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## EDITORIAL.

### THE CROWNING GRACE.

Man is a proud animal, and pride, perhaps, is his "besetting sin." It should not be classed among his infirmities. It demands more serious consideration than it receives.

To the same extent that pride is a sin is humility a Christian grace. The humility of Christ was one of the foundation stones of salvation. Humility in the Apostles was one of the forces that made their preaching powerful, and helped to drive the car of Zion from Asia Minor into Europe. The Christian element of to-day, shorn of humility, would undoubtedly be shorn of its power. Even humility in a worldly sense is a necessary ingredient in the make-up of success. For, unless we stand with uncovered head in the presence of our undertakings, acknowledging the necessity of extra force, failure will win the day.

As far as our observation goes, there is an alarming absence of humility in the presence of God in nature. It seems to us that when God is manifesting most clearly and grandly His glory in physical nature, man most energetically essays to "play the fool." At times, when the very soul should hold its breath in His presence on the mountain top, the wave-lashed shore, or amid the whirling storm, many men and women fling away humility and make themselves ridiculous. As Moses, when he saw the flaming bush, was told to pull off his shoes, as the ground on which he stood was holy, so, when man goes out where God is seen, and heard, and felt in nature, he should exercise a proper humility, for he is standing in the presence of the living God. The music which comes with the zephyr, the tinkling rhyton, or the boiling tide is His voice. The beauty which tints the cowslip, or which rests on the bosom of the mountain tarn, is but the shining of His face, while the moaning storm and the heaving earthquake are but the echo of His footsteps.

God's dispensations furnish man an occasion for the exercise of humility. Pride with fortune will make misfortune; humility with misfortune will make fortune. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life." There are many counterparts of Saul. Men, who at first unattended by any unusual degree of prosperity, live close to God, but who became prosperous and forget God.

Some are humble until misfortune overtakes them. Then humility abdicates the throne in favor of a bitter, censorious pride. How much better it would be for them to say, "Lord, I humbly bow before thy dispensations, trusting like David, in thy loving wisdom."

If those who compose the church of God would only in their hearts and lives

humble themselves in the sight of God instead of offering incense on the altar of self, the watchmen in the streets of Zion would cry out that the morning approacheth. A humility among mankind, based upon a proper conception of who and what man is, and who and what God is, and the nature of sin and righteousness would hush sobs, dry tears, dull swords, dismount guns, lower standards, banish strife, enthroned peace, and send the rich currents of millennial life through the veins of Church and State. Let us all place the statue of the poor publican in the vestibule of our hearts, and read so often and so prayerfully the quaint and sweet old story of the Prodigal that we will read it into our very lives.

### STEALING THE TRUTH.

It is very popular these days to deny dogmatically the written revelation of God and to speak learnedly of the plans and purposes of God as affecting this life and one which is to come. It is true that there is implanted within every human mind an idea of God, and in all human nature, an instinct leading in the direction of divinity. But it is folly for us to expect to learn anything definitely of God outside the written revelation. In the Word of God we learn the name, attributes, and purposes of God. We can learn them nowhere else. So the spectacle of latter-day theologians throwing away revelation and posing their new faith on the doctrines that have come to us through the same derided and banished revelation, arouses within us a kind of indignation. Dr. Briggs and his kind are preaching that we have a new Bible. They say that reason has thrown off the covering in these latter days, and that the Word of God is for the first time understood in these latter days of the nineteenth century. Moses made a "mistake", after all. The prophets were failures, the apostles beat the air, and it was reserved for such men as Briggs, Savage, and others to present to the world the true photograph of God and decipher His letter-book.

The fact of a divine revelation through Jesus Christ is the keystone in the arch of all true faith. When we leave it out of our social and theological structures, a pile of ruins will be all that will be left.

### THANKSGIVING DAY--A SUGGESTION.

The President has proclaimed that Thursday, the 30th day of November, shall be a day of thanksgiving. It should be filled with praise to God for his general and special blessings. We have no doubt that our readers will spend it in a manner indicating a desire to worship God and not to minister to self.

We suggest to the Methodists in the North Carolina Conference that they make Thursday, the 30th day of November a "red letter" day for our Orphanage and Preachers' Home. The trustees have requested Rev. J. W. Jenkins to ask that all of our congregations meet on that day and make a liberal thanksgiving offering in behalf of the Orphanage. Let the offerings be liberal. Make the service warm, entertaining, instructive, stimulating, elevating and inspiring; tell the people what the Orphanage is, what it means, how far it has progressed, how much farther it will go, how many demands it will meet, and what a grand work it will do; look to God, depend on the Holy Spirit, and the results will be surprisingly gratifying. Brother, begin at once, your preparation for Thanksgiving Day. God, angels, and hundreds of homeless ones are waiting for the outcome.

An ounce of contentment is worth a pound of feverish speculation in Conference future.

