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"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

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What will You take for Yourself.

It is said that every man has his price. Young man, have you yours? Will anything at all buy you? Will you even sell yourself by a little falsehood, by evading the truth to gain somebody's opinion, or to accomplish some desired end? Will you even so far forget yourself, your manhood, your friends, your position in society, your best interests, as to thus sell yourself for the favor of another?

Doubtless you now spurn the thought and yet have you not often done so? Be careful, be honest in reply. Answer only as the little voice within prompts. Remember that it is of daily occurrence with mankind. Others, who think they are just as good, just as strong in character, who value themselves just as highly as you, are daily selling themselves.

Will you prove yourself a man, and talk, and act, and live like a man? Will you even countenance by your approval, by your influence, by your patronage, that which in your heart you know to be wrong, for fear of giving offence, for fear of losing somebody's favor, or subjecting yourself to somebody's cutting jest? If surrounded by the jovial associates of former days, where the convivial bottle is freely passed, and you are urged to partake of an extra glass, can you, even if there be none present to expose you to those whom you know think better things of you say "No"? Can you everywhere, under all circumstances of temptation, say "No"? If you can, then indeed you do possess true nobility of soul, then indeed may your friends safely lean upon you and feel proud of you.

Even those whose solicitations to evil you have refused to accept will respect and love you more because you are proving yourself a man. They who sustain such a character are building upon a rock, and will find themselves surrounded by friends comprising the best and noblest of mankind. All love you because they know they can trust you. Let your price be above earthly treasures or temptations, and you will thus gain not only nobility of character and soul, but the respect and love of all the pure and good.

GOOD LAUGHERS.—Only honest men are good laughers; a man may smile and smile, and be a villain; but the poet doesn't say he may laugh. In the rogue's laugh there is something forced and hollow, like the sepulchral bass of a stage robber's ha! ha! ha! One misses the true ring; there is discord somewhere in the music. But a good laugh is an outlet for all the bitterness of life, the prompter of social harmony, the lightener of trouble, and the balm of pain.

Past, Present and Future.

[From the Arkansas Transcript.]

The world passeth away.—1 John, 11, 17. Now is the day of salvation.—2 Cor. 6, 2. Ye know not what shall be on the morrow.—James, 14, 14.

Look on the past. Behold, wild scattered round, Time's fragments everywhere strow the ground. The dead are there, once blooming young and gay,

'Mid putrefaction, lo they faint away; The aged oak, once tall, and strong, and green, Decayed and withered in the past is seen. The lordly mansion, once the owners' trust, It's glory you see crumbling into dust. Even Egypt's boast, the pyramids of yore, Shall fall to ruin and be known no more. The past is gone; the future black as night By clouds lies hidden from all mortal sight. The present's here. See there with angel brow Wisdom lifts up her voice of mercy. Now, Now the accepted time, the gracious day, When man repents, wipes the stain away, Inspires new life through the atoning blood, And writes his name among the sons of God.

This is emblematical of the Past, Future, and Present, as these divisions of time appear to us who are now on the stage of human life. Behold the past, see there the fragments that time has left behind. There is the burying place, filled with the records of the past. What a volume of biography is the graveyard. There they lay, the blooming and the beautiful, the strong and the active, all mouldering into dust. The laughing eye, the noble brow, the dimpled cheek, the teeth of pearl, the musical tongue, the brain creative, and the cunning hand; all, all are silent in the tomb and mouldering into earth.

There, too, is the oak that once towered in strength and beauty, now withered and decayed. Once it gave shelter to the beast of the field, the fowls of heaven lodged in its branches, but now it needs a prop to prevent its falling to the ground. The splendid mansion is seen crumbling into dust. Architecture and sculpture, and painting had bestowed upon it their highest efforts; the artist looked with pride upon it; the owner delighted in it, but it is gone, its glory has departed, it is among the things that were.

In the distance are seen the huge forms of the pyramids; Egypt's renown and the wonder of the world; memorials of the past telling us of the folly, cruelty, despotism, and ambition of kings; telling us too, doubtless, of the sweat and groans and tears and blood of thousands of men like ourselves who slaved and labored to build those gigantic monuments. But these also pass away, if not before, they must when the earth shall reel to and fro and totter like a drunken man. Then, at least, all reminiscences of the past, sinking into the deep sea of oblivion, will be recognized no more.

