

Selected Articles.

THE PRAYER OF AGE.

"Forsake me not when my strength-fulleth."
 Forsake me not—the day of life declines,
 My path bath nearly reached the horizon's brim,
 Faint on my path its fading glory shines,
 The shadows lengthen, and the way grows dim.

Forsake me not—wrap in a golden haze,
 The morning lies, in its pure light serene
 How far away—yet memory's hand will raise
 The time wrought curtain which hath dropped
 between.

Forsake me not—my step is weak and slow,
 Slow to obey the mandate of my will;
 My hand hath half forgot its cunning now,
 And falters in the task it would fulfill.

My pulse beats feebly—youth's impetuous fire,
 Swoops through my veins no more with sudden
 force;
 High thoughts and ardent dreams no more inspire,
 And sluggish life runs on its destined course.

Forsake me not—when all the day hath gone
 Oh lead me gently to my last repose;
 And bid me wake on that Eternal morn,
 Which neither waning light nor sunset knows.

CONCERNING JUDAS ISCARIOT.

BY THE REV. J. I. BOSWELL.

The place which Judas Iscariot occupies in history is peculiar. A chosen apostle of Jesus, he betrayed Jesus, with the kiss of outward friendship, into the hands of deadliest foes, and thus by one foul act became the worst of traitors.

Something instructive may be gathered from his life—some lessons which it would be well to learn. For the life of any man, great or small, good or bad, if it were faithfully told, and rightly understood, would carry a suggestive moral to all the world. And Judas tells us, by his painful life and fearful death, as no sermon can tell us, what to shun rather than what to imitate. He is a lighthouse on life's ocean to warn us of dangerous rocks and treacherous sands.

Of his early life we know nothing. Called to be an apostle, he seems to have been cordially received by the other apostles, and was honored and trusted by them. Though his character was bad and growing worse from year to year, yet his reputation was good. No suspicion of evil rested upon him. Up to the very day of the betrayal he was with Jesus and the other apostles, and when Jesus announced at the last supper, "One of you shall betray me," the other apostle turned not to Judas, but each, with exceeding sorrow, asked the question: "Lord is it I?"

Not by one fatal plunge does any man descend into the depths of iniquity beyond the hope of saving mercy. The outward sin is but the work of a moment, but slowly is the character which prompts that sin corrupted. The tree which seems stronger than all in the forest yet falls suddenly in the fury of the storm with a loud, resounding crash, reveals in the hollow trunk the slow process of decay. It was rotten at the core, therefore it did fall.

Judas was for years a covetous man. He had a money-loving and a money-grasping nature, and he did not restrain it. It grew with his growth, choked all generous feelings, and guided him beyond all bounds until he fell into ruin. Very instructive is it to trace how step by step he went onward and downward until lost to sight.

In those early days there were those who ministered of their substance to Jesus and his apostles. For convenience one of these apostles was selected to take charge of these gifts. Judas was chosen treasurer of the little church. He carried the purse in which money was placed for the twofold purpose of ministering to the wants of Jesus and the apostles and relieving the poor. Then came the temptation to which he listened and yielded. He was unfaithful and perverted trust funds to his own private use. To conceal it he was guilty of hypocrisy, and then hating those whom he had wronged, as men will often do, he was guilty of that act of treason which darkened his soul with terrible remorse.

In this there is a warning for men of the present time. We live in a commercial age. Monetary transactions are numerous, and sometimes very large. Nearly every person is liable, at some time, as members of a corporation, as executor of an estate, as a collecting agent, in some way or other to have trust funds in his possession. Let those who have a covetous disposition, as Judas had, pause before they yield as Judas did. The honest path is the only path of safety. Trust funds are not to be perverted—they are not to be risked in hazardous Wall-street speculations for purposes of private gain, with the hope—often a vain hope—of replacing them shortly. Certainly the covetous man does not intend to be guilty of theft. And yet how often he yields to sin, and then comes the shame of exposure!

In that photographic scene which is given in the first eight verses of the twelfth chapter of St. John's gospel, the nature of Judas is plainly shown. Avarice, at first a master passion, destroyed all noble affections. He was untouchable by the generous gift of a lov-

ing heart; he cared not for the poor, though with a hypocritical tongue he pleaded for them. He thought only of the three hundred pence which the ointment cost, and which he longed to have the handling of. John, the mild-hearted disciple, whom Jesus loved, calls Judas a "thief." A harsh term, many would say. Pity indeed that we live in this soft-spoken age, when it is scandalous for a truthful man to give bad deeds exactly the names which they deserve. Politeness demands—that is, the worldly politeness of the nineteenth century—that we should apologize for the disciple who called Judas a "thief," and that we should speak of Judas as an unfortunate gentleman, who was the victim of circumstances, and who, in a much-to-be-regretted hour, was guilty, not of theft, but of embezzlement. O for the trumpet that gives a certain sound! for the voice from the pulpit and the press which will be like the voice of God, truthful and just!