### THE PASTOR IN CIVIC LIFE.

ROBERT STUART M'ARTHUR.

It is the solemn duty and the exalted privilege of the pulpit to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is a proposition to which churchmen of all schools will give a hearty assent. But the question immediately arises, What is the Gospel? To this question different and somewhat contradictory answers will be given. Is the chief element in preaching the Gospel simply the conversion of an elect few, and their safe and speedy translation to Heaven? Is there not a much broader and so truer, conception of the purpose of the Gospel among men? Was not Bunyan's conception of his Christian, as a man who ran from his sinful environment and made a straight line for the Celestial City, apparently intent only on saving his own soul, a narrow and selfish, and in so far an un-Christian view of Christianity?

That Christians are left on the earth, and not taken immediately to Heaven, clearly shows that they have duties toward God and on behalf of man to perform on the earth. Our Lord, in His matchless prayer, distinctly prays to the Father that His followers should not be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil. It is easy to imagine what this world would soon become if all God's children were at once taken to Heaven. They are the light of the world; that light must shine in the darkest corners. They are the salt of the earth; that salt must be put in the same barrel with the world's things to preserve them from decay.

We are told that when the words of Terence, the Roman comic poet: "I am a man and deem nothing common to man foreign to me," were uttered in a Roman theatre, they evoked thunders of applause. They evoke applause still when spoken to almost any audience. They are a touch of nature, which shows that all the world in its deep heart still possesses kinship. Shall the Gospel be narrower in our conception than was this noble sentiment? Is there any sphere of life which the Gospel was not intended to reach, sweeten, hearten and ennoble? Is it not intended to humanize and in some degree to divinize all the relations of life? Did not Jesus Christ first give the world the conception of a religion which was equally needed by, intended for, and adapted to all classes, conditions and races of men?

Municipal governments assuredly need the alleviations which religion can give. It is sometimes said that we ought to bring politics into religion; but it is quite certain that we ought to put religion into politics. While we repudiate the Old World conception of the relations between Church and State, we still earnestly affirm that each owes solemn duties to the other. The man who thinks he is so devoted to the other world that he cannot do his political duty in this world, is never likely to see another world half as good as this world. There may be times when it is a Christian's duty to neglect a week-day service of his church, that he may serve his country and his God by attending a primary or polling-booth. "The things which are Caesar's" have their place in the thought and effort in true religionists, as truly as the "things that are God's."

Between these two, rightly considered, there is not, and there cannot be, any opposition. Shall we allow the worst elements in the community to vote early and often, while Christian men vote not at all? What right have men to lay claim to the advantages of good government when they will not take the trouble to register, or having registered, to vote? Such men do not deserve good government; and were it not that the innocent have to suffer with the guilty, one could with great complacency see such men obliged to live under a bad city government.

Many feel that when citizens fail through mere indifference for several consecutive years to exercise the rights of citizenship at the ballot-box, they ought for a time to be deprived of that right. It might be well to tax the right of suffrage in such way that only by exercising that right would the tax be remitted. It is simply shameful that so many of the so-called citizens often entirely neglect the duty of citizenship at the ballot-box. It is humiliating beyond description that often dishonesty robs those who do cast a ballot of the intended results of their exercise of their sovereignty. In monarchical countries those who slew

kings were called regicides. In the American Republic those who make false counts of ballots strike at American sovereignty. They are the regicides under our form of government. They ought to be punished with the utmost vigor of the law; and men who utterly neglect the exercise of their kingly functions of citizenship, and so are guilty of political suicide, ought also to be punished by the courts and rebuked by the pulpits.

There is no sphere of human duty to which the pulpit can afford to be indifferent. Its sphere is limitless, and its influence, if possible, should be ubiquitous. We ought not to separate widely between our piety and our patriotism. To the Hebrew Psalmist, Jerusalem stood for the noblest aspirations of religion, as well as for the highest attainments of patriotism. We have too much eliminated God from current events, and also from municipal and national affairs. We have thought of God as having direct relation to national affairs in the days of Moses and Joshua, and David and Solomon, and Isaiah and Micah, but we have relegated Him to remote times and distant lands.

Many Christians are practically guilty of a species of atheism in their thoughts regarding current events. They even boast of their indifference to all political duties. They hold up their hands in holy horror because of the corruption in politics. They ought rather to blush because of their shameful neglect of their solemn political duties. They have by this neglect done something toward turning this greatest city of the western hemisphere, and the third largest city of the world, over to the control of the most corrupt political organization in political history. Probably there is no more feral, venal, and political organization even among nations not yet emerged from heathenism and barbarism. The dishonesty and incapacity of our municipal rule has brought reproach on Americanism, on Republicanism, on civilization, and even on humanity.—*Exchange.*

### THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE.

Christ once drew a parallel between his own death and the death of a corn of wheat. At another time he made a remark which clearly indicates a dissimilarity between his death and that of the natural seed corn, "I lay down my life that I may take it again." "I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." His death was to be his own choice and voluntary act, as much so as though not accomplished by the hand of wicked men.

