

BV 4531

.J4

Copy 1

Talks on High Themes
for Young Christians

CHARLES E. JEFFERSON



Class BV 4531

Book J4

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES
FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

TALKS
ON
HIGH THEMES
FOR
YOUNG CHRISTIANS

BY
CHARLES E. JEFFERSON, D.D.
PASTOR OF THE BROADWAY TABERNACLE
NEW YORK

BOSTON
THE PILGRIM PRESS
NEW YORK • CHICAGO

BV4531

. J4

Copyright, 1909

BY LUTHER H. CARY

248531



THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

FOREWORD

WE are always thinking aloud on low things such as the weather and the next dinner or excursion, but when it comes to high things we are inclined to keep our thinking to ourselves.

And there is a reason. High things are sacred and we do not want to profane them with talk. High things involve our deepest experiences and we shrink from making an exhibition of them. Moreover it is difficult to speak of high things with wisdom, and to exhibit one's ignorance or folly is not pleasant. And then when one thinks of high things aloud he must be in the

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

company of those who are on his own level, for not every one likes to think of high things, and to speak of things exalted with those who have no sympathy with our ideals or feelings seems to be a violation of the Master's admonition not to cast pearls before swine. There are many reasons why men never think aloud on things which are high.

And this is a pity, for it does one good to think aloud. Continuous reverie is not wholesome. The mind which does not express itself becomes stupefied. Many a subject is puzzling and opaque until the tongue takes hold of it and shakes it. Crowding a thought into language is a task which wakes up the mind and gives it new vigor. To set an idea or feeling vibrating in the

FOREWORD

air gives one a new sense of its reality and increases the scope of its influence. And therefore a soliloquy on cardinal matters is not without advantages. In the quiet of one's own room it is helpful to think aloud about the things which are of utmost worth. High things have a fashion of getting themselves lost in fog-banks, and one must pull them out of the mist, and get them down on paper. It is surprising sometimes how the mist leaves a subject when it is once brought out into the open air. Clearness of thought is all-important in dealing with things of high concern, and both the pen and the tongue are magicians which have the faculty of making muddy streams run clear. If one can talk with an acquaintance or friend this is far better.

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

“Iron sharpeneth iron ;
So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his
friend.”

In social intercourse the mind becomes alert and takes on new capacities. The effort to express what one thinks and the exertion to take in what some one else thinks are fine exercises for mental muscles, and the soul grows by every such use of its powers. If the person with whom we talk does not altogether agree with us, this disagreement becomes a means of grace, for it is a distinct advantage to see a subject from a new standpoint and to enter into the workings of a mind different in type and experience from our own. A good debate on high themes may be both exhilarating and profitable, for ideas, like iron, are hammered into shape by heavy blows,

FOREWORD

and become all the clearer in outline as well as more serviceable after they have had a vigorous pounding.

So I invite you into my study that we may think aloud together concerning some of the things which sometimes perplex and which occasionally slip down into the mist.

If now and then I fail to touch upon subjects which are occasions of stumbling, or if my meaning at points becomes muffled in the rustling of my words, or if here and there your experience and judgment should depart from my own, speak right out, please, for I am desirous of learning your minds while I am revealing you a bit of my own. I shall leave all the windows open so that whatever is said may be heard round the world.

BROADWAY TABERNACLE, NEW YORK

I

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

Talks on High Themes

I

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

I DO not like the word confession, for it suggests things. It is a word which has associations and an atmosphere. It suggests wrongdoing: we confess an error, or a fault; a criminal is induced to make a confession. The word makes one think of a court-house and a jail. To say that one must confess that he is a Christian seems like saying that he must admit that he is a culprit. A good Catholic goes to confession, and all Christians are called upon to confess their sins.

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

It is hard to wash the word clean of these associations. Or if it does not imply wrong-doing it hints at something stately and formal. Are there not ponderous documents known as confessions of faith? It is enough to frighten boys or girls to be told that they ought to make a good confession.

Nor is the word profession much better. It smacks of pretense; it sounds hollow and superficial. People are always professing things they do not believe. They profess to be what they are not. A man of large professions is often a man to be shunned. To profess allegiance to Christ seems somewhat too showy and pretentious for one who wants to live a quiet Christian life.

Nor is the word *own* satisfactory. It also implies more than it says.

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

We "own" a poor relation, or our dog which has bitten a boy in the street. But when we talk of the duty of owning Christ it makes one feel that he is an outcast craving recognition, and that it is a great act of virtue on our part to admit that he belongs to us.

And yet, while it is difficult to find a word that satisfies, there is a very definite act which must in some way or other be expressed, and possibly we shall not do better than to go back and listen to an ancient Hebrew poet saying: "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." "Saying so" expresses clearly what the New Testament means by confession. When one decides to be a Christian let him say so. There is an easy-going, informal sound about "saying so" which reminds one that Christian

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

confession ought to be both natural and easy. It ought not to be thought of as something stiff and formal, elaborate and solemn, but something as natural as breathing and as easy as talking.

Of course there will be voices in the heart ready to protest against the beginning Christian taking any such step as this, and just how plausible these voices are I know full well, for I heard the entire chorus of them in my own heart when I was a boy. One voice asserts that the essence of the Christian life is a heart right with God, and that when the heart is right any formal, outward act has little worth or meaning. Another voice is certain that conduct is the one thing essential and that it is not what one says but what one does that counts. Let the Christian, therefore,

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

do Christlike deeds, and the world will infer from this that he has been with Jesus. Another voice warns against self-conceit; silence is the only genuine modesty. Another voice sounds solemn warnings of possible falls, and insinuates that if one declares himself a Christian and then stumbles and goes back, the humiliation that overtakes him is tenfold greater than if he starts in silence and never announces with trumpets the kind of life he proposes to live. But all such voices, however plausible, are mistaken and misleading, as you will readily see when you think what they say aloud.

All these voices run directly counter to the grain of the Christian life. The Christian life is first of all a natural life, a life which every normal human being ought to live.

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

If a man's life is artificial or defective then he may be assured that his life is not altogether Christian. Now it is natural for human beings to talk about the things in which they have an interest. It is hard to conceive of a man interested in politics who never says a word about politics; or of a woman in love with music who never mentions music; or of a man enthusiastic over art who continuously ignores art in his speech; or of a woman zealous in a great reform who maintains an unbroken silence in regard to it. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If therefore a man is interested in Jesus of Nazareth and his cause, the natural thing for him to do is to say so.

The Christian life is also complete. Christ lays his claim upon body,

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

mind and spirit; he is inexorable in his demands; he will have nothing less than all. He therefore who would start the Christian life should be careful that the surrender of the soul's all is total. Not only must every faculty of the mind be brought into captivity, but also every organ of the body.

Now of all the organs of the body none surpasses in usefulness or power the tongue. It is a miracle-working member. As James reminds us, it is small but it is mighty. It is peculiar to the race of men. Animals, to be sure, have tongues, but there is only one human tongue. The faculty of articulate speech is granted only to those who are capable of becoming the sons of God. When, therefore, one decides to live a complete life he must carry with him all

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

the capacities and powers with which the Almighty has endowed him. To silence or discard a member which has been granted a central place in the life of the soul is evidence that the person doing this does not see clearly what being a Christian means.

Moreover, being a Christian is synonymous with being manly. Jesus was the ideal man. He above all others was candid, brave and true. He was incapable of anything cowardly or underhanded. His unshrinking courage thrilled and lifted the men who knew him. To be a Christian is to go to school to him; the mind which was in him is also to be in us. If through fear or shame we creep and sneak through life, not daring to proclaim our thoughts, our own heart condemns

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

us and tells us that we are unworthy of being numbered among the disciples of One who was always outspoken and magnificently frank.

Furthermore, the Christian life is a life of faith. A Christian is one who refuses to walk by sight; he accepts things which are not yet present; he believes things which he cannot prove. Conscious of his own weakness, he believes there is a strength able to sustain him. He sees that many things are impossible, but he believes that with God all needed things are possible. But if he is timid and fearsome and shrinks from plunging boldly into the service of his new Master, he has nipped the Christian life in the very bud. The youth who refuses to say he is a Christian, out of fear that he may fall, invites the very fall he would

fain escape. There is nothing for which Jesus so strongly pleads as faith. Many a well-meaning Christian has by a life of silence quenched the Christian light and crushed the Christian life at the very start. If one has not faith sufficient to open his mouth he will certainly lack faith sufficient to win the battle and earn the crown.

And then the Christian life is in its essence the unselfish life. One does not become a Christian primarily for himself, but for others. Jesus told his disciples at the very start that only as they lost themselves could they ever hope to save themselves. That principle is fundamental. If a Christian is in the world to bring his acquaintances and friends to Christ, of course he must use his tongue and that continually.

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

It is by our speech that we persuade men to do the things which we want them most of all to do. We are to influence them, to be sure, by our conduct, but our speech is a part of our conduct. We are to be judged by our deeds, and what we say is one of our deeds. When men say, "Live the Christian life, and you need then do nothing more," they forget that one does not live the Christian life unless he speaks. A life of deeds divorced from words is only a maimed and mangled life.

But even if the world did not need the open confession which Christians make, Christians themselves need the strength which this confession brings. It braces one to let men know that he has identified himself with a noble cause. The consciousness that men have their

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

eyes upon us is one of the ways God has of holding his servants true to their appointed task. Let a man commit himself in public to an arduous enterprise, and the gaze of the witnesses will help keep him from turning back. When men enlisted for the Civil War they always did it in public. The act of putting on the uniform and marching openly under the flag quenched the fears of the heart, and made timid men brave as lions. No man is strong enough to dispense with the strength which comes from public confession.

Finally, a Christian ought always so to act that others may safely follow his example. If it is right that one Christian should stand always dumb, then it is allowable that all Christians should stand dumb;

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

and with no one in the world but dumb Christians, how would the cause of Christ triumph? It is only in those communities in which the testimony of professing Christians is fullest toned that the principles of the Kingdom flourish. Every silent Christian subtracts from the sum total of the power needed to bring the world to Christ.

I have spoken strongly in regard to this matter because Jesus himself has used language both vigorous and emphatic. He knew what was in man, and knowing how in each generation human hearts would be beguiled and tempted, he spoke often of the wickedness of secrecy. He told his disciples that they were a city set upon a hill.

And when he sent his disciples out to preach he told them that no

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

matter what sufferings they might incur by proclaiming themselves his disciples, they were to go bravely forward, for if they would not confess him before men, he could not confess them before God. There was only a handful of Christians in the world, and every one of them was infinitely precious; nevertheless it was better that some of these be slaughtered in the act of confession than to live on without saying that the Lord had redeemed them. Jesus is merciful, and yet he says that it is of such tremendous importance that his witnesses should speak that he commands them to go on speaking even though they may be murdered for doing so. Certainly the merciful Jesus would not sacrifice his best friends after this fashion if the world did not

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

need the public witnessing which only the tongues of Christians can furnish. If the first Christians were brave enough to confess Christ at the risk of being killed, we ought to be heroic enough to witness for him at the risk of being laughed at.

In the Sermon on the Mount Christ says that people do not light a candle and put it under a bushel measure. Of course not, and the next time you hear some one trying to prove that a Christian can be a true follower of Christ without saying so, just think of that poor, discouraged, lonely candle flickering its life out under the cover of a bushel measure. If you are under a bushel be sure that Christ never put you there ; you crawled there yourself.

II

JOINING THE CHURCH

II

JOINING THE CHURCH

NOW that you are a Christian you are of course going to join the church. You have already been thinking about it, but I see certain difficulties have arisen. There is something in you which impels you toward the church and there are voices which persuade you to hold back. You hesitate and waver, and I do not wonder. These shrinkings and reluctances are natural, and on the whole they are commendable. They are a good thing to have for a season and they are a good thing to get rid of. Sometimes the shrinking comes from a natural timidity of disposition, sometimes it is the result of

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

mental confusion, and often it is due to the consciousness of imperfections in the heart and life.

In these days of hesitation you will hear many voices, and the argument of the voices will run somewhat as follows:

“Why join the church at once? Why be in such a hurry? You do not know your own mind yet. You are ignorant of the Bible and the creed. You cannot tell yet whether or not you will hold out. There will be abundant opportunities to join the church later on. Why not go slow?”

And while you are waiting another voice says: “You are not ready to join the church yet. You are not good enough. You are impatient and quick-tempered and selfish and the last person to think of going

JOINING THE CHURCH

into a Christian church. Is not the church a divine institution, and should not those who join it be almost perfect? What presumption in so poor a Christian as you are to think of writing your name on the church book!"

And while thus abashed a third voice assures you that you are not needed. "You are youthful and insignificant and can add but little to the resources of the church. You are limited in money, experience and influence, and with so many already in the church why should a creature so weak and useless want to crowd himself in?"

After hearing this you are in a mood to listen to a voice which reminds you that you are not at all certain of your orthodoxy. "Are you sure you believe everything in

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

the Bible just as the preacher believes it? Can you say that you accept every sentence in the creed? Do your opinions coincide with the opinions of all the people in the church? Is not a person a hypocrite who joins a church unless he believes everything which the church officials believe and teach?"