Something more we wish to say about Judas; but for the present let it pass. Only consider this one question: Who is the modern Judas? To-day the voice of Jesus is heard, it may be in every church, saying to the disciples: "One of you shall betray me." With sorrow let each ask the question: "Lord, is it I?" Let those who turn with abhorrence from the life of Judas in the gospels, see to it that in their veins flows no drop of that traitor's blood. Who is the modern Judas? That man who, professing to be one of Christ's followers, will yet, for gold, for worldly titles, for mere social position, for reputation, for any earthly consideration whatever, be false to justice, mercy, truth; be false to any cause for which the Saviour lived and died.

NOVEL-READING.

The novel has become, for good or for evil, the daily food of the civilized world. It is given to youngest childhood in Mother Goose and other extravagant and grotesque inventions, it is placed in the hands of older childhood and youth through the distributing agencies of a hundred thousand publishing houses and Sunday-school libraries, and prepared for the eyes of the adult world by every magazine and weekly newspaper that finds its way into Christian homes. Among all peoples and all sorts of people, of every age and of every religious and social school, it is the only universally-accepted form of literature. History, poetry, philosophy, science, social ethics and religion are accepted respectively by classes of readers, larger or smaller; but the novel is read by multitudes among all these classes, and by the great multitude outside of them, who rarely look into anything else. The serial novel is now an invariable component of the magazine in America and England; the French *feuilleton* has been so long established as to be regarded as a necessary element in the newspaper; while in Germany, the land of scholars and philosophers and scientific explorers, the story-tellers are among the most ingenious and prolific in the world.

It all comes of the interest which the human mind takes in human life. If history and biography are less read than the novel, it is because the life found in them is less interesting or in a less interesting form. The details of individual experience and of social life are far more engaging to ordinary minds than the proceedings of parliaments and the intercourse of nations. From these latter the life of the great masses is far removed. The men and women whom one meets at a social gathering, and the dramatic by-play and personal experience of such an occasion, will absorb a multitude of minds far beyond the proceedings of a Board of Arbitration that holds in its hands the relations of two great nations and possibly the peace of the world.

The daily life of the people is not in politics, or philosophy, or religious discussion. They eat and drink, they buy and sell, they lose and gain, they love and hate, they plot and counterplot, their lives are filled with doubts and fears and hopes, and realizations or disappointments of hope; and when they read, they choose to read of these. It is in these experiences that all classes meet on common ground, and this is the ground of the novel. In truth, the novel is social history, personal biography, religion, morals, and philosophy, realized or idealized, all in one. Nay, more: it is the only social history we have. If the social history of the last hundred years in England and America has not been written in the novels of the last fifty, it has not been written at all. In the proportion that these novels have been accepted and successful have their plots, characters, spirit, properties and belongings been taken from real life. There is no form of literature in which the people have been more inexorably determined to have truthfulness than in that of fiction. History, under the foul influence of partisanship, has often won success by lying, but fiction never. Under the inspirations of idealism, it has presented to us some of the very purest forms of truth which we possess.

So universally accepted is the novel that it has become one of the favorite instruments of reform. If a great wrong is to be righted, the sentiments, convictions and efforts of the people are directed against it through the means of a novel. It is mightier to this end than conventions, speeches, editorials and popular rebellions. If a social iniquity is to be uncovered that may be cured, the pen of the novelist is the power employed. The adventurer, the drunkard, the libertine, the devotee of fashion and folly, are all punctured and impaled by the same instrument, and held up to the condemnation or contempt of the world. At the same time, we are compelled to look to our novels rather than to our histories and biographies for our finest and purest idealizations of human character and human society. There is nothing more real and nothing more inspiring in all history and cognate literature, than the characters which fiction, by the hands of its masters, has presented to the world.

There was a time when the church was afraid of the novel; and it is not to be denied that there are bad novels—novels which ought not to be read, and which are read simply because there are people as bad as the novels are; but the church itself is now the most industrious producer of the novel. It is found next to impossible to induce a child to read anything but stories; and therefore the shelves of our Sunday-school libraries are full of them. These stories might be better, yet they undoubtedly contain the best presentation of religious truth that has been made to infantile mind. The pictures of character and life that are to be found in a multitude of these books cannot fail of giving direction and inspiration to those for whom they are painted. Among much that is silly and preposterous and dissipating, there is an abundance that is wholesome and supremely valuable. Religious novels, too, have become a large and tolerably distinct class of books of very wide acceptance and usefulness in the hands of men and women. The church, least of all estates, perhaps, could now afford to dispense with the novel, because it is found that the novel will be produced and universally consumed.