Not so, however, with the corn of wheat. When it goes into the ground to die, it has no choice in the matter. And when it comes up out of the grave with its renewed and multiplied life, there is no act of will or effort on its part. With this exception the law of life through death, which Christ pointed out, was identical for himself and for the corn of wheat.

It is a question as to how long a time the germ of life can be retained in a grain of wheat or other seed corn. We have all heard the story of the Egyptian wheat and the lily bulb which were said to have been folded up in the hand of the mummy and laid away in the dried atmosphere of the tombs for a thousand years and which, upon being brought out to the light and placed under proper conditions of earth and air and moisture, have grown and produced "after its kind," with all the youthfulness of first and second year seed corn. Again, I have heard all such statements as to the millennial age of vegetable germs called in question as impossible, on the ground that the particles of matter would disintegrate with time and the seed germ would of necessity become devitalized. Of course this is a question of fact to be determined by experiment and not by theory.

But of this we can have no doubt; as long as the grain of wheat lies in the hand of the mummy, or elsewhere, intact, unspoiled and undying, "it abideth alone," whether it be for a twelve month, or for a millenium. If it is ever to increase, or do anything in the world, if it is ever to multiply and be anything more than it now is, it must go down in the ground and be despoiled. It must rot and die!

I have sometimes playfully thought to myself that when we dig in the earth in the spring-time to make their little graves for the seed corn and the lily bulb and plant them out of sight in the dark and dismal ground, we ought to get up a funeral procession and play the dead march and carry black plumes and wear crape and shed tears over the spot. It is so bad to bury anybody—to shut up anything in

a tomb—where it must be subject to corruption and to death.

But, someone reminds me, this is the way of nature. Our flower beds are not graveyards, nor our corn fields burial places. If we are to have a garden of flowers or a harvest of wheat, the seed corn and the lily bulbs must go down into the ground and die.

Therefore, instead of weeping when we plant our garden and fields, we will throw away our emblems of mourning. We will stop our funeral dirges, and we will lift up our shouts of gladness and carry bright banners, and we will rejoice and be glad because of the multiplied beauty and largeness of life that is to come at the harvest.

Yes, and why not have the same confidence of hope and faith at our own burial and at the burial of our Christian friends, and at the failure of any of our plans and expectations? Christ applies the same principle to himself and to the seed corn. He teaches us that the same law of life through death, and of success through apparent failure, runs through all the spheres of our moral and spiritual activities. The way of life is the way of death. The way of success and high achievement in any line, is the way of struggle, of effort and of waste.

All this is true for the individual, for institutions, and for society at large. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. The dying, decaying leaves of the forests are the mulching and feeding of the growing trees. The toil and sacrifice and courageous defeat of one generation is the advancement and up-building of the next.—*Douglass P. Putnam, D. D., in Evangelist.*

### PUBLIC READINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

[Sunday School Magazine.]

Milton said there were no songs comparable to the Songs of Zion. It is just as true that there is no reading comparable to the Word of God. It is the most inspiring, the most suggestive, the most thrilling, the most convicting, the most comforting, the most enlarging, and in every way the most charming book that men read. The public reading of it is of the utmost importance. We rejoice that one of the lessons of this month is of that subject: There is great need of it. The Bible is the great battle-ground of the day. It is being attacked on the one hand by indifference, and on the other by fiery criticism. The issue is not doubtful. It will come out with new wreaths of triumph. Indeed, it has today a stronger hold on the life and the thought of the world than ever before. But nothing will contribute so much to its early and complete enthronement as the right use of the Book itself.

In that most interesting account which Nehemiah gives of the reading of the Scriptures by Ezra there are several points which are particularly impressive.

The only mention of a pulpit in the Bible is when the reading stand which Ezra occupied is so called. The first function of the pulpit was, therefore, to assist the people in hearing the Word of the Lord. It was a place from which the Word of God was dispensed—not dispensed with—as is now too often the case. The only true pulpit power, that which enters the consciences of men and abides to make them better and greater, is that which proceeds from God's Word.

It has always been a noticeable fact that the closer the adherence of the preacher to the pure word of God is, the greater and more permanent is the effect. In studying the leading evangelists of the race, we have seen that those who made the Word of the Lord the chief and almost only instrument of instruction and illustration have done work which remained as a permanent heritage of the church. Such work has taken on organization and has become reproductive. On the other hand, those who have used the Scripture largely as a pretext and have utilized large natural endowments of oratory, wit, sarcasm, learning, and various personal gifts of influence, have been more like passing meteors than fixed stars. When Ezra read the law, those present to hear were "the men and the women, and those that could understand"—that is, with the grown people came also the children who were mature enough to understand the Word which was read. "And all the people answered Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground."