

The Press and Banner

ABBEVILLE, S. C.

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Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1884.

Vacant Places at Home.

By Mrs. A. L. RUTHERFORD.

There are places—vacant places—here beside our dear hearth-stove; And we need not seek any more.

There were smiling, cherub faces, Loving hearts, light, glad and free, Which, at dawn and evening's altar, With us bowed a willing knee.

In our eyes the tear drops gather, As we see their vacant chairs; By the fire-side, table, altar, Grief our chastened spirit wears.

Little feet that ever hastened Joyfully to seek our side, Now no more their quick steps greet us, No more their loved ones with pride.

But we know our father called them To his knees, and high and low, And we know our mother's voice, Have been garnered in the sky.

Soon our places will be vacant, And on earth be known no more; May we then in their vacant seats, Greet those loved ones gone before.

GRAINS.

The will of God is the sum of all law.

God's promise is more sure than man's performance.

Trouble always runs to meet the man who goes out to hunt it.

People who carry sunshine with them are always welcome.

Nobody has ever found happiness who did not first find Christ.

When you can't see in any other direction, try looking straight up.

Failure is impossible in Christian life until we stop trusting in God.

Some of the heart's sweetest songs have been learned in the dark.

There is no spiritual life where there is no love.

Read not books alone, but men; and chiefly be careful to read thyself.

People who can be spoiled by honest praise are no account to begin with.

Three precious things that many throw away—Time, money and health.

When you pray for the Lord to bless other people, don't insist that it shall be done your way.

Adversity is the trial of principle; without it a man hardly knows whether he is an honest man or not.

Only a frown? But it left a sad void in the child's heart—quivering lip and tearful eyes.

The Devil is not so much concerned about your profession as he is about your practice.

You will not get to heaven when you die unless you get more than half way there while you live.

No man can walk far with God who does not keep step with everything that is good.

On the day when we have not done a little good, we have done a great deal of mischief.

A wide-spreading, hopeful disposition is your own true umbrella in this vale of tears.

Christianity and War.

Infidels sometimes say that Christianity has been the cause of more wars than anything else. Well, suppose this true. The sun has been the cause of more wars than anything else; is that any reason why the sun should be blotted out of existence?

The rain has been the cause of more floods than anything else. Shall we therefore decide that the rain is a curse and not a blessing to the world?

Christianity is not the cause of wars. Sheep do not go to war with wolves. It is the wolves that make war on the sheep. When Christ said, "I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword," the meaning was, that the truth which he declared would so awaken the opposition of evil men that it would be the innocent occasion of calamities and strife.

Christianity is not the cause of wars. Read the sermon on the Mount, and see if it breathes the spirit of war. Blessed are the peacemakers, said the Savior; and to the only disciple who ever undertook to defend him, he said, "Put up thy sword."

Wars and fighting among men come of men's lusts which have not yet been subdued by the gospel of Christ. It is Satan, the evil spirit, who makes the wars; it is the spirits of demons who gather the nations to battle. "My kingdom is not of this world," said the Savior. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." John xvii. 36.

No doubt there are people and nations which have stolen the Christian name, and under it prosecute wars. I remember hearing a London infidel say that the Bible was the cause of the atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition; and he seemed somewhat surprised when told that the men guilty of those atrocities would have burned him alive for reading or possessing a Bible. Surely the Bible ought not to be blamed for the misdeeds of those who hate the Book, and persecute those who love and read it.

The angel's message is "Peace on earth and good will to men." Let us sound it abroad, and let us pray that soon the King of righteousness and King of peace may come and reign over all the earth.—H. L. Hastings.

MR. VINET says: The greatest miracle that I know of is that of my conversion. I was dead and I live; I was blind and I see; I was a slave and I am free; I was an enemy of God and I love him. Prayer, the Bible, the love of Christians, these were to me a source of profound ennui; whilst now it is the pleasure of the world that is a weariness to me, and piety is the source of all my joy. Behold the miracle! and if God has been able to work that one, there are none of which he is not capable. When people know in their own hearts that this is true, when they most freely and truly respond to the great work done in them, why is it they cannot go further, accept Christ's teachings on the peace question and fully rely upon Him for care and keeping, both for themselves and their property. He has written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." Leave all thought of vengeance etc., to Him, and just follow peace with all men. Prove it! prove it!—Messenger of Peace.

Sabbath Preparation.

There is no preparation for the Sabbath day usually more valuable than that which we gain in its early hours. Then we may devote ourselves to special thoughts concerning the sacred duties before us. And even though on the Sabbath works of necessity should turn our minds to material things, it is possible to make a supreme effort in the secret depths of the soul to have thoughts harmonize with the day. But though we desire on the Sabbath to arrest worldly tendencies, there are many ways in which this can be done.