The trash that is poured out by certain portions of the press will continue to be produced, we suppose, while it finds a market. The regret is that such stuff can find a market, but tastes will be crude and morals low in this imperfect world for some time to come. Let us be comforted in the fact that sensuality tires, that there is education indirect if not direct in coarse art, and that there will naturally come out of this large eating of trash a desire for more solid food. A long look at the yellow wearies, and then the eye asks for blue. If we look back upon our own experience, we shall doubtless find that we demand a very different novel now from that which formerly satisfied or fascinated us, and that we ourselves have passed through a process of development which helps us to pronounce as trash much that formerly pleased us. Let us hope for the world that which we have realized for ourselves. —Dr. F. G. Holland, in *Scribner's* for August.

NOTHING AT REST.

Although the solid earth seems destined to remain just as we see it, there are forces unceasingly operating for altering the boundaries of the sea, and all those lines ordinarily regarded as permanent features in nature.

There is not a rill or a river on the Continent of America now coursing in its primeval channel. They are continually rasping down the rocks and reducing broken fragments to powder, which is transported by the restless element, water, and spread out in new relations.

The sea is perpetually encroaching upon the land. Vast regions are gradually swallowed up from view, while new territory is rising above the surface in other directions. So the revolution goes on from age to age. It is so gradual that a thousand years hardly registers the variations of a coast line. But the law of alteration is never suspended. On its unvarying progress depends the perpetuity of animals and plants and possibly the globe itself.

The stability of the everlasting mountains is a beautiful poetical figure, but nothing is more uncertain than their duration, while water, the emblem of instability, never changes. It is the most potent agent in the constitution of this ever varying world for altering and remodeling its condition that there may always be seed time and harvest. Science confirms this declaration.

Dr. Barnas Sears, one of the greatest of living men, once said that the moral weakness of the present age is the want of a profound and positive conviction in religious matters. The man who is unsettled in his views, with whom religion is rather a matter of opinion than of positive and eternal truth, will naturally be charitable to all. But his is the charity of doubt and indifference. —Central Baptist.

HE DOTHT NOT AFFLICT WILLINGLY.

How comforting these words to the sorrowing heart! "He doth not afflict willingly." Precious is the thought that a loving Father's hand deals the blow, though that blow would seem to crush the spirit. How sweet to be able then to say, as we bow in meek resignation to the will of Him who doeth all things well, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth good to him."

We would not question his dealings, however dark or mysterious they appear, but simply crediting the assurance that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," receive his corrections as tokens of his love and faithfulness.

There is a "need be" for all that he does. The discipline may seem to us very severe, but he sees that there is a necessity for it. The rod must be laid upon us, but even as he lays it on he speaks in tones of tenderness and love. He leaves us not to walk alone this path of sorrow. Every step of the way is marked by the foot-prints of the "Man of sorrows," who has trodden it before us, and who even now walks with us to support and sustain, when we are ready to faint by the way.

Is it sickness that wastes the future? Are weary hours of pain appointed us? Listening to his voice we hear him say, "What I do thou knowest not now, but no doubt thou shalt know hereafter."

Does adversity come, and is poverty our appointed lot? The lowly One, who "had not where to lay his head," speaks in these words, "The disciple is not above his master."

Does death come and remove from us the dearest object of earthly love, the one upon whom we have leaned all along life's journey; and the grave hide from our view the face upon which from childhood we have loved to gaze, and we feel desolate and lonely? Jesus comes nearer still, and as he sweetly whispers, "Fear not," "Lo I am with you always," he points the eye of faith to the "land beyond the river," where the death-divided shall be reunited in the home where sorrow never enters and tears never fall; "the inheritance which is incorruptible, undecaying and that fadeth not away." So that amid our tears we are enabled to rejoice in the consolation of grace, and in the glorious hope of immortality, exclaiming with the apostle, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and singing as we journey onward,

Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
 Take life or friends away,
 But let me find them all again
 In that eternal day.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND LOOKING GLASSES.

There is something touching in the attachment that everybody has for his own countenance. Is not that one of the tenderest things in Dickens—Charley's hiding the looking-glass from poor disfigured little Dame Durdan. I am certain that a sudden change, though for the better, in the face of the plainest person I know would make him homesick.

I confess to a subtle satisfaction in my last photograph, which I am very well aware is not shared by any of the friends to whom I have presented copies. They talk about the position being forced or natural; or the eyebrows not being brushed; or the hair being too formal; or the picture flattering me a little; or not flattering me at all; or its being too light; or too dark; or too festive; or too solemn; or about its being a capital likeness; or an abominable one—according to variance in prints, moods, and notions. But what interests me in it—they have no souls for. I wonder if I am as unappreciative in the matter of other people's photographs. I declare I shall look through the next photograph album with new eyes.

