

THE SEAT OF THE WORLDLY LIFE

(By Dr. George Matheson.)

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—1. John 2: 15.

To the mind of St. John the darkest shadow of the human soul is worldliness. Perhaps each of us has a special aversion to some special form of sin. Matthew, Mark and Luke emphasize the horror of blasphemy. Paul lays stress on the danger of unbelief. James is impressed with the evil of idle hands. But John has a special aversion to worldliness. Why? I take the reason to be that he himself had been specially bitten by that form of sin. John had started on the race of life under the impulse of personal ambition. So intense had been that ambition that it had suffused even his religion. He had asked for a front seat in the kingdom of heaven—a seat beside the Lord where he would have a monopoly of the Divine Presence. He had now come to see that this seeming piety was extreme worldliness. And why was it worldliness? Because he was too fond of the society of his brother man? Exactly the reverse—because he was not fond enough of that society. John's error lay in forgetting the claims of his brother man—in wishing to be alone in his glory. If he had asked that the front seat might be extended so that there might be room for everybody, it would have been all right. But to desire a monopoly of God, to seek an exclusive access to the audience-chamber of the King's Son, this was a breach of brotherhood, and therefore this was worldliness. And that is the reason why John says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." He means that there can be no sense of fatherhood where there is no sense of brotherhood. If worldliness signified anything else than unsociality, there would be no meaning in the statement. If it be unworlily means to be a hermit, why should it indicate the love of God—why should it indicate any love at all? But if it be to be unworlily means to be no hermit, if it be to be unworlily means to be social; if to be unworlily means to have a right hand of fellowship for our brother man, I can understand why it prepares for my love of God. He that loves the brother whom he hath seen is ripening for devotion to that common Father whom as yet he hath not seen.

Lord, let me not think that the world is a place! That would lead me to underrate my difficulties. If the world were any particular place, I could easily get rid of it. It it were a theatre or a ball-room or a garden-party I could soon take the wings of a dove and flee away and be at rest. But the world is none of these things—the world is within me. I can carry it about to any place, and the place to which I carry it immediately becomes worldly. Teach me this truth, O Lord! Teach me that, whatever I think of myself alone, that spot is the world! Teach me by the lesson of heaven itself—a worldly thought! Remind me ever that his most mundane moment was his vision of paradise—his vision of Thy heaven as a place where I was to stand in advance of all men! Impress me with the knowledge that I am not to be driven out of the world, but that I am to drive the world out of me! Help me to expel it from my own heart! Reveal to me that to find Thy rest I need no wings of a dove, no flight from the common haunts of men! Crucify the image of my own soul, and I shall hear Thy voice saying, "Go where thou wilt." Drive out the selfish man from the garden of my heart, and there will be no need to remove me from the tree. Create a clean spirit within me, and I shall not fear to live in unclean streets. Bathe myself in Jordan's stream, and the wilderness of Judea and the wedding of Cana will to me be alike unworlily; for alike in the wilderness and at the wedding I shall think of the brotherhood of man.—*Christian World.*

SPARKS FROM OTHER ANVILS.

Herald and Pres'y—Sincerity in Christian work is no guarantee of success. One may point out to others a smoother road, but if it does not go where they wish to go, neither his sincerity nor their confidence in him will take them to their destination. An easy salvation which ignores sin and self-surrender is no salvation.

United Presbyterian—The talents that we have are the ones that we are to answer for. God does not require bricks where he has given no straw, it is only cruel taskmasters who do that. But where he has made an investment he looks for revenue. He requires only a faithful use of that which he has given. Where much has been given much will be required.

Presbyterian Witness—The call for consecrated and thoroughly equipped laborers to gather the great harvest that wait for reapers in every land, was never so loud. To your knees, then, Christian parents, and pastors. The Lord will be enquired of for this. This kind cometh not forth but by prayer. Let the whole church begin to pray in earnest for men to meet the growing needs of her expanding work, and the response is certain, for He has said "Ask and ye shall receive."

Michigan Presbyterian—Is there a future life? Natural theology has its answer. Underlying the parable of Dives and Lazarus is an appeal to the common sense of the hearers. It simply voices their own demand for righting the wrongs and equalizing the inequalities of this life. As a finished volume this life is a wonderful failure; as a chapter it will do very well. There would be no great tragedies without the background of eternity. There would be no great preaching without the roar of eternity's sea in the hearers' ears. Eternity throbs in the moving emotions, the thrilling sacrifices, and glorious deeds of humanity.