By this time you are ready to criticize the church. You are not sure that you wish to identify yourself with it. It is far from an ideal church. It is slow and wrinkled and half dead. There are a lot of hypocrites in it, and several people whom you do not like. How could you be happy associated with persons in whose goodness you do not believe and with whose crotchets you could not get along?

At this point a happy thought

JOINING THE CHURCH

strikes you. It is not necessary after all to join the church. A Christian can be just as good outside the church as inside. Many men outside are better than those inside. Joining the church is only a form and what does God care for forms? He looks only at the heart, and if a man has the spirit of Christ he belongs to him and is sure of heaven whether his name is on the church book or not. To sign a church covenant is hazardous. A man ought not to promise to do things when possibly he may not do them. It is enough then to belong to the Church Invisible.

If joining the church is a duty then it cannot wisely be postponed. Putting off known duties is one of the most effective of all ways of putting out the eyes of the soul. That

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

joining the church is a duty I will prove later on. As for your fear of not holding out banish it at once. Now that you are a Christian you must walk by faith and the sooner you begin the better. Christ has promised to keep you and it is a bad beginning to start off by doubting him.

As for your deficiency in goodness, I acknowledge it is great, but it is not great enough to bar you from the church. You should never think of the church as a museum of models or an artistic collection of labeled saints. The church is a school, and if you are willing to be taught by the great Teacher you have a rightful place in it. The church is a hospital, and if you really want to be healed by the great Physician you may enter it. The church is an

JOINING THE CHURCH

army, and if you want to do some fighting under the great Commander you may enlist. The church is a family, and if you want to be with your brothers and sisters you may come in. Joining the church is not saying, "See how good I am!" It is an expression of gratitude for the mercies of God and an indication of a purpose to show forth this gratitude in a life consecrated to his service.

If you feel you are not needed it is because you are morbid. Lift up your eyes and look upon the world. Do you think no more laborers are needed? Is there no chance for an additional soldier? Has the world so nearly conquered its sins that the Church need not add to its ranks? How do you know you are not needed? You have at least one talent—possibly two. A child of

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

God can use his talents to best purpose inside the Church of Jesus Christ.

I do not know how much you believe, but I know that it is not necessary for you to believe all that the pastor and church officials believe in order to join the church. There is only one belief which is essential, and that is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you believe that he is your Saviour, and if it is your desire to reproduce so far as you can his spirit and participate in his work then you believe enough to join the best church in the world.

I do not wonder you see imperfections in the church. I will assent to all the bad things you care to say against it. But after you have painted the church as black as you can, you have furnished one of the best of all

JOINING THE CHURCH

reasons why you ought to go into it. You say the church is feeble and slow and dead. Yes, but it is Christ's church. It has in it hypocrites and disagreeable people. Yes, but it is Christ's church. If he is the friend of sinners ought you not to follow his example?

As for its not being necessary to join the church, I must deny this. You cannot possibly be as good a Christian outside the church as inside, and no man outside the church is so good a man as he would be if he were a member of it. It is true that some men outside are better far than some men inside, but the comparison must be not between some men outside and other men inside but between what a man is outside and what that same man would be if he were inside. A man who does his

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

duty is always better than a man who shirks it. Joining the church is indeed a form, but it is the outer symbol of a spiritual experience. Outer forms are not without their value, for otherwise we should have no marriage ceremonies and no Presidential inaugurations. A world like this cannot get on without forms, and if Jesus submitted to the form of baptism, and if he gave to his disciples the bread and wine saying, "Do this in remembrance of me," we may be sure that forms have a place in our earthly education and that we cannot dispense with them without incurring great and lasting loss. When one really intends to do something he ought not to be ashamed to say so, and writing his name to a covenant by which he binds himself to live for God and

JOINING THE CHURCH

serve his fellow men will strengthen his purpose and hold him more surely to his duty. I have observed in my reading of Church History that the Visible Church was the Church which overturned the Roman Empire and lifted Europe out of its awful degradation, and I notice also that things go rather badly nowadays in every community in which there is not a church which men can see. I confess that the "Church Invisible" has an imposing sound, but the Visible Church is the only one which I know anything about.

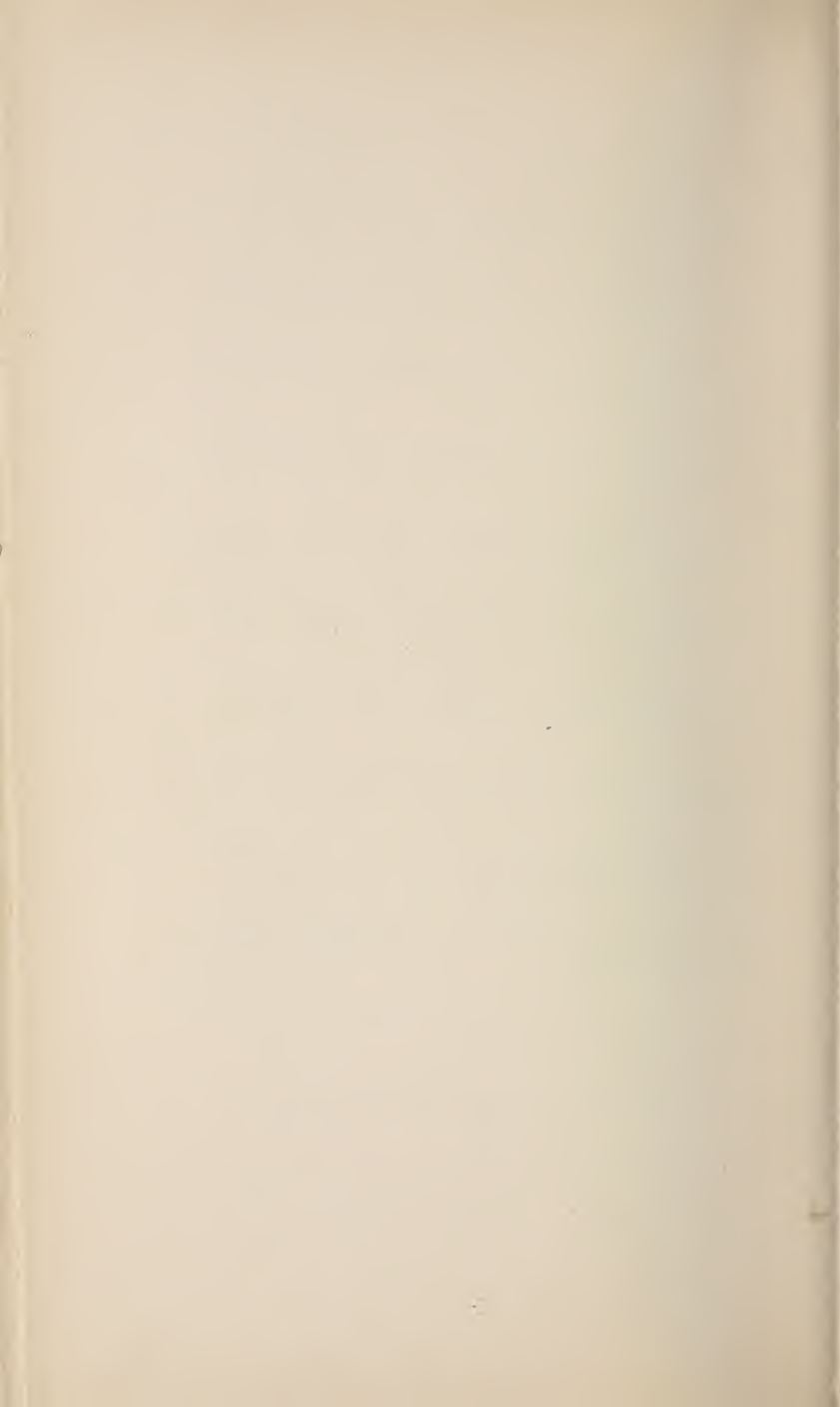
And now for the proof that joining the church is a duty. It is noteworthy that the New Testament knows nothing whatever of detached or isolated Christians. All the Christians known to the apostles

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

were members of the church. A man cannot be a Christian by himself. He is first of all a brother. He is a member of a family. He is a lover. Christ's new commandment commands him to love his fellow Christians. How can he love them if he holds aloof from them, or if he refuses to help them bear their burdens or do their work? Almost all the virtues and graces urged in the New Testament are social graces and virtues. Man is human only in society; a Christian is genuinely Christian only in the church. A Christian outside the church is abnormal, stunted, maimed. The church is the home of the Christian life, and it is only in fellowship with believers that the soul comes to know the dimensions of that love which passes knowledge.

JOINING THE CHURCH

The Christian is also a worker, a soldier, a savior. He must be a profitable servant, an effective soldier, a loving savior. Group strength is the only form of strength sufficient to solve the problems or overcome the evils of this world. An isolated man is impotent. A detached Christian is unprofitable. Soldiers who really mean to fight march with the army. Workers who want their work to count work together. If the Church is indeed the body of Christ, the organ through which he speaks, the instrument by which he works, then it is certainly the duty of every soul desiring to fulfil its destiny to become an integral part of that body.



III
HABITS

III

HABITS

WHEN one gets down deep into the little word "habit" he finds there the idea of having. Any action which we have and hold for a long time has a tendency to increase in power until it has and holds us. If one speaks the truth and persists in speaking it the custom thus established renders it difficult in time to speak lies. Whereas if one tells lies and keeps on doing this he will in time be held as in a vise, and find it well-nigh impossible to speak the truth. It would seem then that habits are customs which build themselves into our physical and mental nerves until they become at last a

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

real part of our very self. "It is second nature" men sometimes say, meaning by this that some one has done a certain thing so many times that it is done at last without thought, and seems to be only the expression of a man's deepest self. It would seem then that habits are really jailers, and hold those whom they take possession of tenaciously in their grip. Every soul, no matter what it thinks and says, is a slave, and its freedom lies in its opportunity to say who its master shall be. Paul before his conversion was a slave, and his cry was, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" After his conversion he was also a slave, and such he subscribes himself in many of his letters; but his cry now was a shout of triumph and of rejoicing in the

HABITS

Master whose brand he bore. In one case Paul's prison was a dungeon ; in the second case the prison was a palace. Bad habits cast us into the dungeon, good habits seat us at the banquet table of the King.

It is worth noting that a man's habits are his own. He does not inherit them from his ancestors nor are they thrust upon him by his surroundings. We are all exposed to accidents but no one can have an accidental habit. We may all have misfortunes, but never in the shape of a habit. A habit is a man's own creation, formed by multitudinous acts of the will. If you have a bad habit you have yourself to blame, and while you may pity a man whose life is cursed by a habit that is evil, along with your pity should go a certain measure of condemna-

tion. We are never quite true to the facts when we excuse men for wrong action because their habits are tyrannical and bad. The soul that allows his lower nature to develop into a capricious tyrant must bear the consequences of his persistent misuse of the will. Sit down, then, with your habits, look them quietly in the face. Say to them, "You are mine, I created you; you could not have been without my consent; I have worked for years in making you what you are; I take the responsibility of what you are and do." This at least is honest, and is the first step in the work of overcoming habits which are bad.

It is important that beginning Christians should see at the very start the tremendous power of habit, and should set themselves at once to

HABITS

the work of forming habits which are good. Youth is the time when habits must be formed, for it is then that the muscles of both the body and the mind are most plastic and yield themselves most readily to the molding touch of the controlling will. Men can add years to their life simply by establishing good habits at the beginning. A good habit is the greatest of all time-savers. What an interminable piece of work it would be to walk if we did not in the early years master this difficult accomplishment! So much time would it take were we obliged to think about each action in the intricate process that there would be little time for anything else. But by practising the art of walking in childhood when we have nothing else to do, it becomes at

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

last second nature, and through the remainder of our lives we walk without thinking, giving our strength and our time to the work which God has given us to do. So it is with every habit; it enables us to do easily and naturally what would otherwise be done laboriously and with wasteful expenditure of time, and he can do most in a day who, other things being equal, has established the largest number of best habits. When one does right things habitually he really begins to live.

There are a few habits to whose building a young Christian should set himself with apostolic devotion and resolution. One of these is the habit of attending public worship. This may seem to some of you rather a formal and unimportant

HABITS

matter, but the future of Christianity is involved in this habit. "Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together," wrote a wise man centuries ago, and he said it when men ran the risk of sacrificing their lives by being caught in a Christian service. The practise of going to church should be begun early and should be persevered in diligently without intermission and in spite of obstacles no matter how many or immense. God is a God of routine, and he rejoices in repetitions. There are certain things which he does every year, and in not one year of all the years has he failed to repeat the acts which he performed when years first began. Certain other things he does every month, and certain other things every day, and in the doing of them there has been

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

from the beginning neither break nor variation. He is without variability or shadow of turning. No life can be blessed which is not subjected to routine. No soul can grow strong which despises the irksomeness of repetition. There are certain things which we must do every day. If we do not do them we are less than men. Other things must be done every week and if these are omitted the soul suffers loss. A follower of Jesus ought to form the habit of worshiping God with his fellow Christians in the house of prayer on every Lord's Day. This was Jesus' custom and his disciples ought to follow his example. Nothing but duty should ever break the established routine and order. There is a vast difference between going to church occasion-

HABITS

ally and going to church habitually. The habitual churchgoer comes to have not only a different feeling but also a different character. One needs this habit of church attendance to beat back the flood of opposing forces which will otherwise come rushing in.

