for man, His humility, patience, meekness.

"Christ pleased not Himself." He lived to do His Father's work—do we? "He went about doing good." What good are we doing?

A wide field for very solemn Lenten work opens before us. Sins more directly against God; sins against man; besetting sins; open sins; secret sins; negligences; ignorances; sins of body; sins of mind; sins of heart; sins in holy things; sins in common things. What am I as a son or a daughter? as a husband or wife? as a father or mother? What as a brother or sister? What as master or mistress? What as a servant?

Oh! this work of self-examination is hard work. David called on God to help him in it. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." "Let us" then—in Lent especially—"search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto the God in the Heavens."

And, as each and every sin is detected, let it be brought to the true confessional—the mercy-seat; to the true purgatory—the Cross.

3. Self-humiliation.—This will surely follow on honest, thorough, self-examination. Great stress is laid on it in the Bible. We mark it in the examples of God's holiest servants. God dwells "with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit;" "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;" "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Abraham, Jacob, Job, David, Isaiah, Daniel, St. Peter, St. Paul, are chief instances. There can be no true repentance without it; no just sense of God's greatness and our own littleness. The very Angels, who have not sinned are humble.

It is to be feared that, in the religion of many, now-a-days, far too little is thought of repentance, confession, and self-abasement. True, we are not saved by them. The pardon of our sins, our justification before God, our title to heaven, these are through the Son, Jesus Christ, only. But the deeper the work of the Spirit of God, the deeper our conviction of sin; and the deeper our conviction of sin, the deeper our self-abasement.

The Cross itself should humble us in the dust,

while yet it brings us salvation, and peace, and joy. For at the Cross we learn most truly what sin is, and what it cost to save us from its penalty and power. If Job learned from God's greatness and glory in His works, to say, "Behold, I am vile!" "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!" we surely should learn to say so from the shame and sufferings of our crucified Saviour. For these were for our sins. The Church, therefore, fitly puts into our mouths, in her Ash-Wednesday Service, words of lowliest confession, and embodies in it that best manual for penitents, the fifty-first psalm.

4. Self-discipline.—God gives us freely the grace of His Holy Spirit in Christ Jesus. He works in us both to will and to do; but we are not, therefore, to suppose that we have neither responsibility nor work. We are to work with God's good Spirit in resisting sin, in doing battle with the Devil, and in growing in grace. God's help is not to be an opiate, but a stimulant.

The language of the Bible is, "fight"—"run"—"strive"—"purify yourselves"—"perfect holiness." "Keep thy heart," says Solomon. "with all diligence." "I keep under my body," says St. Paul, "and bring it into subjection;" St. Paul knew that that the body is a good servant, but a very bad master. If we give way to habits of idleness, as lee-a-beds and loungers—if we indulge in gluttony, excess of drink, or uncleanness—we are not keeping our bodies in subjection. Surely, if so holy a man as St. Paul felt it needful, we ought not to think ourselves above it. No man trusted more to the grace of God than did St. Paul, yet he crucified, and call on us to crucify "the flesh, with all its affections and lusts."

And this is the great object of *Fasting*.

Many Christian persons have a prejudice against this. They think it contrary to the spirit of the gospel of Christ. But surely he who said "When ye pray" (taking it for granted that they would pray)—said also "When ye fast" (taking it for granted that they would fast as well as pray). The first mission of the Church was undertaken by command of the Holy Ghost, "as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted." "This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting," is true of more than one sin.

Our Collect for the first Sunday in Lent puts fasting in its spiritual light. "Give us grace to use such abstinence, that our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness." There is no merit in fasting. There is no use in fasting, for its own sake. Nor are we to fast in the spirit of the Pharisee, boasting before God and to be seen of men. It is a means to a high and holy end.

Not every one can practise it by total abstinence from food. And certainly it is not to be practised, either during Lent or at any other time, to the injury of our health. We may, with Daniel, abstain from "pleasant bread," that is, we may be content with plainer, simpler food. We are not to unfit ourselves for the services of God's house, or for our daily work; but it is a fitting and scriptural accompaniment to solemn self-humiliation before God, and to a season of special confession and penitential prayer. It is a means of self-mastery over our will and appetites, and passions, of keeping the lower part of our nature in check, and thus it is a help to our higher nature and our spiritual life.

5. Prayer.—Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, not in Lent only, but always and everywhere. But in Lent it is well to make more time for it. To this end we may abstain from amusements, from party-giving or going to parties, and confine ourselves, as far as possible, to social intercourse, such reading, and such employment of our time and thoughts as are suitable for a season of special meditation, self-examination, self-humiliation, and self-discipline.

In these prayers confession of sin should have a chief place. But your prayers should not be for yourself only. With holy Daniel you may confess your country's and your Church's sins. One of the Church's Ember seasons falls in Lent. It is a time when we should pray to "the Shepherd and Bishop," the ascended Head of the Church, for

the bishops on earth and for their chaplains, that they be discerning, wise, and faithful under the solemnity of making "choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of" the "Church;" that we may have for the Church's pressing needs, both at home and abroad, a supply of men called of God, taught of God, blessed of God.

Reader! Begin and go through Lent, as striving to use it humbly, diligently, holily; not only as a preparation for Good Friday and Easter, but as a means of strengthening and deepening your soul's life.

Doomed to die, and oh, so young.

Is there nothing that can save

This poor, hopeless sufferer

From the dark and cruel grave?

Comes an answer: "Yes, there is:

'Favourite Prescription' try;

It has saved the lives of thousands

Who were given up to die."

For all "female diseases," Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the standard remedy, and no woman should despair of recovery until she has given it a trial.

### IT COSTS TOO MUCH.

THE SAD EXPERIENCE WHICH BEFELL ONE OF THE ASTORS.

In the early days of the direct tea trade with China, importers were anxious to secure the earliest cargoes of a new crop.

The first cargo brought the best price and large profits. The successful Captain was always rewarded, so every known aid to navigation was adopted.

The young captain of one of Mr. Astor's clippers bought, on one of his trips, a new chronometer, and with its aid made a quick passage, and arrived first. He put the price of it into the expense account of the trip, but Mr. Astor threw it out, insisting that such an item of expense for new fangled notions could not be allowed.

The Captain thereupon resigned and took service with a rival line.

The next year he reached port long in advance of any competitor, to the great delight and profit of his employers, and the chagrin of Mr. Astor.

Not long after they chanced to meet, and Mr. Astor inquired:

"By the way, Captain, how much did that chronometer cost you?"

"Six hundred dollars," then, with a quizzical glance, he asked:

"And how much has it cost you, Mr. Astor?"

"Sixty thousand dollars."

Men are often unfortunate in the rejection of what they call new fangled notions.

There are sick men who refuse even when their physicians tell them they cannot help them, to take Warner's Safe cure, because it is a "new fangled" proprietary medicine. The result is they lose—life and health.

Thousands of other men have been restored to health by it, as the testimonials furnished to the public show. The proprietors have a standing offer of \$5,000 to any one who will show that any testimonial published by them is not, so far as they know, entirely true.

Dr. Andrew Wilson, Fellow of the Royal Society, of Edinburgh, the editor of "Health," London, Eng., says, in his magazine, in answer to an inquiry, "Warner's Safe Cure is of a perfectly safe character, and perfectly reliable."

New fangled notions are sometimes very valuable, and it costs too much to foolishly reject them.

CONSUMPTION CURED.—An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all throat and Lung Affection also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper. W. A. Noyes, 149 Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y.