

Popular Pulpit

LAX CHRISTIANS.

By Rev. J. O. Davis.

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.—Ephesians iv. 1.

The greatest hindrance to the spread of the Christian religion is not the attacks of its open enemies, but the lax and often vicious lives of its professed adherents. The Christian religion is a call to life, not to the mere intellectual acceptance of a system of philosophy, however beautiful and inspiring its teachings may be. The faith of the Christian in Jesus Christ must be shown by his living in a Christian manner.

In the very early days of his ministry our blessed Lord laid down certain fundamental principles which were to govern the lives of His disciples. They are to live in the world, yet not to be of the world; earthly mindedness is to be far from them; they are to seek first the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness. Their religion is to permeate the whole life, not to be put on for certain days and seasons and then laid aside. It should make itself felt in the house, the workshop, the office, the factory, the school. Every relation of life must feel its sanctifying touch. They are to be "the light of the world"—by their example to guide men's feet aright. They are to be "the salt of the earth," whose function is to purify and sweeten society.

When those without see many who profess and call themselves Christians living in apparent disregard of their vocation, is it wonderful that they turn away?

Surely never more than to-day have men needed the exhortation of the apostle, "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

In another place St. Paul expresses in a word the whole meaning of the Christian vocation; they are "called to be saints"—that is, they are devoted to God.

This calling is not received for the comparatively few who in every age of the church stand out conspicuously, towering above their fellows like lofty mountain peaks; it is for every Christian, however humble and simple he may be. Only here and there one attains to the height reached by those rare souls to whom the church delights to give the title "saint," but all are obligated to make the effort to do so. The example after which they patterned their lives is the pattern for all. He who gave them strength to gain the height stands ready to strengthen all who will receive and use the grace He offers.

If we would walk worthy of our vocation we will not wait for opportunity to do some great thing, but we will endeavor to do our duty each day as it comes to us. Those homely, everyday duties that so often seem irksome may be glorified if they are looked upon, as in reality they are, as stepping stones to heaven. We will patiently accept the trials that beset us. We will endeavor steadfastly to overcome the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. We will seek to live always as in the sight of the Lord and do all things for his glory.

YESTERDAY AND TO-MORROW.

By Rev. Henry F. Cope.

"Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before."—Phil. iii., 13.

The regret is vain that looks not to reconstruction. The best expression of sorrow for yesterday's wrongdoing is service for to-day's right. It is a good thing to look back, but only that we may push forward. There is no consolation for the individual, no betterment for society, in the gospel that goes not beyond repentance.

There are many who are eating out their own hearts with bitter repentings of past follies. The cheer is driven from every day by the memory of old wrongdoing; they fairly are haunted by a fearsome past. Perhaps, as a plain matter of fact, their sins are not as gross as they seem; imagination has magnified them. But dwelling on them, poring over them, they have paralyzed their own possibilities of present improvement.

It is true that no man can undo his past. It is true, as many know in bitterness and pain of spirit, that conscience and memory constantly pierce the hearts with the thorns that have grown from past sowing. But is there folly greater than that of the man or woman who permits regret for falling to prevent any attempt at rising again? Every day is a new day. Every life

may make new beginnings. All else is lost when hope is lost; the light fades from the eyes and the soul seems to perish within the man when he ceases to believe that he can make yet one more beginning. Heaven rejoices when we weep over our own wandering, but greater far is the joy when we arise and set our faces toward home again.

In the race of life many things may bring a man down, but he alone is responsible for it if he is both down and out. We, the competitors, may be ever ready to cry "Failure," but somehow we know that eternal justice will pronounce no verdict till the course be done, and eternal love ever is yearning to see each fallen one again upon his feet and pressing forward in the race.

In the school of life we may learn to forget the difficulties of the tasks once set before us, and even the disgrace when we failed at them in the joy of the strength that all the struggle of meeting and mastering these tasks has given. How foolish would he be who should refuse to tackle the larger problems of life because the little old slate on which he worked his sums in school is blurred with tear marks.

And so with our sorrows. Too many are living in the shadow of clouds long passed. Carrying in their hearts the gloom of days gone by, they rob to-day of its courage and to-morrow of its glad confidence. Their backs are soon broken who do not know how to drop some burdens.

There is a great difference between the fragrant memory of days that in their passing seemed most bitter, between those mists through which loved faces smile out of death's shadows and the carefully preserved pails and trappings of our woe.

So, too, do we imbitter our present with the cherishing of slights and injustices, malice and enmity, thought or done to us in days past. Memory and history easily become a chamber of horrors, a pit where dwell only foul and noisome things, and to-day's pleasure and to-morrow's promise alike are lost in contemplation of yesterday's pain.

God is ahead as well as behind. The universe is not heartless, a pitiless machine where past faults forever preclude the possibility of future perfection. The ever upspringing hope in the human breast is but the echo of the infinite, wooing us to new endeavors, calling men to arise and go to their Father.

They go forward who look forward. The best lives are the lives that seek ever the best. We owe it not only to ourselves that we lie not prone in the dust; we owe it to all others to begin again. What right have we to block the way of those who would press on, with our prostrate forms, or to cool their ardor with our groaning regrets?

The past has its lessons; but they only are learning them who are pushing forward. Failures must be as finger posts to future successes. Regretting the past, set it right as far as you may, then redeem yesterday by right doing to-day and right determination for to-morrow, and you shall find every force of good facing with you and strengthening heart and hand for better things.

Short Meter Sermons.

Our lives are the lips of the Most High.

Only a coward will hide behind his conscience.

Your superiority does not depend on your pedestal.

Self is the only thing that really can break love ties.

Religion is the touch of the infinite on all our affairs.

An honest message never has trouble finding hearers.

It takes more than soft solder to cement souls together.

It takes more than headache cures to set the heart right.

The only worthy high living is that which puts the soul on top.

A cross disposition is no evidence of bearing the divine cross.

No great deeds are done without the doing of many little details.

No man increases his own good reputation by stealing another's.

When a man boasts of his courage he is giving it absent treatment.

Preach the pleasures of piety and people willingly will bear its pains.

Society has its temptations, but they are as nothing to those of solitude.

The heart that feeds on pride must have many an ache in its stomach.

As conscience becomes atrophied the critical faculties often become active.

There's no advantage in making men weary with a sermon inviting them to rest.

Many think they can overcome sin by shooting glittering generalities at the devil.

You might be a walking theological seminary and still be traveling on the wrong road.

You will never persuade the world to accept your religion when you look as though it made you sick.

For Coughs and Colds

There is a remedy over sixty years old—Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. Of course you have heard of it, probably have used it. Once in the family, it stays; the one household remedy for coughs and hard colds on the chest. Ask your doctor about it.

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Ayer's Pills increase the activity of the liver, and thus aid recovery.

London 101 Parks.

One of the most useful activities of the London County Council has been in the extension of the park system of the metropolis, which now includes, under the management of the Council, nearly 5,000 acres.

The acquirement and development has cost about £8,500,000, and the annual charge for maintenance comes to £565,000, which adds about a half penny in the pound to the rates, or about two-tenths of 1 per cent. The cost includes the salaries of an outdoor staff of 843 men and women.

The Council came into existence in 1889, and succeeded to the metropolitan board of public works in the care of the parks, but of course with larger powers. In all fifty-seven new parks have been added since then out of the total that come under the Council's management.—Park and Cemetery.

The Sedan-Chair.

Perhaps some expert in the Siamese language will tell us what is its word for "sedan-chair." When the King of Siam's minister, protesting against his majesty's favor toward motoring, suggested recently that "the royal sedan-chair" was always at his disposal, it is improbable that he used a word reminiscent of the French town. For it is from the scene of Napoleon III.'s collapse that the sedan-chair takes its name, and perhaps remote posterity will suppose that it had some connection with that event. But Sedan first produced these conveyances centuries ago, and they were seen in England in 1581. One used by James I.'s Buckingham provoked great popular outcry against the employment of men as beasts of burden. Sir S. Duncombe is credited with having introduced them to London in 1634. And Bath knows the Pickwickian sedan-chair to this day.—London Chronicle.

Lesson from the Past.

Thomas Jefferson was writing the immortal Declaration of Independence, and had just evolved the revolutionary doctrine that all men are endowed with certain inalienable rights, among which are "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

"Of course," he reflected, "there will be about one week in the year when the boy with the cannon cracker or the toy pistol will be at liberty, in his pursuit of happiness, to take anybody's life."

Smiling as he thought of the havoc the automobilists would play with these principles some day, he proceeded to submit a few facts for the consideration of a candid world.—Chicago Tribune.

The Boy's Opportunity.

"Now, wouldn't it be funny," said Popley, playfully, "if I were to become a little boy again?" "Mebbe it wouldn't be so funny for you, pa," replied his bright young son. "If you was to be littler'n me, pa, I think I'd square up a few things."

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Save the Babies.

INFANT MORTALITY is something frightful. We can hardly realize that of all the children born in civilized countries, twentytwo per cent., or nearly one-quarter, die before they reach one year; thirtyseven per cent., or more than one-third, before they are five, and one-half before they are fifteen!

We do not hesitate to say that a timely use of Castoria would save a majority of these precious lives. Neither do we hesitate to say that many of these infantile deaths are occasioned by the use of narcotic preparations. Drops, tinctures and soothing syrups sold for children's complaints contain more or less opium, or morphine. They are, in considerable quantities, deadly poisons. In any quantity they stupefy, retard circulation and lead to congestions, sickness, death. Castoria operates exactly the reverse, but you must see that it bears the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher. Castoria causes the blood to circulate properly, opens the pores of the skin and allays fever.

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