Our greatest fight in this world is with the weather, and weather is of two sorts, external and internal. Internal weather usually goes by the name of mood or feeling. Alas for the Christian who allows himself to get "under the weather!" He is a frail and puny creature, who will never wear a crown. Any youth who allows himself when in good health to be kept from church by a shower has a defect in his character which needs immediate attention. No shower has ever been

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

known to keep a Christian from a wedding party or a banquet or an entertainment for which the ticket was already bought, and therefore absence from church on account of the weather is always a piece of hypocrisy of which honest people should be heartily ashamed. It is the internal weather by which we are too often controlled, and one has made but scant progress in the high art of living who has not learned to master his moods. What difference ought it to make to a Christian whether on a particular Sunday he feels like going to church or not? Feelings are only winds, and expert sailors are not controlled by the winds, nor are masterful Christians the victims of their feelings. Inclination is only the lurch of the soul caused by the stir of blind

HABITS

forces which must be controlled by the power of the will. Life never is worth living so long as we are the sport of our moods. Fix it once for all that the place of the Christian on the Lord's Day is in the house of prayer and that nothing but duty shall ever keep you out of your place, and you have taken a long step toward ultimate and glorious victory.

And what I have said about the habit of attending public worship can be said with equal emphasis about the habit of praying, the habit of Bible study, the habit of giving, the habit of working, and the habit of cooperating. Fight your native inclinations and resist your natural tendencies and curb your carnal impulses, compelling yourself by repetition to do those things which

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

you know are pleasing to God until at last you can say with Paul: "It is not I but Christ who dwelleth in me who is winning the victory!"

IV

ATTENDING MEETINGS



IV

ATTENDING MEETINGS

THE Christian religion re-enforces the native instincts and aptitudes of our nature. It makes human beings more social; it brings them closer together. It increases the cravings for fellowship and widens the joys of it. Christians when normal want to come together; the impulse to do so is spontaneous and irresistible. In the darkest days of persecution the Lord's disciples have met together by night if not by day, and in caves and desert places if not in churches or homes. The fagots of bigots and the swords of kings have never been able to keep Chris-

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

tians apart. *They know instinctively that the life of the heart depends upon fellowship and that the very existence of Christianity hangs upon meetings.* It is in meetings that the sacred fire is kept burning in which the iniquity of the world is to be consumed. There is immeasurable meaning in Christ's words: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He is of course present with the solitary worshiper in his closet, but with no such fulness of joy or power as when Christians are together. There are promises to those who pray alone, but the great promises are to those who pray together.

It is well to state these facts and to ponder them, for there is much bewildered thought concerning the

ATTENDING MEETINGS

value and uses of meetings. Many sarcastic things are said about the people who are always going to meeting, and so many things are declared to be more important than attending meetings that it would be strange if an impression did not root itself in many hearts that attending meetings is an elective and oftentimes a nuisance. The non-churchgoer becomes hilarious at the expense of the superstitious mortals who think that they can get to heaven by attending meetings, and the young churchgoer, bewildered by this scoffing mirth, begins to wonder if, after all, attending meetings is so important as certain old-fashioned people imagine. A surprisingly plausible argument can be made by an adroit critic against the value of church meetings. When

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

it is asserted with an air of omniscience that the great King of heaven does not need either the praise or prayer of insignificant creatures like us, and that the time spent in attending meetings if spent in doing good would bring the millennium appreciably nearer, and when suggestive contrasts are made between the hypocrites who sing hymns and the well-nigh perfect people who never sing hymns at all, and when to clinch the argument we are introduced once more to the well-known foolish woman who drove her husband to drink, and her children into the streets because instead of making a home she was always at meeting,—such an argument is sometimes sufficient to upset a big boy who is in the last year in the high school or to shake the conviction of a young

ATTENDING MEETINGS

woman who has already entered college.

But many statements, like certain men, are not so wise as they look. An argument may strut like a drum-major, but be after all little more than gilt buttons and a plume. It is not to be denied that meetings like all other good things are capable of abuse, but it is unwise to condemn a thing because somebody has misused it. People who deal in wholesale condemnations do not use their minds as much as they ought. Nothing is so important for a beginning Christian as the constant use of his brain. The power of discrimination is one of the most useful of all gifts, and it is worth noting that the spirit of wisdom is both coveted and prayed for by prophets and apostles.

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

Let us concede then that attending meetings is only one form of Christian service, and that there may be too many meetings, and that the meetings may be attended in a way which brings no blessings, and that even foolish and bad people have been known to like to go to church. What then? All such facts and a hundred others like them leave untouched the impregnable truth that in the economy of God for the education of souls, meetings are a fixed and invaluable feature, and that when rightly used they are an unfailing means of grace to the soul which wishes to apprehend that for which it has been apprehended by Christ.

The use of a religious meeting is twofold. First of all it is testimony. It is a form of confession; it bears witness before the world to Christ's

ATTENDING MEETINGS

goodness and power. It is evidence that he is working; it is proof that human hearts have received his grace. Every meeting is a contribution of the Lord's followers to the Lord's cause. It is by this united testimony that impressions are made upon the community. Public attention is arrested and popular interest is awakened. Christianity is a missionary religion; it is always seeking the sheep that is lost. Its eyes are ever toward the prodigal. A meeting is the ringing of the bell to attract the prodigal's attention. It is a trumpet note calling men everywhere to prepare for battle. It is Christ's appointed way of saying to the crowd, "Come unto me!" This is the first purpose of a religious meeting, and the second is to build up the life of the followers of

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

Jesus that they may be more effective in his service.

A meeting, then, is first of all a form of work. This should never be overlooked. Its fundamental purpose is to help others. It is a sacrifice which Christians offer for the salvation of the world. When this fact is forgotten meetings degenerate into a formal or pernicious thing. If the meeting is a form of luxury, a scheme for entertaining professing Christians, a contrivance for ministering to the culture of those who claim to be servants of the Son of God, then it has lost the Christian secret and all sorts of sad things are sure to follow. First of all will come the temptation for Christians to measure all meetings by the amount of personal satisfaction received. A Christian will go to

ATTENDING MEETINGS

church saying, "I wonder what I will get," and he will often come away saying, "I did not get much." If on Sunday morning he is not conscious of any special need he will not go to church at all. If he goes to the morning service he will not go in the evening, for, he says, "I can get all I need in a single service." He measures everything by the standard of his own felt need,—and in doing this he ceases to be a Christian altogether. A Christian is one who lives for others. He places the emphasis on giving and not on getting. He acts upon the principle that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Church attendance is to him an opportunity to serve. He goes to church primarily to communicate, and in the act of giving he knows will come an ex-

ceeding great reward. By the losing of himself he saves his soul, by dying to himself he rises into a more abundant life. This is the secret of a genuinely Christian meeting. One who attends in a Christian spirit pours into the service from start to finish a generous contribution. It becomes his service because he pours into it his own energy and life. Of course he gets, but he gets because he gives. A service becomes full-toned, penetrating, and uplifting when the Spirit of the Lord is in it.

There are five forms of meetings common in all our churches, and the principle above unfolded is applicable to all. There is first of all the meeting for worship, with its exposition of Christian truth; there is a meeting for Bible study by means of question and answer; there

ATTENDING MEETINGS

is a meeting for praise and prayer and testimony concerning the trials and triumphs of the Christian life; there is a meeting for conference in regard to Christ's work at home and abroad; and there is a meeting for social intercourse in which the bounds of acquaintanceship are extended and the bonds of fellowship drawn closer and strengthened. To all these meetings the follower of Christ should come praying for grace that he may make a contribution which God can use for the building up of the Church and the saving of the world.

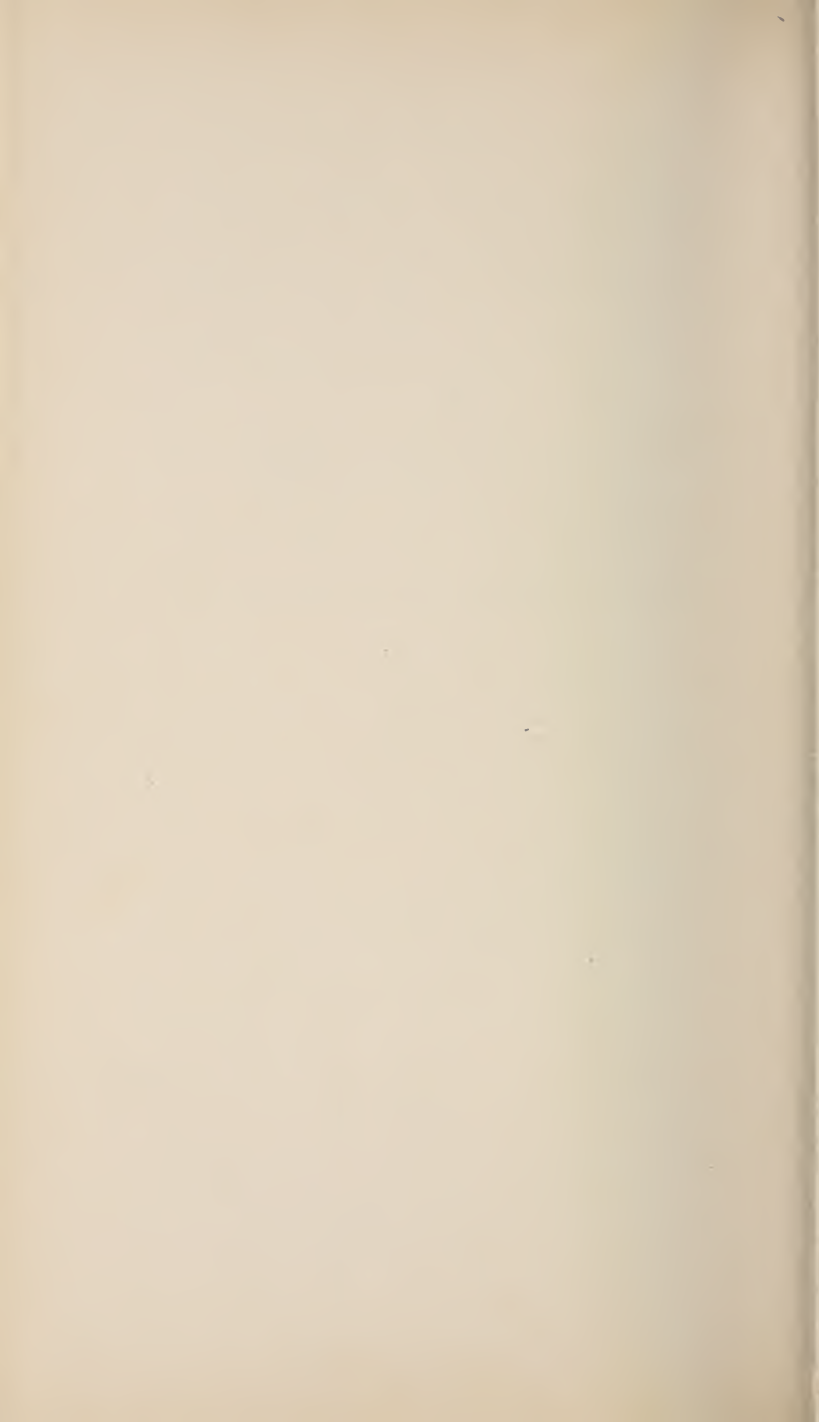
It is often a practical and puzzling question how many meetings should be attended on the Lord's Day, and how many in the course of a week. No rule can be given. It is possible to attend too few and it is possi-

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

ble to attend too many. One must take into account the needs of the community, the condition of the church, the state of one's health, the character of one's work, the number of one's home and school and social responsibilities and duties, and then do the thing which promises on the whole best to advance the interests of the kingdom of God.

V

WORK AS A DEVELOPER



V

WORK AS A DEVELOPER

MEN are unfolded and built up by work. This is not doubted outside the realm of religion. The world can scarcely contain the books written in illustration of the value of labor. The blacksmith's arm and the farmer's frame have been used as arguments and spurs to effort, and the muscles of leg and back are not different at this point from the muscles of the mind. It is one of the A. B. C.'s in the world of intellect that only the man who works grows. That development is conditioned on the exercise of one's powers is an axiom which no one takes the trouble even to question.

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

The amazing revelation of all great biographies is the stupendous amount of work done by those whom the world cares to remember. That man must eat his bread in the sweat of his brow is true in the realm of the body and in the kingdom of the intellect.