As unsatisfactory as they are in the main, photographs show a man to himself in some respects better than the looking-glass does. For in the looking-glass you are always met by that frightening point-blank stare. On the other hand, you can gaze upon your own photograph just as composedly as upon that of the King of Siam.

There is no social custom more widely observed than that already alluded to, of looking sideways at one's self in mirrors. Scarcely one adult passenger in a hundred fails in the observance while passing through the ladies' cabins of the J—y C—y ferry-boats; and ninety-eight out of the ninety-nine do it on the sly. The strange part of it is that, while everybody knows precisely what his file leader is about everybody imagines that he himself has never been caught in the act. It is one of the delusions to which humanity is subject. —Why cannot we be frank about it? Suppose we try to be frank about it tomorrow! —The Old Cabinet, in *Scribner's* for August.

THE BREAKFAST TABLE.

A family which has to hurry through breakfast misses a great deal of comfort. If one has to be at business at precisely such a moment, better rise early enough so as to have a leisurely breakfast hour. A cup of coffee is the foundation of a good breakfast—muddy coffee is the misery of a breakfast. The best way to make coffee is to put the coffee into a flannel bag suspended over the top of the coffee pot, and turn boiling hot water through it. Never let coffee boil except for a moment, as it comes to a boil. A little egg makes it clear. For Sunday morning baked beans are supposed to be necessary for every son of a Puritan. You can tell who eats heartily by looking at sleepers in church.

A good beefsteak is a most excellent item in the breakfast bill of fare, if it be broiled. Fried, it is an abomination.

Hot buckwheat cakes or waffles with maple syrup are the felicity of the breakfast hour.

Fried potatoes if properly served are a great luxury. The French style of cooking potatoes is the best. Slice potatoes very thinly and wash. Then drain and wipe them and quickly drop them into hot fat. When done turn them into a colander, sprinkle salt on them and serve hot. If you wish them light or swelled, leave the potatoes in the colander only about half a minute, then put them back in the very hot fat, stir for about a minute, and put them again in the colander. If the fat is very hot, when dropped into it the second time, they will swell.

At this season omelets and broiled ham make a nice breakfast. For cooking omelets we recently gave an excellent recipe.

Hammered biscuit are a nice special dish for breakfast—very popular in the South. A lady gives the following recipe for making them:—With a quart of flour rub thoroughly a heaped-up tablespoonful of lard, add cold water or sweet milk enough to make a very stiff, dry dough; work and beat it an hour and a half. Some people say give three hundred blows with a mallet. When it blisters or pops it is ready for the oven. Bake carefully until the biscuit are a light brown.

On this question of eating, Dr. W. W. Hall says that it is not wise to eat by rules made in the chemical laboratory, or in the study of the philosopher. "Eat what you feel like—that is partake in moderation of what is most palatable to you; but in rare cases, it is found that what you are most fond of is followed by disagreeable results, gracefully yield to nature, avoid it for a while at least." —*Erchongue*.

THE TEST OF SMALL THINGS.

In small things lie the crucibles and the touchstones. Any hypocrite will come to the Sabbath worship, but it is not every hypocrite that will attend prayer-meetings, or read the Bible in secret, or speak privately of the things of God to the saints. You shall find the same true in other things. A man who is no Christian will very likely not tell you a downright lie by saying that black is white, but he will not hesitate to declare that white brown is white—he will go to that length. Now the Christian will not go half way to falsehood—nay, he scorns to go an inch on that road. He will no more cheat you out of two-pence farthing, than he would out of two thousand pounds. He will not rob you of an inch any more than of an ell. Even a Pharisee will ask Christ to his house to sit at meat with him—he is willing to entertain a great religious leader at his table; but it is not every one who will stoop down and unloose his shoes, for that very Pharisee who made the feast neither brought him water to wash his feet nor gave him the kiss of welcome; he proved the insincerity of his hospitality by forgetting the little things. I will be bound to say Martha and Mary never forgot to unloose his shoe-latchet, and that Lazarus never failed to see that his feet were washed. Look then, I pray you, as Christians, to the service of Christ in the obscure things, in the things that are not recognized by men, in the matters which have no honor attached to them, for by this shall your love be tried. —*Spurgeon*.

Before you ask a favor of any man just consider three things: First. Can you not avoid it? Second. Can the one you apply to grant it? Third. Would you, if your places were reversed, do for your friend what you ask him to do for yourself? It is well to think of this, as it may change the whole question.

I cannot always speak a word for Christ, but I can always live for him. I cannot always do good actively. I may not have the opportunity, though I have the inclination; but I can always be good, passively. The voluntary language of my character, of what I say or do is spasmodic, and liable to continual interruption; but the language of my character, of what I really am, is as continuous as my life itself, and suffers no more interruption than the beating of my heart or the breathing of my lungs. —*Rev. Hugh Macmillan*.