

The Christian Life.

Too Busy to Pray.

Jesus appears to have devoted himself specially to prayer, at times when his life was unusually full of work and excitement. His was a very busy life; there were nearly always "many coming and going" about him. Sometimes, however, there was such a congestion of thronging objects that he scarcely had time to eat. But even then he found time to pray. Indeed, these appear to have been with him seasons of more prolonged prayer than usual. Thus we read: "So much the more went there a fame abroad of him and great multitudes came together to hear and be healed by him of their infirmities, but he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed."

Many in our days know what this congestion of occupation is—they are swept off their feet with their engagements, and can scarcely find time to eat. We make this a reason for not praying. Jesus made it a reason for praying. Is there any doubt which is the better course? Many of the wisest have in this respect done as Jesus did. When Luther had a specially busy and exciting day, he allowed himself a longer time than usual for prayer before hand. A wise man once said he was too busy to be in a hurry; he meant that if he allowed himself to become hurried he could not do all he had to do. There is nothing like prayer for producing this calm self-possession. When the dust of business so fills your room that it threatens to choke you, sprinkle it with the water of prayer, and then you can cleanse it out with comfort and expedition.—*Jas. Stalker in Episcopal Methodist.*

Are We Safe?

A lady told a sweet story illustrative of what it is to have Christ between us and everything else.—She said she was wakened up by a very strange noise of pecking, or something of the kind, and when she got up she saw a butterfly flying backward and forward inside the window-pane in great fright, and outside a sparrow pecking and trying to get in. The butterfly did not see the glass, and expected every moment to be caught, and the sparrow did not see the glass, and expected every minute to catch the butterfly; yet all the while that butterfly was just as safe as if he had been three miles away, because of the glass between it and the sparrow.

So it is with Christians abiding in Christ. His presence is between them and every danger. I do not believe that Satan understands about this mighty and invisible power that protects us, or else he would not waste his efforts by trying to get us. He must be like the sparrow—he does not see it; and the Christians are like the butterfly—they do not see it, and so they are frightened, and flutter backward and forward in terror; but all the while Satan cannot touch the soul that has the Lord Jesus Christ between itself and him.—*Pacific Methodist.*

Boldness.

That which gives the believer boldness in coming to God in blood. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." The believer enters by faith where Jesus is, worships in the courts of heaven, feels at home even in the presence of God, because he who was wounded for our transgressions is there for him. This makes him bold, not because he is anything, but because the great high priest is ever pleading his righteousness being the righteousness of God. Many a child of God is in bondage from seeking to be bold, though he is not aware of it, something to the finished work of Christ, just as if this were not enough, and yet God, by raising up Jesus, and setting him at his right hand, has shown himself fully satisfied with the work of Jesus, and for the sake of Jesus and the life he

laid down on the cross he now passes over every poor sinner who trusts only in him. Millions have been sheltered under that blood. God has set him forth to be a propitiation or covering through faith in his blood. All who are quickened by the Father and drawn to Jesus as lost sinners, and made to trust only in the blood of Christ, are safe. God has given his word that they are safe, for "when I see the blood," he says, "I will pass over you." "He that believeth on him is not condemned"—condemnation fell on Jesus; the judgment came down upon the Lamb—the Lamb was slain, and all who trust in that are free.

He suffered in their stead, He saved his people thus, The curse that fell upon his head Was due by right to us. —*Scripture Testimony.*

Losses.

"Some things which we greatly prize we must lose. Time wrenches them remorselessly from our grasp. The only thing to do with them is to enjoy and profit by them while we have them. Other things once gotten can never be shaken off. The only thing to do is to keep free from them. These things in the abstract do not have the force which they bring in the voice of personal testimony. A beloved friend who has passed the allotted bounds of human life and says he has daily and hourly reminders of it, sums up this practical wisdom in a letter to us in which he says: "It is sometimes hard to keep from almost envying you young men just coming into the thick of your best work at such a time as this, when, as it seems to me, there are motives stronger than ever for every good man to put forth all his strength of body, mind and soul in the one work that makes life worth living. Old age has enough to see to without adding to its burdens a weary remorse or regret over things undone in the years of one's strength and opportunity." —*The Congregationalist.*

Value of Calamities.

"In the great calamities which are permitted to befall communities we seldom realize the good results which may follow. God's ancient people, when broken in spirit by their afflictions, were called to listen to the assurances of his mercy and love. 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,' was his message. 'The mercy of judgment,' Baldwin Brown says, 'is a subject we too little study. Yet mercy is the deepest element in every judgment with which God afflicts mankind. Great epidemics are healing ordinances. They purify the vital springs. They leave a purer, stronger health when their dread shadow has passed by. Catastrophes in history are like thunderstorms; they leave a fresher, brighter atmosphere.—Reigns of terror are the gates through which man passes into a wider world.'—*Christian Inquirer (Baptist.)*

Sympathy.

"Sympathy is in itself help, and sympathy prompts to an expression of itself in help. If in our hearts we feel for another, we want to share his sorrows and to enter into his joys. And if it be known by another, as it will be, that we have real sympathy with him, he will be helped and cheered thereby, and he will know he can call upon us for any needed expression of our sympathy in practical help. Sympathy is the outcome of a loving heart. It is the expression of love for Christ, and of love for those who are dear to Christ. There are calls for sympathy in every sphere in which we are placed in the providence of God.

If thou art blest, Then let the sunshine on thy gladness rest On the dark edges of each cloud that lies Black in thy brother's skies. If thou art sad, Still be thou in thy brother's gladness clad." —*Sunday School Times.*

Be Strong With God.

"It is impossible for us to make the duties of our lot minister to our sanctification without a habit of devout fellowship with God.—This is the spring of all our life, and the strength of it. It is prayer, meditation and converse with God that refreshes, restores and renews the temper of our minds at all times, under all trials, after all conflicts with the world. By this contact with the world unseen we receive continual access of strength. As our day, so is our strength. Without this healing and refreshing of spirit, duties grow to be burdens, the events of life chafe our temper, employment lower the tone of our minds, and we become fretful, irritable and impatient."—*Cardinal Manning.*

'He is Love.'

"Brighter than the most glorious dawn that ever lit the expectant hills, there grows before the eyes that gaze on him the light that changes all things; the light that lives on earth, and shall live while earth lasts, in the fact that God the Son was crucified for us; the light that glows in every life that takes its character and strength from him; the light that whosoever men may meet it, howsoever it may find its way into their hearts, brings God's great demand upon them, and tell them why he made them, what he would have them be, what is the true meaning of their lives, what is, indeed, his will for all men, and the calling and capacity of all; even the light of the central and pervading truth that he, the Righteous Judge, the Lord of all, so loved the world that he is love." —*Father Paget, of England.*

'Ambassadors for Christ.'

"It behooves us, then, to cultivate the gifts that preserve the mind and heart that will best fit us for our life work of being 'ambassadors for Christ.' Let us use every gift which God entrusted to us by which we may the better illustrate and enlarge our faith."

Whether science, history, imagination, anecdote, experience, current incident, let all be directed to the end. It was said of Oanlon Liddon that he was not above telling a story if it would fit his purpose. We should be 'above' nothing by which we can drive home the truth, or by which we can 'pull men out of the fire.' But an essential condition of success is prayer—private, protracted, prevailing prayer. The early Methodist preachers were men of prayer. They were powerful on their knees and because they had power with God they also had power with men. Of one, who but recently passed away, it was said that on the Monday morning he began to plead with God for the next Sunday night in particular, and he rarely preached without results." —*The Rev. Henry Bone.*

The Home.

His Messengers.

Mr. Spurgeon, the famous preacher who died lately, was, as we are told, in the constant habit of referring to certain points in his life when, by some trivial occurrence, God turned him into the right path. The first such occurrence was his going aimlessly into a garden in London one day when he was a boy, and meeting there an old man who had been long a missionary in Africa. The venerable man talked for some time to the lad, and then knelt beneath a great yew-tree, and prayed that he might become a successful preacher. Rising, he took shales by the hand, and said: "I believe God will hear my prayer. When you preach your first sermon, let them sing the hymn. "God moves in a mysterious way. His wonders to perform." This injunction Spurgeon obeyed years afterward. Another circumstance which he

often recalled was a heavy snow-storm which prevented him, when a lad, from going to his own church. He entered a little chapel where a layman was preaching. This man uttered the words which for the first time showed Christ to the lad as his friend and helper, and led him to consecrate his life to his service.

After he had begun to preach in London, the city was visited by the Asiatic cholera. Mr. Spurgeon threw himself into the work of caring for the dying and dead until his strength yielded. His physical weakness, the prolonged strain and the poisoned atmosphere overcame him; hope and courage, and at last faith itself, gave way. He resolved to turn his back on the plague-stricken city, and to save himself. "Going along the Dover road he saw, pasted in the window of a cobbler's shop, a slip of paper on which was written: "Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

"God sent that message direct to me," he used to say, "I took heart and hope, and cheerfully turned to my work again."

We all can look back to certain turning-points in our lives, when an invincible hand seemed to lead us, through some trivial influence, upward. But how often do we look at the events of the day as the towns-people of Nazareth looked at Jesus passing through their streets; not recognizing that by them that which is truest and noblest can be developed in us. And all the time God is speaking to us through them, and we will not hear.—*Youth's Companion.*

Home Education and Crime.

A large share of the men and boys who are incarcerated in our State Prisons and Penitentiaries, are there because they had no proper discipline in the family, and were allowed by over indulgence to play truant instead of attending school and therefore received no school discipline.

Often when I have been asked what are the causes, or what is the particular cause, that sends most of our men to prison. I have of late years invariably answered, "The want of family discipline." The indulgence of the father and mother, who allow the child to grow up without any discipline to form character, leads almost inevitably to evil ways and consequently to prison. The child even of tender years who is indulged in its natural waywardness, and who is allowed to say to its father or its mother "I will" or "I won't" is in a fair way to become an inmate of our penal institutions.

Parents are also responsible for the waywardness of their children which leads them into crime, from a practice of deceiving them.—*Warden A. A. Bush, (N. Y.)*

Husbands and Wives.

A good husband makes a good wife. Some men can neither do without wives nor with them; they are wretched alone in what is called single blessedness, and they make their homes miserable when they get married; they are like Tompkins' dog, which could not bear to be loose and howled when it was tied up. Happy husbands and a happy husband is the happiest of men. A well-matched couple carry a joyful life between them, as the two pies carried the cluster of school. They are a brace of birds of Paradise. They multiply their troubles by dividing. This is fine arithmetic! The wagon of care rolls lightly along as they put together, and when it drags a little heavily or here's a hitch anywhere, they look each other all the more and so lighten the labour.—*Tom Roughman.*

So grow services; sweet remembrances grow from them anon.

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