It is a pity that the spiritual life should ever have been thought of as lying under a different law. Religion has often started in magic and it is difficult for the mind to break away from the idea that in the spiritual kingdom there is a sleight-of-hand way of doing things which only the divine Necromancer can hope to understand. If one could only be as sensible in his religion as he is in his business or play, two-thirds of all the difficulties of the Christian life would vanish.

WORK AS A DEVELOPER

Ruskin used to say, "When I hear a young man spoken of as giving promise of high genius, the first question I ask about him is always — Does he work?" And when I hear of a young man who has made a confession of Christ, the first question I want to ask is — Does he intend to work? Genius is worth little without labor, and neither is even the gift of the Holy Spirit in conversion. Without work divine gifts are frittered away and divine opportunities are forfeited.

Being a Christian is working, but all working is not Christian; and therefore we must complete the sentence by saying, *Being a Christian is working for God*, which means of course working for mankind; and this, being interpreted, means striving to help as many human beings

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

as one is able to reach. Happy is the Christian who has grasped the idea that the Christian life is work ! It was thus that Jesus conceived it. As a boy he felt that he must be about his Father's business. As a man he declared that it was his meat to do the will of him who sent him, and to finish his work. At the close of his life he could say in speaking to God: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Life to Jesus was a piece of work to be performed, and he asked his disciples to follow him. The apostles were all indefatigable workers, and it was by their labor that they turned the world upside down. The statement of the good news in the New Testament is followed by a record of Acts, and unless a beginning Christian follows up his confes-

WORK AS A DEVELOPER

sion of Christ with a volume of deeds he will early begin to question whether or not he is a Christian at all.

It is helpful to conceive of every duty of the Christian life under the form of work. Even prayer is in a sense a piece of work, and so is every part of public worship. If Christians felt each Sunday that they had a piece of important work to do they would be more likely to carry into the church service something of the enthusiasm and energy which they display in secular affairs. The only reason that religious worship is ever irksome and unrewarding is because so many dawdle through it and bring to it the listlessness of a vacant mind. Loafers cannot expect the divine blessing either in the church or out of it. Fatalism has always

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

haunted the mind of religious people, and to lie passive in the hands of the Eternal has been ever a favorite way of going to heaven. Too many churchgoers attend church to be played upon by music, or to have ideas pumped into them by the preacher, but public worship, like blacksmithing and farming, is *work*, and only those who throw themselves into it by an expenditure of intellectual and moral force can hope to receive a reward. We are colaborers with God, and it is only as we work with him that it is possible for him to work with us. In every department of our life we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, never allowing ourselves to slacken our efforts through discouragement, for through the forthputting of our energy God

WORK AS A DEVELOPER

finds it possible to work out his own good pleasure.

Many a Christian fails in the Christian life for no other cause than laziness. Many a church dwindles and dies because it is made up too largely of sluggards. Christians ought to be the busiest and most energetic people in the world. They ought to labor in season and out of season. They ought to spend and be spent. They ought to abound more and more in every good word and work. If they refuse to labor they check the processes of spiritual development and instead of becoming adults in the faith they remain babes unable to digest even milk. Arrested development is a common fact in the vegetable and animal worlds; in the moral world it is tragedy. What so saddens the

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

heart of a lover of Christ and of men is the large number of professing Christians whose native powers are atrophied and whose natural abilities are undeveloped, all because they are unwilling to perform any genuine labor. There is divine wisdom in the multiplied warnings of the Scripture against inactivity and sloth, and God never grows weary in urging us, through prophets and apostles, to do with our might what our hands find to do. Whether a person works or not is for each person to decide for himself. In the realm of the spirit no one's labor can dispense with the labor of another. College professors cannot make a scholar. They can only assist young men who are willing to work to make themselves scholars. Physicians cannot manufacture a drop of blood.

WORK AS A DEVELOPER

They can assist those who are willing to work for the upbuilding of their body. Preachers cannot create a virtue. They can aid those who are industrious in the work of developing their character.

Not a few Christians have a quarrel with Jesus because his promises have never been fulfilled. The New Testament speaks often of peace and joy and power, and to all of these many a disappointed heart is still a stranger. But before one condemns the Lord of life for failing to make good his word let him read the book of The Acts which he has written, and ascertain how faithfully he has done the things appointed him to do, for it is only the good and faithful servant who is permitted to enter into the joy of his Lord. Work is a means of grace, a school

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

of character. By work we build up the virtues and coax the graces into bloom. By work we get out of the prison of fear, and escape from the dungeon of hate. By work the sacred fire is kindled, and by work the heart tastes of the rapture which the redeemed know. Work is the one stimulus which lasts. Fill the week with work for Christ and you will be hungry for the Bread of life when Sunday comes. If a man will not work neither shall he become hungry for the bread which comes down from heaven. If you are working now, work harder. If you are doing much, do more. Only busy men were called by Jesus, and no others are called now. If we do our work well we are rewarded by being allowed to work still harder.

WORK AS A DEVELOPER

This is a mystery until one understands that work is God's agency for developing immortal souls, and that it is only by the unfolding of the powers that are within us that we are able to enter into the peace and joy of the Eternal, and to sit down with Jesus in his throne.

VI

WORKING FOR THE CONVERSION
OF ONE'S COMPANIONS

VI

WORKING FOR THE CONVERSION OF ONE'S COMPANIONS

IT is a mistake to suppose that one must reach a certain age or get into a particular place before he can become an effective Christian worker. The most difficult and important work is within our reach from the start. It is dangerous to think that any period of life is a period of preparation in any such sense as to release one from the obligations of Christian living. Boys and girls in school and young people in college are not simply preparing for life, they are living now or ought to be; and if their

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

life at the present moment is not full-toned and Christ-full they are not fulfilling their destiny as human beings, nor are they fitting themselves for the maturer life which is yet to be. There is a sense, of course, in which youth is preparatory, but our entire earthly life is just that also; still life at every point ought to be full-orbed, and work which one's hands and tongue and heart find to do ought never to be postponed under the impression that there are certain periods in which we may be excused from complete living on the ground that we are getting ready to live later on.

Now no one, no matter what his age, is living as a Christian ought to live who is not striving for the conversion of those who are nearest him. It is of the essence of the

WORKING FOR CONVERSION

Christian life to work to make others Christians. The New Testament is careful to tell us how, as soon as one man found Jesus, the impulse seized him to go in search of a friend or brother. This was natural and inevitable in the apostolic age, and it is normal and to be expected in all ages, whenever and wherever the instinctive movements of the quickened heart are allowed to express themselves in outer conduct. To hold back or crush out the native impulses of the awakened heart is one of the ways of quenching the spirit and maiming character and dwarfing life. Even though the impulse may not be strong at first, it should not be despised. Christ is so careful of spiritual fire that even smoking wicks he will not quench, and those who follow

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

his example will guard with care every hint of flame discoverable within them. There are forces within and without to hold one back from doing a genuinely noble and useful deed, and a beginning Christian, especially if he be young and self-distrustful, must be prepared to overcome battalions of scruples and hesitations and voices of worldly wisdom if he is to begin at once to work for the enlargement of the circle of Christ's disciples. It is difficult. Of course it is! One may make mistakes. To be sure he may! Others will sneer and say cutting things. Indeed they will! Many a youth has been caught and held fast by his doubts and shrinkings until the initial impulse to work for others has died within him, and he has settled down in the

WORKING FOR CONVERSION

smug conclusion that only special persons with particular gifts have a right to venture upon a work so hazardous and exacting.

It is a fact not to be forgotten that human beings are influenced easily and profoundly by those who are of equal age. Companionship is possible between those whose ages are far apart, but all such companionship is exceptional, and it is the order of the world that one shall find his closest comrades and dearest friends among those whose years are approximately equal. Parents, to be sure, influence their children, teachers their pupils, aged saints young men and maidens, but the influence of a boy or girl over those associated with him or her in work and play is one of the mightiest of the controlling forces of this

world. Parents send their boys to school, says Emerson, but it is the boys he meets in the street who educate him.

The power which young people exert upon the characters and lives of their companions is immeasurable, and all the more penetrating and powerful because so often unpremeditated and unconscious. Disparity in age, say what we will, constitutes a barrier which is not easily surmounted. Children often feel that their parents do not understand them — they were born so long ago. Pupils feel that the teacher is on a throne in a separate world. Every preacher in the sixties knows that with all his accumulated wisdom and experience there are things which he cannot now do so well as when he was in the upper

WORKING FOR CONVERSION

twenties. Avenues were opened then which have long since been closed, and the distance between his heart and the hearts of school children has been lengthened not by his own fault or volition but by the inexorable will and way of God. Age has yet its honors and its toils, but youth also has privileges and prerogatives, crowns and opportunities to which the hoary head even though found in the way of righteousness cannot lay claim. The universal inclination of young people to flock together, of middle-aged people to associate with one another, of aged people to seek companionship with those whose years are equal to their own, is one of the things ordained of God to be made use of by those who belong to Christ and desire to extend his

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

kingdom. A living boy of sixteen can get nearer to another living boy of sixteen than can one who is as wise as the wisest saint whose dust lies in Westminster Abbey. A wide-awake girl can get closer to another girl of her own age than can any mother in Israel however sweet and holy.

What an opportunity, then, for every young Christian who wishes to do original and effective work for Christ! He can approach souls which are inaccessible to the wisest of the sages and the holiest of the saints. The limited measure of his experience fits him to be a minister to those whose experience has similar limitations, and his very ignorance helps him to pass through doors which remain locked to those who carry huge bunches of the keys of knowledge.

WORKING FOR CONVERSION

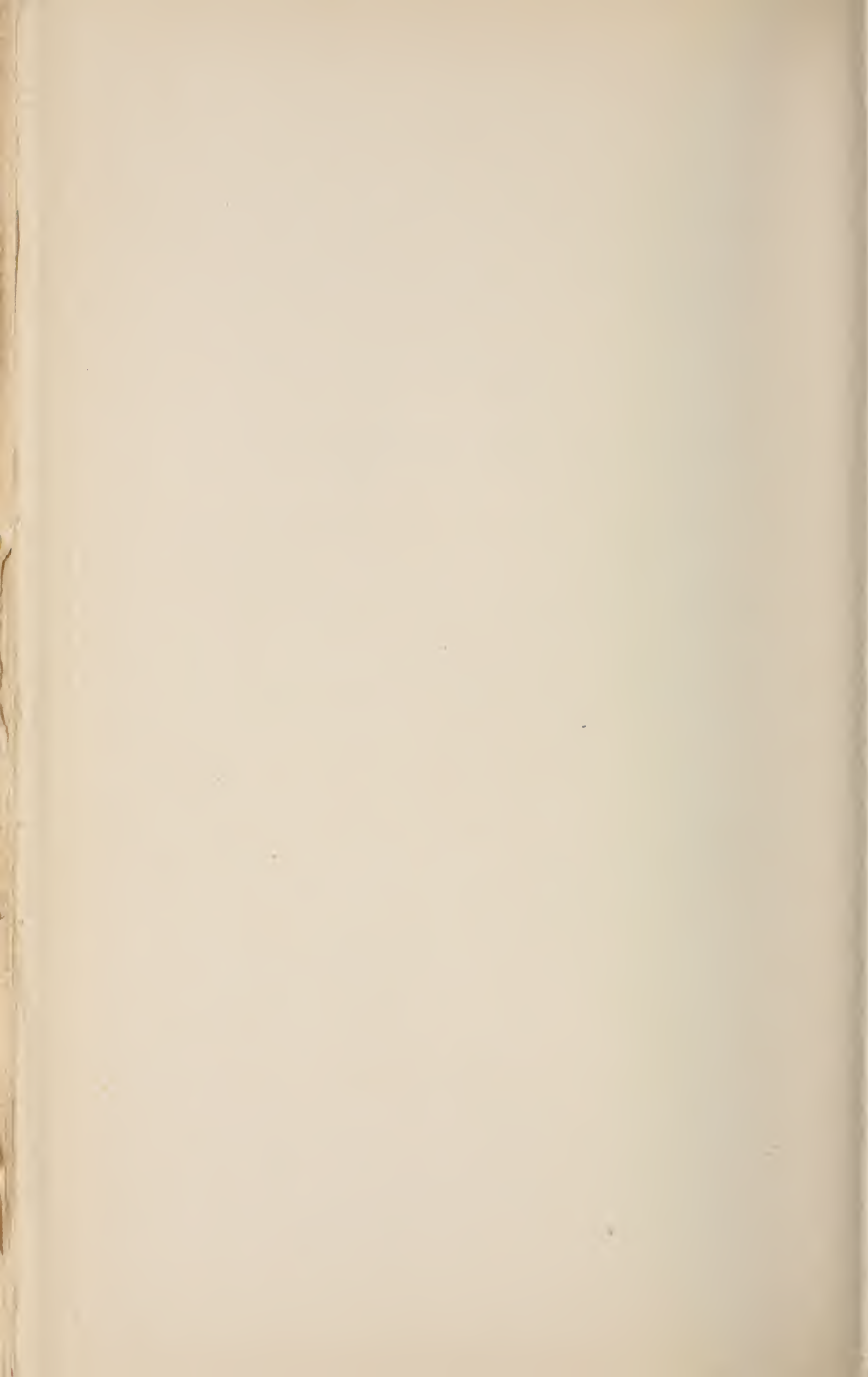
It is a thought to make the heart sing that no matter how inexperienced and obscure one is, there is some one in the world whom it is easier for him to reach with the everlasting gospel than it is for anybody else. It is a solemnizing thought that there are things which a boy can do which a man cannot do so easily or so well, and that certain work if left undone under twenty can never be done in this world at all. The fact to be remembered is that young Christians have their work just as older Christians have theirs, and that the work of boys and girls, young men and maidens, is just as important in its place for the upbuilding of this world as is the work of adults to which the Lord God has called them. Age can no more do the

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

work of youth than youth can do what age is called to do. Every Christian, no matter what his years, should count himself a missionary, and his special parish is the circle of his acquaintances and friends. If his lamp shines so feebly that those who are nearest to him are not influenced by it, it is because the light in him has become darkness or because in a fit of morbid humility he has, contrary to the Lord's command, gotten under the bushel.

VII

HELPING THE PASTOR



VII

HELPING THE PASTOR

IN what way can young Christians in our days render effective assistance to the church?

One way is by strengthening the hands of church officials. It is a mistake to look upon church officials as though they were a class apart. They are all poor mortals of like passions with the youngest of you, only brethren to whom have been assigned special tasks for the good of all.

Sometimes a chasm seems to yawn between the office-bearers and all the young people of a church, and such a chasm works boundless mischief. Young people ought to know all the

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

officers of the church, and never allow themselves to feel that these dignified personages are made of superior stuff or have any better right to a place in the church than the boys and girls who have just taken their first communion. If a church official should perchance be stiff or distant or somewhat grim, why not throw upon him loving glances of eyes that are friendly, and warm his cold heart by coming closer to him? It is a pity that young people should ever harbor ill feelings against their elders, even though their elders may not be entirely lovable or altogether wise. Young people help the church amazingly by cultivating a sunny temper and by showing themselves sympathetic, kind, and sweet. In the words of Paul, "We beseech you to know them that labor among

HELPING THE PASTOR

you, and are over you in the Lord.”

One of the most important and hardest worked officials of a church is the Sunday-school superintendent. His work is taxing and he has discouragements not a few. He needs the inspiration which young people have to give. The Sunday-school is the church in the act of studying the Scriptures by question and answer. In helping the school one is helping the church; in building up the school one builds up the church. Whatever help, therefore, is given to the superintendent is a contribution made to the cause of Christ. In the school there are many who are not professing Christians. Their presence creates an opportunity for you who are members of the church. By your punctuality and studious-

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

ness and earnestness of purpose you can give tone and character to the school and make it easier for the school to accomplish the work given it to do.

The minister always counts on his young people. Many persons in middle and later life cannot wisely attend the evening service; young people with few exceptions can. The mid-week meeting is for many business men and for many women, also, an impossibility. But young people as a rule can give the church an evening every week if they will. One's presence helps. A human soul exerts more influence than we dream. Each one contributes to the heat of the meeting. Heat is what is needed most. Vacant chairs or pews chill the mind and benumb the heart. When the room is full the

HELPING THE PASTOR

word of the Lord runs and is glorified. Young people can, therefore, create an atmosphere in which the words of the preacher take fire and burn. They can increase the receptiveness of those who listen and augment the enthusiasm of the one who speaks. A speaker sends back in flood what he receives in spray. It is out of fresh and forward-looking hearts that the spray comes with which the preacher drenches his congregation. It ought never to be forgotten that the sermon is preached not simply by the man in the pulpit but by every Christian witness in the room. It was not simply Peter's words on the Day of Pentecost which broke the hearts of three thousand men, but the light on the faces and the fire in the hearts of the one hundred and twenty witnesses who stood

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

beside him bearing testimony to the truth of what he said. Young people can help the preacher preach!

In pastoral service also there are wide doors and effectual. According to the New Testament every Christian is in the truest sense a pastor, a shepherd of souls. The spirit has been poured upon all, and therefore all must cooperate in the great enterprise of the world's redemption. To single out one man or one little group of men, and say, "To you and you alone belongs the work of pastoral service," is going contrary to the entire New Testament. It is because this pastoral work has been left so largely to the minister that the church limps and hobbles on her way. The pastoral work of the church cannot be done by any one minister, or any staff of

HELPING THE PASTOR

salaried workers; it is done rightly only when it is done by the entire company of Christian disciples. From this work young people ought not to hold themselves aloof. They must supplement the work of the pastor and the deacons and the other adult members by energetic and persistent work of their own.

How can the pastor look after all the young men in his congregation? Let each male church-member look after one. How can the pastor oversee and guide all the young women in his parish? They must be shepherded by the young women who are Christians, befriended and led upward one by one. How can the minister speak to all the unconverted in the town? They must be invited one by one by those who have given themselves to Jesus. Is there a sick

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

woman to be read to? God has appointed some young woman in the church to read. Is there a sick man to be sung to? God has ordained some one in the church to sing. Are there bundles of good things to be carried to the poor? Certainly the young people are the ones to carry them. Are there hospitals to be visited? What light will so cause the wards to glow as the radiance which streams from the eyes of young men and maidens who, like their Master, know the joy of doing good!

I started with a title which I do not like. I wrote it because it is a phrase in common use. But instead of saying, "Helping the Pastor" it is better to say, "Helping the Master" — "Helping the Church." It is possible for one actuated by friendly feelings to help the pastor, and

HELPING THE PASTOR

after all lose the spirit and the joy of genuinely Christian service. If you desire simply to help the pastor you may get tired sometime of helping him, or you may have a pastor some day with whom it may not be easy or pleasant to work. But if your aim is to cooperate with Jesus in the building of a church which shall be the shrine of his Spirit and the home of his disciples, you will never grow weary, and at the end of the day you will still be found working — for his yoke is easy and his burden is light.



VIII

PREPARING TO TEACH IN THE
SUNDAY-SCHOOL

VIII

PREPARING TO TEACH IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL

THE New Testament holds us fast to the fact that the supreme work of a Christian is building up the Church of Christ. The Church is His body. Every Christian is an organ of that body, with a specific work to do. Because every Christian is called to service, every Christian is gifted. All gifts are necessary, honorable, God-given. No one of them is to be despised. All must be used in the building of the Church.

But gifts are of different ranks. Some are greater than others, and more to be desired. Gifts are graded

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

according to their usefulness. A serviceable gift takes precedence over a gift which is simply brilliant or showy. Paul urges us to desire earnestly the greater gifts. We are to be ambitious. We are to make the most of ourselves and to fill the largest place possible in the Church of God.

Of all the gifts which men can use in the building of the Church none can be counted greater than the gift of teaching. There are gifts more showy, but none more useful. The religion of Jesus is the truth, and truth must be taught. The Scriptures contain the oracles of God, but they are not understood unless explained. The New Testament holds the principles round which the world's life must organize itself, but these principles do not woo and win the heart until they are unfolded and

PREPARING TO TEACH

made glorious by some one who understands them. The work of teaching does not belong to any one man; it is a work committed to the saints. There must be in every parish many teachers, else many hearts and minds must remain uninstructed. No minister can do all the teaching needed by his people. There are little boys and girls, big boys and girls, youths and maidens, and older folks of many needs and stations who must be gathered into groups around the Bible, and fed, some with milk, and some with meat, according to their ages, capacities and tempers. Pulpit teaching has a high and enduring place in the Church of God, but it can never take the place of Bible teaching by the method of question and answer. The church must be a school, and its highest function is that of teaching.

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

Here then is a field for which young Christians ought to be preparing. The problem of religious education is the problem of our century. The rising generation is not receiving either in the home or in the public school the moral instruction which will keep a nation strong, and nowhere else can the Church render such far-reaching service as in the Sunday-school. Many other forms of work are honorable and useful, but in the urgency of the need of it, and in the importance of the results of it, Bible teaching outranks them all. God to-day is calling, "Who will go into the Sunday-school and teach?" Blessed is the church in which many a young Christian is saying, "Here am I, send me!"

After the consecration to the work

PREPARING TO TEACH

several years must be devoted to careful preparation. This preparation cannot be begun too soon. Many grown-up Christians refuse to teach because they are not equipped. They are not fitted because they did not, years ago, enter upon a course of preparation. Teachers do not spring up by chance. No one becomes a teacher in his sleep. The teaching gift, like all other gifts, must be cultivated through a term of years, and boys and girls of fifteen and even younger ought to be encouraged to look forward to the time when they shall be teachers in the school.

The starting-point is a desire to be the most useful Christian possible. Everything depends upon the desire. Let no one be discouraged by his meager outfit, or because he does

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

not discern in himself those gifts which seem essential to the work of teaching. It is not what one has at the beginning, but what one wants to have at the end which counts for most in the upbuilding of a life. We are to covet the greater gifts. God's gifts are not tossed to us out of heaven; they are built up in us by our own strivings assisted by the grace divine. The cardinal question is, "Do you *want* to teach? Would you prefer above all things else the privilege of Bible teaching?" If this is your desire you are on the way to become a successful teacher. You can never be a teacher unless you want to be one, and if you long to be one with heart and soul and strength, God is not likely to deny your high ambition.

Having decided that, God willing,

PREPARING TO TEACH

you will be a teacher, then pursue a course of life which will develop in you those gifts and graces which are indispensable in a teacher's work. No other form of Christian service demands so large a group of graces, or subjects the character to so severe a strain as the work of Bible teaching. What patience is needed, and what fidelity, punctuality, industry, alertness, courage, sympathy, persistency, sacrifice and faith in God! One must be willing to be a servant, to give up his time and strength, to lose himself, in order to receive a teacher's reward. But what a reward it is! He enters into the passion and joy of his Lord!

Through the years of preparation pray without ceasing for the docile heart and the open mind, and for the unfolding of all those faculties which

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

teachers need. Along with the praying must go incessant study of the Scriptures, pen and note-book carefully garnering harvests gleaned from many fields. New life comes into Bible study the moment one studies in order that he may teach. The holy purpose gives new lenses to the eyes and adds fresh powers of apprehension to the intellect. The study of prophets and apostles is no longer dull, haphazard, unprofitable, but becomes thrilling, purposeful and satisfying, because the student is now a steward of the Most High God entrusted with treasures which he is to give to others.

A Christian bent on teaching is alert to every opportunity to perfect himself in his high and holy art. He listens with eager attention to the sermons; he attends lectures and

PREPARING TO TEACH

conventions; he sits at the feet of Bible experts. He hungers evermore for knowledge, for in the work of teaching the most abundant knowledge is still insufficient and the highest skill still falls short. The note-books accumulate, and the library grows apace. A teacher must have his tools. Books are the instruments with which he works. Young Christians who have heard the call to teach will buy each year a volume on the Scriptures, and perhaps a volume on the art of teaching, so that when the time comes for entering into office they shall be workmen of whom the Church need not be ashamed. There should be in every parish a teacher-training class in which candidates for the teaching office shall be perfecting themselves for their chosen work. From this

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

class substitutes can be drawn to fill vacancies which are temporary, and successors for those who have died or moved away. Why should not every well-equipped church have as many young men and women fitting themselves for teaching as Jesus had apostles in his Palestinian school?

IX

YOUNG PEOPLE AND MISSIONS

IX

YOUNG PEOPLE AND MISSIONS

THEY belong together. When Christians say they do not believe in missions they do not know what Christianity is, or else they do not know what the word missions means. Every Christian is by his calling a missionary — one sent. Christ never calls men except to send them. His first word was always “*Come*,” his second word was always “*Go*.” To the men whom he gathered around him he said, “Behold, I send you forth,” and in the upper chamber on the night on which he was betrayed he said, “As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” Mark understood

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

his life when he wrote, "He appointed twelve that he might send them forth." These men are in the New Testament called apostles, which is only a Greek name for missionary. Please read the Gospels through some time, substituting for the Greek word apostle its Latin synonym, missionary, and see what a difference it makes. It would help every Christian if he began on the day of his conversion to consider himself a missionary. It would save him from a deal of selfishness and redouble his enthusiasm and usefulness.

As it now is, the word "missionary" has a far-off sound. It is a name applied to a handful of good people who go to countries beyond the sea, or it is kept for another little band of workers who go to distant parts of their own land.

YOUNG PEOPLE; MISSIONS

The word is made narrow and technical, and the people who wear it are considered exceptional and extraordinary. Being made a peculiar class the missionaries become separated from the mass of Christ's followers, and dividing walls rise which check the flow of sympathy and affection. As they are supposed to do a work different in kind from that done by other Christians, and as they are credited with a consecration to which the majority of church-members can lay no claim, there is danger of the so-called missionaries and ordinary Christians drifting completely apart, just as in the Middle Ages the monks, shut up in monasteries, became inhabitants of another world. But if all Christians would form the habit of thinking themselves missionaries, and

could see that they, if they are doing their duty, are doing under somewhat different conditions the very same work which is done in frontier places and foreign cities, there would be an interlacing of hearts, and a sense of comradeship which would fill the Church with fresh enthusiasm and give a new impetus to all its activities.

Let it be settled then once for all that every Christian is by virtue of his conversion a missionary. He is a home missionary, and also a foreign missionary, a brother or sister of all Christian workers everywhere. He may never go out of his native town, but for him the field is the world. Through the whole world his affections will travel, and over all nations he will spread his prayers. A Christian who in these days takes

YOUNG PEOPLE; MISSIONS

no interest in the slums of great cities or in the millions of human beings in non-Christian nations is a pitiable Christian indeed. How can he hope to understand a God who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, or sympathize with the Christ who died for all? Narrowness is repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, and the soul who is born again lives in a world of wide horizons.

Young people, because full of life and daring, are the very Christians best able to enter into the secret of the great word, *missionary*. Men crippled with disease and worn out by labor may be excused for being slow to rejoice in the idea of being sent. Youth loves to read tales of exploration and stories of adventure. What healthy boy has not been

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

kindled by the biography of a hero? And what girl has not been kept awake by the magic of a page of romance? There is no reason why young people should not love the books which tell of Christian work in strategic fields. The foreign missionaries are the explorers and adventurers of our modern world. They are the heroes and heroines most akin in their deeds of daring to those fascinating characters of fiction whose spell we have all felt. If one wants romance — exciting experiences, thrilling dangers and hairbreadth escapes, dauntless daring and magnificent victories — let him read the lives of those who in the nineteenth century laid the deep foundations of the Church of Jesus in countries which had not known his name. A church is poor

YOUNG PEOPLE; MISSIONS

which does not have a missionary library, and young people are behind the times who are not familiar with the careers of the pioneer Christian workers of our modern world. Reading is one way of keeping alive the interest in home and foreign missions. There is nothing which so dampens enthusiasm and paralyzes all the nerves of noble action as ignorance. If one informs himself about the work in far-off lands he finds it easier to pray for those who are working there and to send money for their assistance. Not every Christian is expected to labor under foreign flags, but there is no flag under which a Christian cannot set up a place of prayer. Young people sometimes lament that they cannot give themselves to the foreign field, forgetting that no matter what the

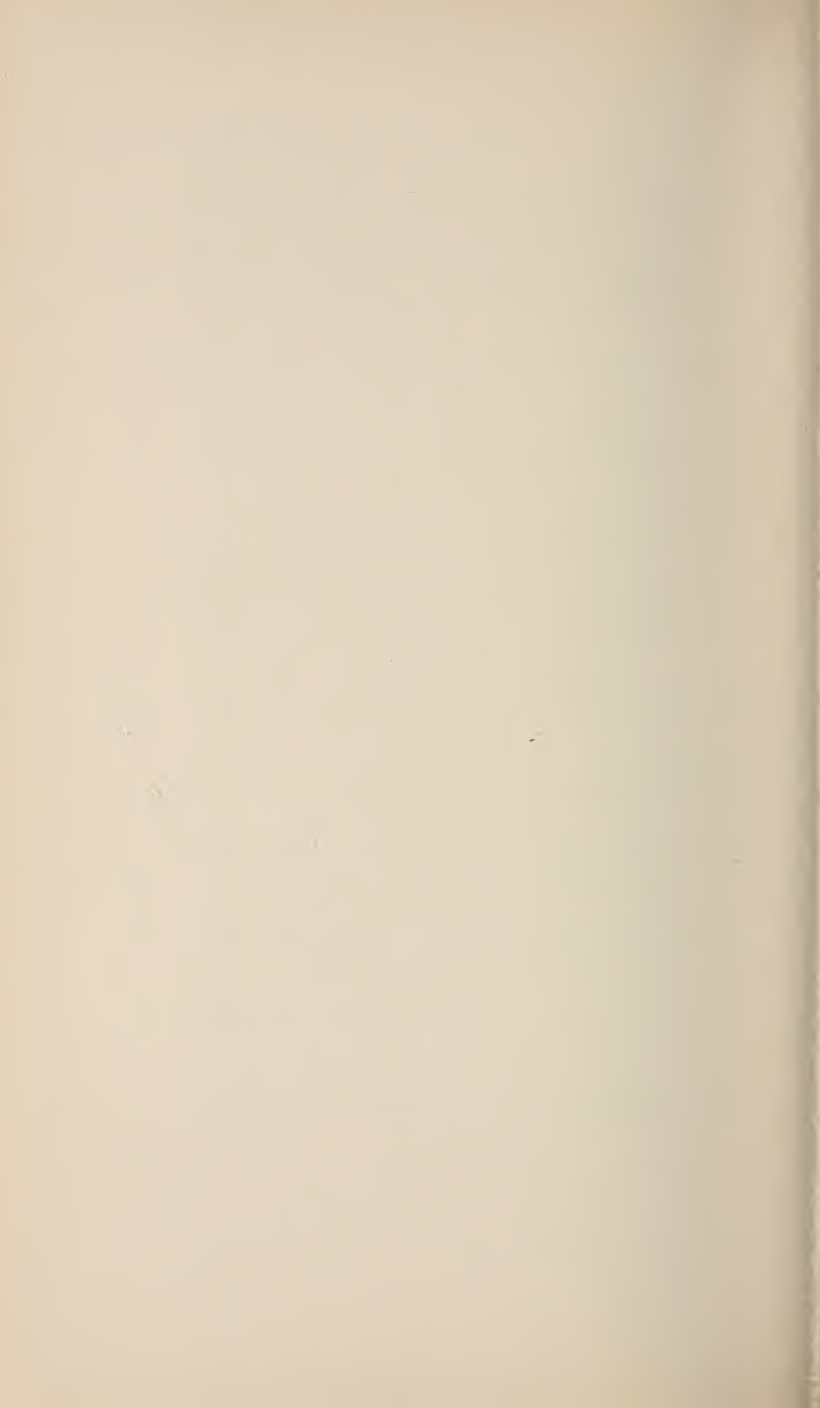
TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

hindrances, they can still go in prayer, beseeching God daily for rich blessings for those who are beyond the reach of their hands. Would you become interested in world-wide work, then pray for the success of it every day.

Let no Christian ever pine because he cannot go in person beyond the limits of his town, or even of his home. Many of the grandest of Christ's missionaries do all their work within the four walls of their home. They are sent to sacrifice for children and to nurse the aged and the sick, but although they live in obscurity they will be found on the last great day side by side with those who fought in public places a glorious fight and won the crown. The marching orders are first Jerusalem, then Samaria, then the

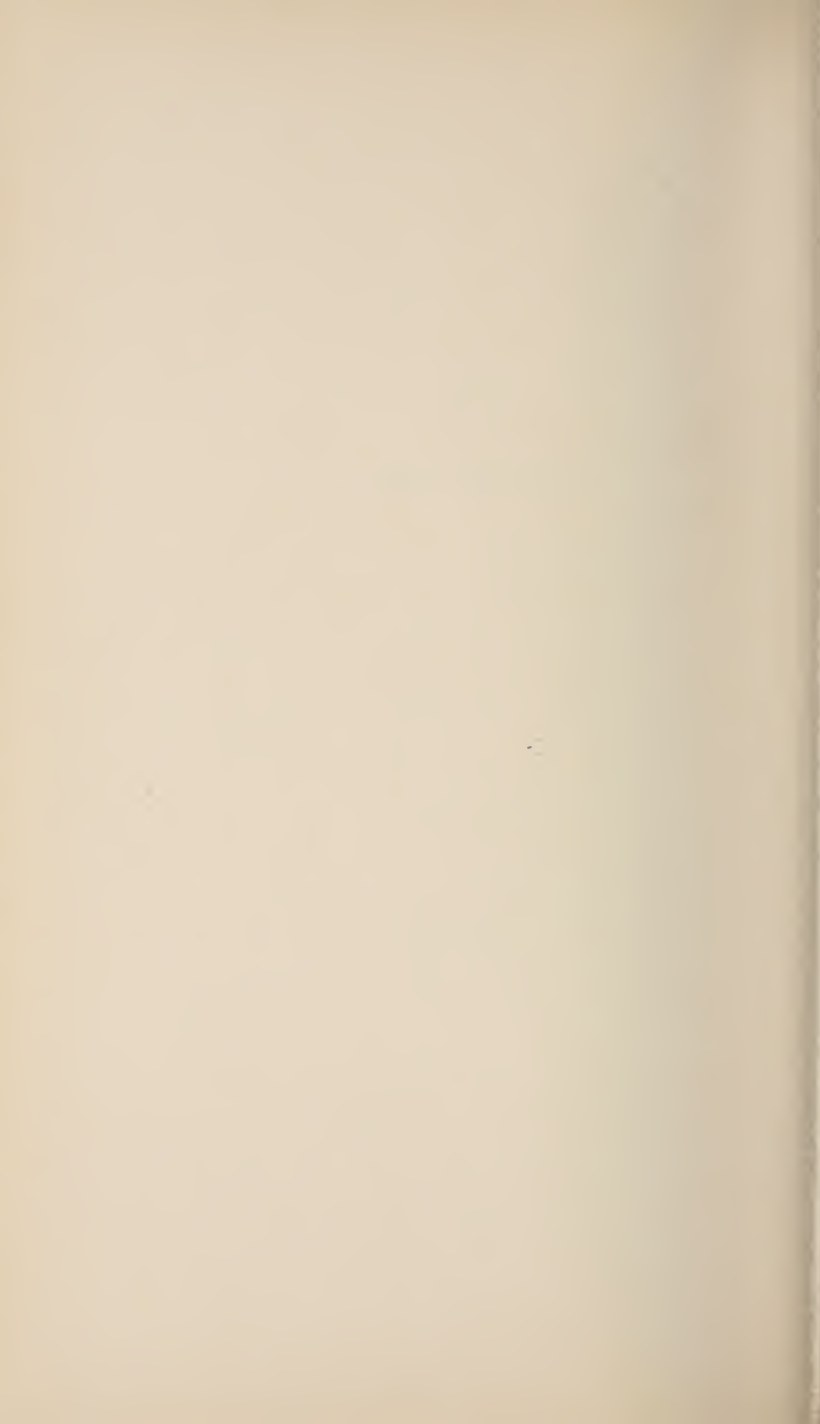
YOUNG PEOPLE; MISSIONS

uttermost parts of the earth. If you cannot go out of Jerusalem, thank God and be content. What a field for Christian service in a little town! How many wrong things to be overthrown, how many injustices to be corrected, how many wrongs to be redressed, how many fallen ideals to be reconstructed, how many sad hearts to be braced and comforted! It is to youth that the Church must look for the larger part of this missionary service. Those who engage in it are in God's great book enrolled among the missionary workers, and here and now they enter into the joy of their Lord. Go! How far you are to go the Lord himself decides, but if, obedient to him, you start, the influence of your life will, like the light of the sun, extend to the uttermost parts of the earth.



X

CITIZENSHIP



X

CITIZENSHIP

A CITIZEN used to mean one who enjoyed the freedom and privileges of a city. In our days it is one who is a member of a State, no matter whether he lives in a city or not. A foreigner may live in a country, but be denied the privilege of sharing in its government. He may be simply an inhabitant and not a citizen. But if he is a citizen the government recognizes him as one of its own sons, and throws around him its protection wherever he may go. A government owes its citizens certain rights and privileges, and wherever there are rights there are corresponding duties. If the

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

State protects a man that man is under obligation to serve the State. The number and nature of the obligations will depend upon the character of the government. Under a democracy like our own one's political duties are numerous, and only as men are willing to perform these duties can we hope for the perpetuation of our republic.

One of the most important duties of an American citizen is that of voting. Because the government gives him the privilege of voting it becomes his duty to avail himself of the privilege. If a man through carelessness or selfishness refuses to do his part in the shaping of public policy, and in the choice of public officials, then other men,—it may be corrupt and mistaken men,—are given undue power in the manage-

CITIZENSHIP

ment of affairs, and the city or state may suffer greatly. The rule of an oligarchy or privileged few has always been ruinous, and under no form of government can an oligarchy do so much mischief as under a democracy. It is only by training all American citizens to take part in politics that the future of America can be made safe.

Young Christians should not allow themselves to think of politics as something unclean, and therefore to be avoided. Politics is nothing but the science of government, and no other science is greater or more difficult. One sometimes hears the word "politician" spoken with a sneer, but the word ought to be redeemed, and every young man ought to feel that he has been called to become a politician. A politi-

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

cian in the true sense of the word is simply a man who is versed in the science of government and who participates in the shaping of civic policies and administrations. Every American citizen ought to be a politician. If Christians hold aloof, then others will seize the reins of government, and it may be drive the chariot of state into a ditch. Nothing has done more to bring the American church into disrepute than the blindness of many Christian men to their civic duties. Some of them have been as impractical and visionary as medieval monks. Politics has been to them the province of the devil. They have attended prayer-meetings and read their Bible, but forgotten to attend the caucus or vote on election day. They have never realized that the State is as

CITIZENSHIP

divine as the family and the Church, and that civic duties are not secular but religious. To be a saint and still engage in political life has been supposed to be an impossibility. Much of the tragic failure of our great cities to govern themselves well lies at the door of Christian men. It is the so-called better classes who are the most remiss in this regard. College graduates and men of wealth and culture, disdaining the work of governing the city, have buried themselves in their clubs and businesses, allowing foreigners and reprobate Americans to work out their selfish ends. The time has come for Christian men to realize that the Christian life means sacrifice, and that no form of government requires at the hands of its citizens so much sacrifice as a

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

democracy. It ought to be an axiom that no man can be a good Christian unless he is a good citizen, and that a citizen cannot be a good citizen unless he votes.

Along, then, with our missionary societies we ought to have civic clubs in which young people may study and discuss the problems of state. The horizon ought to be kept large. The fact that all the kingdoms of the world belong to Christ ought never to be forgotten. If the kingdom of politics has most bandits and rebels in it, then it is the kingdom for Christians to attack. If the political pool is muddiest, then it is the first pool to be cleansed. If a man cannot enter politics without being spattered by mud, then let him by all means enter it. What right has a Chris-

CITIZENSHIP

tian to be cowed by mud? Christians are in this world to do hard things, and to suffer for righteousness' sake, and the man who takes hold only of things which are pleasant and easy is nothing but a coward, though he sits in the front seat at the prayer-meeting, and never misses a communion. It is characteristic of the demons in the New Testament to want to be let alone. That is the characteristic of all demons both ancient and modern. But Jesus was always stirring up the demons, resisting and conquering them, and that is the work which is given us to do. The gamblers, saloon-keepers and all other workers of iniquity will never molest us, but will even contribute to church work if we only let them alone. They must be hit, and hit often and hard.

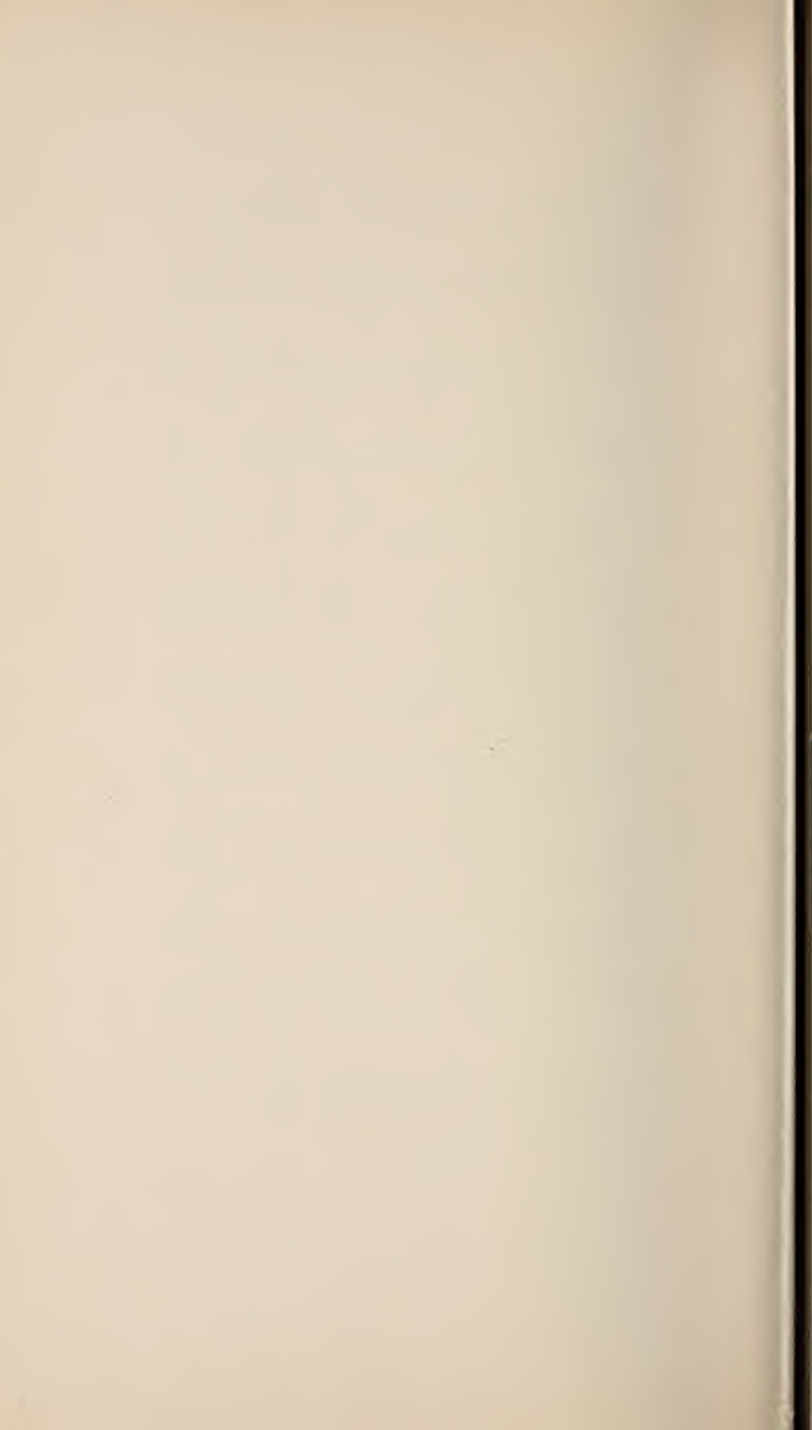
TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

Let no young woman think that because she cannot cast a ballot she can have no part in the shaping of the nation's life. The political influence of women is enormous, and can be made still mightier when women once realize their possibilities. The heart that helps to mold the mind of a man determines the character of his ballot. Thousands of American women vote who never go to the polls.

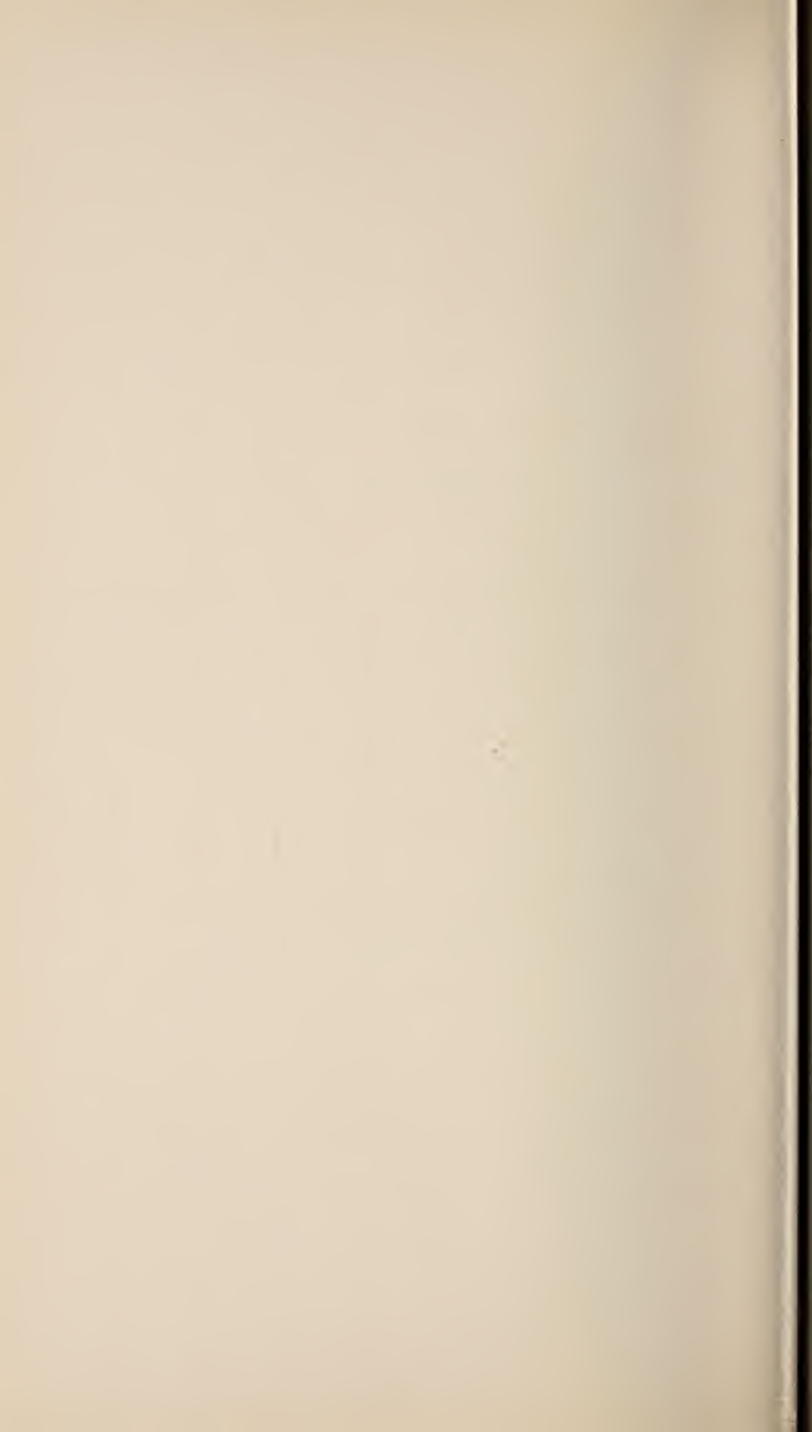
Don't allow your vision, then, to be bounded by the four walls of your church building. You belong to the whole city, and the whole city belongs to you. Singing hymns and quoting Scripture are only incidentals compared with the great work of maintaining public order and protecting life and property, and maintaining personal free-

CITIZENSHIP

dom and securing social justice. In this work every Christian must do his part. Many blessings are now denied society because so many Christians have been recreant to their political obligations. New virtues and graces blossom in the soul which consecrates itself to civic duty. The political order is part of the divine scheme for the discipline of men, and they who shirk its high and sacred obligations lose something out of their life which nothing else can supply. Count the town or city hall a part of your parish. Look on election day as one of the great days of the year. Write down voting as a part of the divine service along with prayers and anthems. Help by your political action to answer the prayer you pray every day: "Thy kingdom come!"



XI
READING



XI

READING

OF course you are going to read. If you do not read now you never will. Therefore if you do not naturally incline to books bend yourself by energy in that direction, and make a practise of reading every week. The aged man or woman who does not like to read is of all mortals one of the most pitiable.

But reading simply for the sake of reading is not enough. The value of reading depends not only on what you read but how you read. Some young people read too much. Reading is with them a sort of dissipation. They read desultorily and inattentively, failing

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

to remember what they read. It is possible to read in such a manner as to dissipate mental energy and lower all the springs of life.

Better not read at all than read a sort of literature which leaves a stain upon the mind. There is a deal of trash published nowadays; avoid it. Many books are third-rate and lower. You cannot afford to spend your time on books lower than the best. It makes far less difference what a man of sixty reads than what a boy of twelve or a youth of twenty reads. Spend little time upon the daily papers. Even the best of them deal chiefly with things for the most part ephemeral and unimportant. Newspapers are published for adults who know how to read with discrimination, and who have learned the arts of skipping

READING

and skimming. Only a small fraction of any daily paper should be read by any one person. You cannot afford the time necessary to find out what your portion is. In early life one wants not news but principles; not sensations but lofty dreams; not commonplace English but language in its noblest forms. The spring of life is quite too precious to be squandered on daily papers.

First of all I would advise you to read poetry. Do it systematically and with zeal. Begin with any poet whom you like. Try a dozen if necessary until you find the right man, then read him. Burns and Scott and Longfellow and Whittier are easy poets. Try them and see if they fit your mood. Tennyson and Lowell are more difficult. You may like them, however, from the

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

start. Browning and Emerson and Shakespeare are more difficult still. It may be well to wait some time before you read them. By and by you will be ready for Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. But do not begin beyond your depth. It is not wise to cudgel oneself into experiences for which one is not yet ready.

Next to poetry comes biography.

Make a practise of reading at least one good biography every year. Biography has the power to kindle the affections and to strengthen the will. Scores of men date their real life from the day on which they began to read the biography of some noble man. There are two biographies which every American ought to read, that of Washington and that of Lincoln.

READING

Next to biography comes history which Carlyle used to say is really the lives of great men. It is the story of a nation in its sufferings and triumphs, and to read it gives wide horizons to the mind. Begin with the history of your own country, then pass to England, then to Germany and France, then to Rome, then to Greece. The stream of events is unbroken and it flows with increasing volume from Athens through Italy to Germany and France; from the continent to England and thence to the banks of the Hudson and the valley of the Mississippi. No one can understand the present unless he is familiar with the past. Do not try the large histories first; begin with short ones written by men who know how to tell a story interestingly. You need

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

not bother with dates and details or dynasties and battles. Read to master the sequence of events and grasp the forces which have molded the character of men and nations.

