

"THESE SAYINGS OF MINE."

They are the greatest sayings that ever fell from the lips of man. They are grouped in three chapters of Matthew, the 5th, the 6th, and the 7th, and constitute the most comprehensive gathering of practical, spiritual truth to be found in the world. They give the law of the relation of the whole man to the whole realm in which he acts. He is in the earth as a citizen, and the manner of his earthly demeanor is very clearly given. If he is in the kingdom of heaven while in the earth as he should be, "these sayings" give the method by which his life is to be ordered here. They will enable a man to live a life of faultless morality while denying the divine power of the one who spoke them, and they will produce the sweetest spirituality in one who takes Jesus Christ as his divine Redeemer, covering what would be an arid morality with a beauty of holiness that is delightful to look upon. Activity, positive expenditure of self for the good of others, definition of morality that carries it down to the foundations of moral action—in thought, piety toward God that makes one reverent in word and very loving in act, proper and religious exercises of various sort defined and illustrated, fullness of trust in God and absolute fairness between man and man constitute in the main the substance of "these sayings of mine."

The estimate which Christ himself put upon the ethical power of "these sayings" is to be found in his characterization of the individual who should conform his life to them. For to hear and do is to order life in accordance with the tenet of the philosophy or religion which some voice utters. Jesus said such a man is wise. Wise because in the erection of the edifice which his own life is he follows the example of the ordinary builder among men.

Jesus knew he had spoken a system of truth, and that it would require a very considerable outlay of care and power to make it of practical service in the lives of men. I hear it said sometimes that it is very easy to become a Christian. But take away the "come" out of that word "become" and you have a very different proposition. It may be very easy to become a Christian, but it is not very easy to be a Christian, and it is so hard to be a "Sermon on the Mount" Christian that I hear people say that to expect conformity in actual life to the principles of "these sayings of mine" is absurd. This is the doctrine of an easy going conscience. To live that sermon is no doubt hard. But it is not absolutely impossible, for once, just once, it has been realized in a life. Jesus himself lived it, and lived it as man. I do not believe any other man will live it. But I know that there are hundreds of thousands of humble souls in all ranks of life and among every people where this wonderful code is known who are striving to live it. They fall to-day, they weep over failure, they pray for forgiveness, they pray for strength and they try again to-morrow, and they are they whom Christ called wise. Whosoever heareth and doeth: not doeth perfectly: not doeth as Christ did: but doeth: doeth stumblingly mayhap, but doeth.

Hearing does not make character. Hearing is only the path that leads us to the forks of the road where diverge from each other the two ways that have been trodden hard by the feet of men through the whole development of the history of the soul. One leads to wisdom, or to the workshop in which that is done which makes wisdom in character; the other leads to wasted energy, to expenditure of power on that which cannot last, and therefore is folly. At the forks of the road two souls stand. One cries, "To do this thing which Christ says do is hard, but to do this thing is the thing to do, and into the narrow, hard road that soul's feet go. This is Christ's wise man; he will dig deep when he lays the foundation for his house."

Hearing is the ante-chamber of service in which fools and wise alike gather, and out of it they go to work a work which shall endure or perish, according as they be fools or wise. In that ante-chamber are stored the timbers which shall be laid as sills for life's structure, and the picks and shovels for digging deep through sand and clay and shale down to bed-rock. One man shoulders his timber and goes there to lay it on the first convenient spot to which he comes. He builds his house there. Another goes out to dig carrying pick and shovel in his hand. He will toll long, perhaps, before he finds the rock on which to lay his sill-beam. One goes to comparative ease of labor, the other to certain hardship. But this last man is Christ's man. He is one whose house will surely stand. It may not be a perfect house, but it is an enduring one.

To hear "these sayings of mine," is to stand in the store room where tools and timbers both are laid. To do "these sayings of mine" is to take the pick and shovel first and dig deep. It is to have a bent form, and an aching back, and a horny hand, and a knotted arm, and oftentimes a weary heart, but at the last a structure of character that no tempest will overthrow and no sweeping flood wash away. Christ knew all this when he spoke "these sayings" and urged men to hear them and do them. He knew it would be hard. To crucify the old man, to fight the good fight of faith, yea, even to trust in the Lord forever, is hard. But to this Jesus Christ calls.—R. S. H., in Philadelphia Westminster.

RESURGAM.

No bell on all the mountain-side
Proclaims the note of Eastertide;
There is no deep-toned organ peep,
No surprised choir, no priest to kneel,
And raise the chant "Resurgam."

But where the rugged mountain looms,
A strange, mysterious lily blooms,
In silence sweet, surpassing song,
It swings its censer all day long,
And breathes the chant "Resurgam."

A shepherd on a jutting rock
Re-counts the new-born of his flock,
While far off, vaguely like a dream,
He hears the cadence of a stream,
Which softly sings "Resurgam."

He sees the plains but lately bare
Now clothed in vernal green, and fair.
He hears the drone of joyous bees
Where, weaving through the fragrant trees,
The south wind chants "Resurgam."

A rude, untutored lad is he,
Like his own mountain, wildly free,
Yet not untuned to that which sings
The psalm of eternal springs—
The mighty chant "Resurgam."

PRAYER.

Our Father, look upon us, a company of Thy dependent creatures, all of us recipients of Thy mercy, of more mercies than we can count, all of us capable of receiving Thee into our hearts, and of glorifying Thee in our lives; yet all more or less conscious of departure from Thee, and transgressions against Thee and ourselves. We pray Thee for forgiveness, for the clear assurance of Thy unchanging love ever present in our hearts, and ever making the darkness light around us. We pray that, bound by Thy pardoning mercies, we may serve Thee with entirely devoted hearts. O Lord, truly we are Thy servants, Thou has loosed our bonds and set us free for Thy service. May we find the impulse and the power and the pattern of all holy living in Jesus Christ our Saviour-Brother. And we pray that Thy grace with us, Thy Spirit dwelling in our spirits, Thy wisdom enlightening our thoughts, Thy commandments written on the fleshy tables of our hearts, may all tend to make our lives noble and blessed, our characters sweet and peaceful. Amen.

Paying a man back in his own coin brings you down to his level.

GETTING READY TO LIVE FOREVER.

By Robert E. Speer.

What would that man do with eternity who doesn't know how to live half an hour? This was one of Emerson's questions. What would he do? Suppose that a man's whole life has consisted in material things, and that suddenly he is transported where there are no material things where he is, while all material things are swept from him out of being. What is he going to do? He can't go visiting places. There are none. He can't play. There are no toys of the only kind he knows how to use. There are lots of persons, but these persons never interested him unless they were against a background of things, and now his things are all gone. To be sure, there is truth and beauty and all that world of principles and ideas of which he often heard, and to which he had himself sometimes alluded, but he could never keep up any sustained interest in them. And now he is doomed to an eternal life without the implements which were his only means of living. Living forever is a problem to such a man. It is worse than a problem. It is hell.

If we are to live forever we must begin doing it now. Now is a part of forever. What time is, what will become of time, are mysteries to us. But we know that we ourselves are here in what we call time, and that whatever becomes of time we are to be still and to be always. And what we want to be we have to begin to be now. What we thought and did, and how we lived yesterday, determined what we are thinking and doing and how we are living to-day. To-morrow is as truly bound to to-day as to-day is to yesterday. Forever is just as surely bound to now.

The eternal life is a life forever. That is the time aspect of it. It is also a life in God. That is the quality aspect of it. And the time aspect will take care of itself if we take care, with God's help, of the quality aspect. Jesus' teaching and the deep doctrine of Christianity is that the quality aspect is cared for within Christ. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." If we live now in Christ, as Christ's dear followers, loving and serving him, we shall live on forever in Christ. We shall be at home in the eternity of which we speak as lying beyond time because we have been at home in the Eternal One who includes all past and present and future, even in Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

Some people tell us that one world at a time is enough, and that if we will do our duty here the future will take care of itself, but there is no one world at a time. The eternal world is here now as truly as it will be hereafter. And men can only do their duty as they know both worlds. Duty is the law of the eternal world laid upon the conditions of the present world which is around our sense, and in which our bodies move. And the idea that we can shrivel up into the smaller world and pen our souls into it when they were meant to be soaring all the time into the higher world which surrounds this and includes this, is an absurd idea. It is death now and it is the utter unfitting of ourselves for the eternities which are both above us and beyond us.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—Paul's longing (Phil. : 1:21-26).
Tues.—Our earthly house (2 Cor. 5:1-5).
Wed.—Job's triumphant faith (Job 19: 25-27.)
Thurs.—Hezekiah's view of death. (Isa. 38:1-22).
Fri.—Paul's view of death (1 Cor. 15: 42-55).
Sat.—Christ's own view (John 14:27, 28).
*Y. P. Topic; Sunday, March 27, 1910. Getting ready to live forever. (Eccl. 12:1-7.)