The future is represented by clouds of darkness that rise upon the path and shut out from mortal vision all prospect of what is before. Religion the daughter of the skies, who descended from heaven and is hastening back again to her blest abode, is seen on the circular path of time. It is time present, whenever she appears. She holds in her hand a scroll; see its burden; she is in earnest; she looks benignly and compassionately as she passes by; she makes known to man his highest good; above her head is seen a crown of glory; this she promises to all who obey her voice and will improve the present time. The past is gone. The castles, and mansions, the green oaks, and the towns, and let them go. The monuments of the pride and ambition and wickedness of kings and conquerors are crumbling into dust, and let them crumble. The glory, splendor and renown of heroes are fast fading away, and let them fade. But the dead shall live again. They that sleep in the dust shall awake; that which is sown in dishonor shall be raised in glory. The past is gone. Time once lost is lost forever. Past opportunities for doing good and for getting good, are gone and gone forever. It is the part of wisdom to recur to the past and see what kind of a record it has borne of us to heaven.

Happy he Whose work is done, who triumphs in the past, Whose yesterdays look backward with a smile,

Nor like the Parthian, woe him as they fly, That common but opprobrious lot. Past hours If not by guilt, yet wounds in their flight, If folly bounds our prospect by the grave.

Yet there is a sense in which the past never dies. It haunts us like the ghost of the murdered. It is ever present, an angel of light, casting upon us a look of heavenly love, or a demon of darkness, scowling with malignity and hate. The memory will exit forever. The remembrance of past actions will therefore live forever. Oh, for yesterday to come. The future is concealed; clouds and darkness hide it from our view; we know not what a day may bring forth nor what an hour. We know however that death is there, an after death the judgment, and after the judgment the issues thereof, eternal life or eternal death. But this is all we know, and this is enough if we are wise. How much of joy or sorrow here may be for us in the future we know not. Whether our path will be strewed with roses or with thorns, we cannot tell; most likely they will be mixed. What opportunities for improvement in religious duties and privilege, or what hindrances we may have we know not. How much of life we can tell? A man may plant, and build, and lay up good things for man's years, and yet to-day may be his last; to-night his soul may be required of him. If then the past is gone, and the future may never come to us in life, it behooves us to improve the present. God in his mercy offers salvation now. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. What is that is offered? Salvation! Thou canst not do without salvation. Without it thou art lost and lost forever. Seize then, oh seize the angel as she passes, nor suffer her to go until she bless thee. The present time; how important! It includes the vast concerns of the eternal state. Destroy it not, there is a blessing in it. Throw years away; throw empires away, and be blameless. Now is the accepted time. God will accept thee now; He no where promises to accept thee to-morrow. Think, oh think of thy soul and its value. Think of Jehovah and his love; think of Christ and his precious blood; think of heaven and its eternal blessedness; of hell and its terrible torments. Upon thy present conduct rests thy eternal destiny. What art thou sowing? What art thou working? What art thou treasuring up? Let conscience answer. Think of the past and all its guilt; of the future and its great uncertainty; of the present as thine. To-morrow may be too late. Now is the day of salvation. Now thou mayest wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. Inspire a new life; rejoice in glorious hope; enroll your name among the children of God and become a glorious citizen of immortality in heaven. Improve the present. See, look on the beach, there is a boat high and dry with a man in it and he is asleep. The ship to which he belongs is in the offing. She will sail the next tide. The tide rises; the man sleeps on. The tide ebbs; he awakes; the water is gone; the ship is gone; and he is left to perish on a desolate island. There is a tide in man's spiritual affairs, which when taken at the rise, leads on to heaven. Omitted, he may be left to perish. My spirit, saith the Lord, shall not always strive with man. Now is the accepted time. Behold that railroad car; it has just started. Look again; there is a person with his hands upraised, exclaiming, "alas! too late!" He is left behind, his friends are all on board and he is not with them. Great is his grief. Man is a stranger here; God sends the chariot of his love to bear him home. Again and again it comes. It is here now, O sinner, step on board. The Saviour is there; he invites thee to leave thy sins and sinful companions and get on board of the heavenly car of mercy. It is ready to start; all things are now ready; some of thy friends are there; hesitate not; delay not, or like the passenger thou mayest find thyself in a more mournful sense too late, and a moment you may wish, when worlds want wealth to buy.

THE CROSS.

Quaint though the construction of the following poem, yet never has the story of the Cross been told with more truthful simplicity:

Blest they who seek, While in their youth, With spirit meek, The way of truth, To them the sacred scriptures now display, Christ as the only true and living way; His precious blood on Calvary was given To make them heirs of endless bliss in heaven. And e'en on earth the child of God can trace The glorious blessings of the Saviour's grace.

For them He bore His Father's brow; For them He wore The Thorny Crown; Nailed to the Cross, Endured its pain, That His life's loss, Might be their gain. Then haste to choose That better part, Nor e'en dare refuse The Lord thy heart, Lest He declare, "I know you not." And deep despair Forever be your lot. Now look to Jesus who on Calvary died, And trust on Him alone who there was crucified.

A PRAYER.