As far as possible, conversation foreign to the spiritual claims of the Sabbath should be avoided; especially secularizing literature should be discarded. When Christians consent to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," not seeking worldly pleasure or gain, even from the very beginning of the day; not secularizing its holy hours by anything of a questionable character, then a new era will dawn upon the Church. Then the spiritual significance of the Sabbath, as a sign between God and man, will be appreciated.

The truth is the responsibility of a proper Sabbath observance, with all its attendant blessings, rests upon the Church of Christ. All agree that progress in the Christian life is largely dependent upon the faithful recognition of the Lord's Day. It is manifestly our duty to seek release as far as possible from worldly engagements on the Sabbath. The day is given—among other things—for hearing God's word in the congregation, and resting in his arms with his people. It is possible so to transfer the cares of life to this day as to wholly unfit the soul for these sacred duties. And not only so; the reading, social visiting, and unnecessary work may be of such a kind as to render religious exercises wholly unprofitable.

We may be fully absorbed in the work of the Sunday school, the church, and the community. Home may bring its urgent demands. Oftentimes duties seem foreign to the religious purposes of the day, but if its hours are commenced in a devotional spirit, and the soul retains a sense of union with the Lord of the Sabbath, the promise of rest in Him will be abundantly verified.

Duty and Art of Preaching to Children.

The church needs children more than it knows. The service that has no place for readings, or prayers, or hymns or sermons, that children can appreciate, is a service that fails in its appeal to grown people. It lacks the dew of divine youth, the childlikeness of the mind of Christ.

Many a Sunday service is suffering from stiffness in the joints. Its life is dry, its bones are limber, its blood is pale, its spirit is feeble, like the old Syrian King David, it is covered with cloths, but has no heat. It needs a child in its bosom to warm it.

Once a year is not enough. The church must know the constant presence of children. It will cost, but it will count. It will mean work for the preacher, and often inconvenience to the people. Children in church are an acquired taste, many, but a tremendous addition in vitality, and infusion of red blood.

Ministers would study this matter, the place of children in the Old Testament church, the meaning of the boy Jesus "in his father's house," the gospel of his likeness, the ringing hosannas in the temple, the test and behest of love, "Feed my lambs,"—and would think how far removed our church services are from the purpose of his mission in this respect, how "grown-up" in their spirit, how devoid of the first appeal to the young heart, there certainly would be, in ministerial eyes, a timeliness in such books as have of late been coming before the public, and a demand for them now too little felt.

Every demand that preaching to children makes on a man will help the whole of his preaching. "Sincerity, intelligibility and earnestness, a good aim and a good arm. Find them, show them, putting the divine message in living human speech, and a man can lead children and help children,—a fortiori, any one.—Rev. W. E. Babcock, D. D., in S. S. Times.

One Wonderful Saying.

I used to reckon our Lord's answer to the healed demoniac of Gadara one of his strangest utterances. The man wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus answered, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things that Lord has done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19). The Gadarenes were urging Jesus to depart from their midst, mainly because they misunderstood the purpose of his mission. Jesus never will stay where he is not welcome, yet such was his compassion for these deluded people that though he departed that same day himself, he did not do so without leaving behind him a witness of the power of his grace. And see the wisdom in this act. Mark tells us that this man "departed and began to publish in the decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel." And see what followed this witness-bearing. A few months later Jesus returned to Decapolis. (Mark 7:31-37). Now the people are glad to see him they rushed to him, bringing their sick, etc. It was these people—perhaps some of the same people once brought him to depart—who testified, "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

The Christian Spirit Brings no Regrets.

If we cherish and exhibit the Christian spirit toward all men, it is not possible that we should ever regret it, even in this life. We will not be sorry for hearing and judging; for thinking and speaking; for holding an every tongue; for stopping our ears to the tale-bearer, and for disbelieving most of the ill reports we hear of our brethren; for sympathizing with the sorrowing; for relieving the destitute; for being patient toward the erring and long suffering toward everybody; for doing good to all men; for being courteous to all; for speaking evil of none; for seeking pardon for all wrongs; for overcoming evil with good. No, such a character and spirit can never give its possessor pain or regret during life; and sure it is that such regrets were never yet heard to fall from the lips of such a man when dying, and will never be recorded by man or angel in Time or Eternity. May the Lord help us to cherish and exhibit such a spirit!—So. Ch. Herald.

The man who is constantly thinking evil finds a thousand ways to speak it.

God will not stop upon an earnest man because he sometimes makes a mistake.

Contentment is natural wealth, luxury is artificial poverty.

"A Carnival of Lust."