Maritime Baptist—It is evident that the very short pastorate must fail largely in the matter of developing the church. The pastor who expects to stay only a short time with a church will hardly think it worth while to enter upon any thorough, systematic efforts for the better organization of its forces. The episodic way of doing things is allowed to prevail. If there is a revival the increase of spiritual power is not directed to the best results, and the life of the church is soon as unfruitful as before. Then the minister resigns and goes away, and the church for a longer or shorter time becomes a grazing ground for unattached ministers and candidates until another pastor is secured and the old story repeated.

Lutheran Observer—Sin has not deprived us of any of the elements of personality, in which our natural filial kinship to God consists. It has not subtracted from them by taking away a superadded gift; it has not added to them by becoming of the substance of human nature. The havoc which it has wrought has been in breaking the inner harmony of our rational spiritual powers with the law of righteousness in which they were originally set. It has introduced a deep disorder into their action. It has deranged intellect, heart and will. It has made us aliens from holiness and God. It has led us to hate the restraints of our heavenly Father's law and love. It has made us prodigals, bent on taking our portion of goods into a far country, away from the Father's eye and the Father's house. We are still sons of God, but we have lost the spirit of sonship, repudiated its obligations, forfeited its privileges. We are still God's children, but rebellious children, wanderers from our home.

WHAT CHRIST EXPECTS OF US.

Some Bible Hints.

Whomever Christ sends forth is as safe in the midst of wolves as of lambs (v. 19). Our testimony will be given us without our preparing only when we have had no chance for preparing (v. 19).

We "hated of all men for His name's sake," when for His sake we do not dare face the sneer of one man? (v. 22.)

Our confession of Christ means one life for Him; His confession of us means His life for us—a gift infinitely greater (v. 32).

Suggestive Thought.

Christ does not promise His disciples peace, but better than peace: victory!

Christ has promised to be with His disciples always; that promise includes all others.

If Christ should appear to you in human form and bid you follow Him, would your discipleship take on new reality? Then how real is it now?

The most holy life is none the worse for shrewdness nor the shrewdness life for holiness.

A few Illustrations.

A loving child is ashamed to have a comfort or luxury that father or mother cannot have; do we want our lives to be more fortunate than our Lord's?

A soldier readily follows his general who has worked his way up from the ranks. There is no service or trail in which Christ has not preceded us.

The true Christian is an image of Christ projected by the Light of the world,—a new and marvelous stereopticon.

Wireless telegraphy is giving us a hint of how subtle and direct is Christ's communication with His disciples.

To Think About.

Am I recognized as standing for Christ,

Would Christ gladly own all my acts and words?

Do I rely upon any guide but Christ?

A Cluster of Quotations.

There is no way of being delivered from this life of self but one: we must follow Christ, set our heart upon Him.—Andrew Murray.

Never a weakness that He doth not feel, Never a sickness that He cannot heal.

D. W. Whittle.

We must walk so close behind Christ that people will not see us, but Christ.—Bishop Thoburn.

Christ always gives more than men ask for.—Alexander McKenzie.

Bible Readings.

- M., June 4. Christ expects wisdom. Luke 16: 9-12.
- T., June 5. Christ expects us to obey. Matt. 5: 17-20.
- W., June 6. Christ expects purity. 1 John 3: 14.
- T., June 7. Christ expects boldness. Mark 13: 9-13.
- F., June 8. Christ expects gentleness. 2 Cor. 10: 1-6.
- S., June 9. Christ expects fidelity. Matt. 25: 21-30.
- S., June 10. Tope—Christ's life. VI. His relations to His disciples, and what He expects of us. Matt. 10: 16-33.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Thy mercy is great it extendeth over all Thy works, it endureth for ever, it becomes tender mercy by long uses and great endurances, and Thy kindness becomes loving kindness, the very bloom and fragrance of love. May we enter into the sanctuary of Thine heart, and find rest there, having entered by the living door, the living Christ. How precious are Thy thoughts unto us! They are not of the earth earthly; they fill all Heaven, they reach infinity, they dwell upon the sublimities of the eternal state, and whilst we follow Thy thoughts we are lifted up in noblest elevation and forgetting earth and time and space we see heaven opened and the whole creation gathered in worship round the feet of Christ. Let us also gather there and receive the rich blessing of Thy Fatherhood. Amen.