Oh, my Father! Take me, Make me Pure and holy, all thine own. May each changing moment find me At thy footstool, Near thy throne!

Oh, my Saviour! Draw me, Fill me With thy precious love divine. May no earthly idol lure me From that sacred Cross of thine! Holy spirit! Woo me, Draw me By thy gentle cords of love! Guide me; guard me, safely lead me To my heavenly Home above! (Southern Presbyterian.)

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Children, do you love each other? Are you always kind and true? Do you always do to others As you'd have them do to you?

Are you gentle to each other? Are you careful, day by day, Not to give offence by actions Or by anything you say?

Little children, love each other; Never give another pain; If your brother speak in anger, Answer not in wrath again.

Be not selfish to each other; Never spoil another's rest; Strive to make each other happy, And you will yourselves be blest.

The Bible at Death.

Life's last hours are grand testing hours; death tries all principles, and lays bare all our foundation. Many have acted the hypocrite in life, who were forced to be honest in the hour of death. Misgivings of heart, that we have kept secret through life, have come out in death; and many also who seemed all right and fair for heaven have had to declare that they have been self-deceived. A gentleman of renown was on his dying bed, when a friend at hand spoke of the Saviour.

"As to the Bible," he replied, "it may be true; I do not know."

"What, then, are your prospects?" he was asked.

He replied in whispers, which indeed were thunders:

"Dark—very dark."

"But have you no light from the Sun of Righteousness? Have you done justice to the Bible?"

"Perhaps not," he replied; "but it is now too late—too late!"

A mother who had laughed at and ridiculed religion and religious people, was seen restless and miserable on her death-bed. She desired that her children should be called. They came. In impassioned accents she addressed them: "My children, I have been leading you in the wrong road all your life. I now find that the broad road ends in destruction. I did not believe it before. Oh! seek to serve God, and try to find the gate to heaven, though you may not see your mother there." Her lips were closed forever, and her spirit departed to its account, while the household looked on terror-struck. Mother! father! would you die thus? Oh! no. Then point to heaven and lead the way.—Bible Society Union.

Value the friendship of him who stands by you in the storm; swarms of insects will surround you in the sunshine.

The American Presbyterian and the Roman Council.

[From the New York Tribune.]

The two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church of the United States which met in this city last May commissioned their moderators to draft a reply to the Pope's invitation to all Protestants to embrace the opportunity afforded by the approaching Council to return to communion with the Roman Church. This reply has just been made public. It sets out by declaring that the Presbyterians are not heretics, because they receive all the doctrines contained in the Apostle's Creed and set forth by the first six general councils. Neither are they schismatics; for they believe in the true Catholic unity, recognize as members of the visible Church all who profess the true religion, and are willing to maintain communion with them provided they do not exact as a condition the profession or performance of anything contrary to the Word of God. They cannot consent, however, to participate in the deliberations of the Council or unite with the Pope's invitations, because they hold the following principles which the Church of Rome condemns: 1. That the Bible is only the rule of faith. 2. The right of private judgment. 3. The universal priesthood of believers. 4. That the Apostleship is not perpetual, that modern prelates have no authority to teach or rule the Church, and that the Bishop of Rome has no valid claim to supremacy, Christ alone being the head of the Church. "As the Church of Rome," continues the reply, "excommunicates all those who profess the principles above enumerated; as we regard these principles to be of vital importance, and intend to assert them more earnestly than ever; as God appears to have given His seal and sanction to these principles by making the countries where they are held the leaders of civilization—the most eminent for liberty, order, intelligence, and all forms of private and social prosperity—it is evident that the barrier between us and you is, at present, insurmountable." The document also contains a temperate protest against the doctrines of transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass, the adoration of the host, the power of judicial absolution, the grace of orders, purgatory, the worship of the Virgin Mary and of images, the invocation of saints, the doctrine of reserve and of implicit faith, and the consequence of withholding the Scriptures from the people, &c., and concludes as follows: "While loyalty to Christ, obedience to the Holy Scriptures, consistent respect for the early Councils of the Church, and the firm belief that pure 'religion is the foundation of all human society,' compel us to withdraw from fellowship with the Church of Rome; we, nevertheless, desire to live in charity with all men. We love all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. We cordially recognize as Christian brethren all who worship, trust and serve Him as their God and Saviour according to the inspired word. And we hope to be united in heaven with all who unite with us on earth, in saying, 'Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.'—Rev. i. 6.

"Signed in behalf of the two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."

M. W. JACOBS, } Moderators.
FR. H. FOWLER, }

A young prince whose mind had learned in some degree to value religious truth, asked his tutor to give him suitable instruction, that he might be prepared for death.

"Plenty of time for that when you are older," was the reply.

"No," said the prince. "I have been to the churchyard and measured the graves, and there are many there shorter than I am."