Next to history you may place fiction. You may like it better than poetry or biography or history, but it does not follow that you should therefore give it first place. It is a bad sign when young people do not read history because it is hard. A young man or woman who gives up a good thing because it is hard ought to be ashamed of himself. Save the easy things until you are past seventy. An old man or woman may be excused for selecting things which are easy. Young people should read books which put iron in the blood and give glow and energy to the affections. I do

READING

not say, do not read any fiction at all; my advice is, do not give it the first place. Along with your novel always carry a book of history, a volume of biography, and at least one good poem.

You ought to be informed, of course, in regard to the things for which the Church stands. Jesus was a great reader, as we see from his quotations, and so also was Paul. When the apostle was in prison he wrote to a friend urging him to bring his books. He studied them so much that a Roman officer thought he was crazy. He could not live without them. Peter was anxious that a Christian should be able to answer questions which might be asked him, and Paul had an abhorrence of conversation which was insipid and flat. An ignorant Chris-

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

tian is a source of embarrassment to himself and his friends, and he is a disgrace to the Church. In a world of books ignorance on fundamental matters is a sin. Every Christian who is not frivolous or lazy can be informed. He must know the Bible, especially the four Gospels, and he ought to read these Gospels through several times every year. He should familiarize himself with the highest forms of Christian poetry, as this poetry exists in the hymnology of the Church. To spend the spare evenings of a winter in the study of great hymns is one of the most rewarding of all occupations.

A Christian should also read Christian biography outside of the Scriptures. There has been a long line of saints extending from the times of the apostles to our own day,

READING

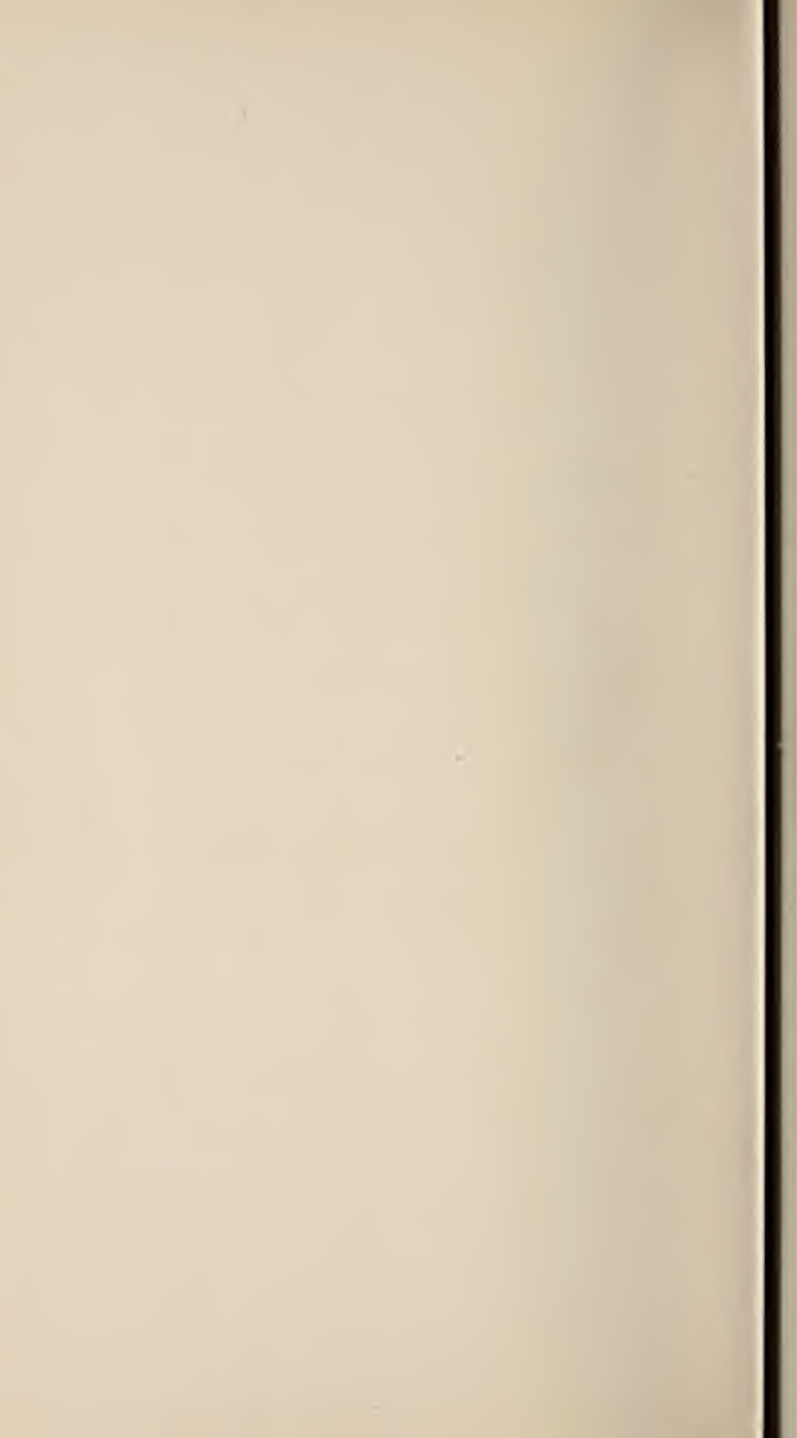
and some of these men ought to be known intimately. There are great preachers whose biographies are means of grace. Within the last hundred years the Church has produced a group of missionary heroes and heroines whose achievements form a new chapter which God has added to the book of The Acts. The history of the Christian Church is a gold mine in which every young Christian ought to be trained to dig.

And then we should know the things which are uppermost in the Church of our own day. Christendom is a wide field, and many interesting things are taking place. There are dangerous problems, tendencies, and movements, and with all these young people should make themselves acquainted. The best way of doing this is the habitual

reading of a religious paper. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, to subscribe for at least one such paper, and to form the habit of reading it regularly and with care. It will exert upon the mind and heart an influence, perhaps not at first discernible, but in the course of years it will make of the reader a different man from what he would have been without it, and will help to give the world a full-statured Christian of whom the Church need not be ashamed.

XII

INSPIRATION AND MOTIVE



XII

INSPIRATION AND MOTIVE

A SOUL cannot make a successful voyage over the wide ocean of life without inspiration any more than a sailing vessel can cross the Atlantic without wind. The sails of the soul must catch the breezes of heaven, if it is to arrive at the heavenly shore. The intellect needs stimulus, and so does the heart, and without influences which quicken and elevate we soon grow weary and fall by the way. If life is to be vigorous and noble, the soul must have a motive or mover. There must be some incentive for exertion, some incitement to effort,

some reason for sacrifice, else the soul will lose courage and die.

What is the inspiration of the Christian? It is Jesus! A writer expressed the answer perfectly long ago — “Looking unto Jesus, let us run.” Christianity is the most personal of all religions. It is not a book or an institution or an idea, but a person. The one duty which it lays upon man is personal allegiance to Jesus Christ. The one blessing which it offers the soul is union with this same Jesus. No other religious teacher except the Man of Galilee has ever made himself the Alpha and Omega, the center and circumference, the heart and soul of his religion. The founder of Christianity says first of all, “Come unto me!” And when men come close enough to hear his words, he goes on to say, “Follow

INSPIRATION AND MOTIVE

me!" And when they have shown a willingness to follow him, he says, "Abide in me!" He never offers them anything but himself. He is not willing that they should love or serve any one else. He will not admit that they need anybody else. He declares that peace and joy and power are all conditioned on their maintaining right relations to himself. He is the bread which they must eat, the water which they must drink, the light by which their feet must be guided. He is the vine, they are the branches. Without him they can do nothing. He is the way, the truth, the life. He is the shepherd, and he is also the door. He is the sacrifice, and he is also the high priest. He is the teacher, the physician, the redeemer. He is everything. His most piercing ques-

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

tion is, "Who do you say that I am?" Everything depends in this world and in the next on what Jesus becomes to the soul.

At the very beginning of the Christian life, one ought to ponder long and carefully this central feature of the Christian religion. What is it to be a Christian? Do not attempt to frame an answer in which there is no reference to Christ. Your Christian life does not begin until your life is linked with his. According to Jesus the Christian life is friendship with him. "I have called you friends." This is the word which he deliberately chose and there can therefore be none better. It would be well if we all said frequently to ourselves, "I am a friend of Jesus."

What is faith? Some men have

INSPIRATION AND MOTIVE

converted it into a great mystery. It is simply trust in Jesus. "You believe in God, believe also in me." This is the faith which he asks for and fosters. "Do you love me?" This is his crowning question to the chief of his apostles. It is his supreme question to every one who would be a Christian.

Young Christians sometimes become bewildered and disheartened because religion appears to be so complicated and mysterious. There seems to be so much of it, and there are so many things to be believed, and grown-up people have so many different opinions on such a multitude of religious topics, that the bewildered boy or girl does not know how to make his way through the interminable labyrinth. But the religion of Jesus is really

quite simple. No religion really from God can be so difficult and complex that only an occasional soul can be expected to master it. If men have made the religion of Jesus intricate and baffling, they have done it in spite of the effort of the Master to make it simple and intelligible to everybody. He has but one exhortation and that is: "Come to me, learn of me, live in me, let me live in you." He counts nothing essential save union with himself. The important question then is not, "Do you believe the Bible?" but, "Do you trust Jesus?" The matter of moment is not, "What is your opinion on this or that ceremony or doctrine?" but, "What is your attitude to Jesus?" The first thing to make sure of is not acceptance of any creed or union

INSPIRATION AND MOTIVE

with any organization, but allegiance to Jesus Christ. There is only one thing which Jesus asks for, and that is love, the love which manifests itself in obedience. The love which refuses to obey is no love at all. If we do the things which he tells us to do then are we his disciples, his comrades, his friends.

It is wonderful how this personal touch transforms and transfigures everything. If your Christian life is a disappointment and enigma to you, it is probably because you have lost this personal note. Prayer becomes tedious sometimes because we allow it to become impersonal. We say our prayers into space, instead of addressing a person who is closer to us "than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." We grow weary of well-doing, some-

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

times, because we forget that these good things are being done for the Lord. It is hard to make sacrifices for the world in general, and for nobody in particular. Sacrifice is always easy if made for someone whom we really love. If Christian work grows irksome, then press a little closer to the One in whose vineyard you are working.

I do not know of a solitary difficulty in the Christian life which cannot be lessened or solved completely by sinking one's life deeper into the life of Jesus. Have you doubts? Then throw yourself with new determination into the work of Jesus. Have you troubles, disappointments, sorrows? Take them all to Jesus. Many Christians receive no consolation in the hour of their grief, because they have not

INSPIRATION AND MOTIVE

cultivated an acquaintanceship with their best Friend. They have lived by regulations and rules, by precepts written in a book; but even the wisest rules and precepts are like so many icicles to a heart which is craving sympathy and love. Only a heart can warm and satisfy a heart. For comfort press your heart close to the heart of Jesus. Do you have a tendency to self-complacency, and is it hard for you to realize that in the sight of God you are a sinner? Then get closer to Jesus. If one is simply trying to conform to a law, he may become as righteous as the rich young ruler who declared he had kept every one of the commandments. But if one is trying to be worthy of the friendship of a person so incomparably noble and exalted as Jesus there will

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

come moments when he will cry out with Peter, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord," and when he will fall down in the dust with Paul, declaring himself to be the chief of sinners.

Are you afraid of death, and does the other world seem uninteresting and cold? It is because your religion has become impersonal. To many Christians St. John's picture of the city with streets of gold and gates of pearl is dreary and uninviting. No wonder! The heart cannot live on gold and pearls. What we crave is love. Well, there is a Lover waiting for us on the other side. He himself has said, "I go to prepare a place for you." To Paul both worlds were so lovely that he could scarcely tell where he would rather be. In this world he

INSPIRATION AND MOTIVE

could work for Jesus, in the other world he could enjoy a closeness of fellowship with him not allowed mortals here. Fill both worlds with the thought of Jesus, and you will feel at home in both of them.

Paul understood the secret of a blessed and effective life. He kept saying to himself, "He loved me, and gave himself up for me." He indulged in no exaggeration when he said, "For to me to live is Christ!" It was this secret which he was always striving to communicate to others. When he asked Christians to give money he reminded them of their Friend who, although rich, had made himself poor that they through his poverty might become rich. When he exhorted them to forgive one another he turned their eyes to One who for

TALKS ON HIGH THEMES

Christ's sake had forgiven them. It was his unshakable conviction that it is worth while to endure hardship and to suffer tribulation, for "if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him : if we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

THE END

OCT 14 1909

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Nov. 2005

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2117

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 987 584 9 ●