Under this head the Western Christian Advocate of last week has some strong words. We give you the following paragraph:

"Imprisonment, or hanging the brutes who commit these crimes, is like removing a pimple when the blood is thick with corruption. The way to avoid the consequences is to remove the cause. Never was a system of education more thorough and effective than that to which the rising generation is practically compelled. A sensational press, reeking with details of domestic scandal, excites prurient imaginations and inflames unholy passions. Police Gazettes, with graphic delineation of sensual orgies and lustful crime, add pitch to the flames. Vile literature, with vile illustrations, are clandestinely sold on trains and in bookstalls, or given as premiums with tobacco and cigarettes."

Take a look around Atlanta or any other city and you will see seeds of lust and corruption running in full force, day and night. Pictures on the walls, "living pictures" in the theaters, commanded by the secular press, and crowds of visitors who claim to be respectable, and then blazing, gilded barrooms offering stimulants for all the base passions, all under the eye of the law and in the face of a community professing to love decency. "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." We are sowing corruption every day. We are educating people for vice, and doing it with our eyes open. The results are coming home, but the full harvest is not yet. Many who are careless now will have painful concern after a little. Where are our laws when common decency is insulted every day on the streets and elsewhere? Oh, how we need a little, even a little manhood!—Western Christian Advocate.

"Thy Will Be Done."

All admit the duty of submission to the divine will. Disappointments and afflictions are regarded as occasions for exercising the duty of submission. When our cherished plans have failed, or a loved one has been removed by death, we recognize the duty of submission. "Thy will be done." There is danger however, that the duty of submission may come to be regarded as an occasional, instead of a constant one. We are taught to pray, "Thy will be done." This is to be our daily prayer, for it is joined to the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." Prayer is the expression of our desire. If we pray that the will of God may be done, we earnestly desire that it should be done in all things, and in all matters pertaining to our selves as well as to others. The attitude of mind is something different from that of acquiescence. It is submission. It is to be feared that a great deal that passes for Christian submission is simply acquiescence with the inevitable. The event must take place; it is useless, we say, to strive against it; therefore submission, so-called, takes place. Such is not the submission we are called for by the petition, "Thy will be done." That requires the habitual reference of all our actions to the will of God.

By this reference to the will of God in all the actions of our lives we gain strength to meet what are ordinarily regarded as the great occasions for submission. By following the will of God in all our activities we become prepared to obey Him when He commands us to "be still and know that I am God."

In proportion as we pursue such a course of action, we walk in wisdom and avoid mistakes that we otherwise would make. God is infinitely wise. So far as one does His will he is sure of walking in the path of safety. He who is where God would have him to be, and is doing what God would have him to do, is in a secure place.

The Same as Crime.

I was a stranger and ye took me not in, naked and ye clothed me not, I was cold, and ye gave me no clothing, Mat. 25:43.

No actual crime is charged. Maliciousness is indicated. Nothing is said about having destroyed with torch or sword. "You didn't break into my house and steal my bread. You didn't poison my food or kill me with violence. You didn't burn my house over my head, or rob me of my clothing, but you did just as bad. You tried to kill me by neglect. You are a robber thief who wounded me, and robbed me, and stripped me of my raiment, and departed, leaving me half dead, but you are the priest and the Levite, who saw me dying in my blood, but had no compassion upon me, and passed coldly by on the other side. You gave me no words of cheer, and made no sacrifices in my behalf, and it is not through anything that you have done that I am still alive. You thought it was going to cost you too much to be friends with the friendless. You thought I was a poor man, without friend or influence, so you drew your robes closely about you, and got as far away from me as you could. Had you known me to be a prince of great power and riches, how quickly you would have run to pick me up. Depart from me, ye small souled and vile in heart. I know you are not a prince, and what man of spirit was king in your heart and you have done it. There is no mansion in Heaven for you. Go to the place prepared for the devil and his angels." The man who rejects Christ in spirit shuts the kingdom of God entirely out of his heart.—Ram's Horn.

The Mennonite Creed.

In the Mennonite religious handbook for church and school, page 121, I read these words: "A Mennonite after having made a public and solemn vow, sealed by the rite of baptism, is under no condition whatever allowed to bear arms nor render any military service." This is the platform on which the Mennonite church of this country stands to-day, 250,000 strong, and I rejoice that I am permitted to bear testimony in their behalf. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, when I give utterance to your motto, "Abstention ever! War never!" I but voice the solemn sentiment and conviction of the entire church.—Selected.

When God's way is our way we are satisfied. When he asks us to walk by faith rather than sight, we denur. But what a world this would be if we trusted the Lord completely! How easily we should bear our burdens! How hopelessly we should meet the sorrows of life! As the bee flutters in the weed, so we should find joy in bereavement. Then our griefs would be no more, but we should be self-will opportunities. But we must be led—no we, but God must be the guide to trust him. So the world weeps blindly and without consolation. All is within reach; but we possess nothing. The spirit starves; but the larder is full. It shivers with the cold when it need but move into the sunshine to be warm.—Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth.

Useful Information.

There is a very general misapprehension, respecting newspaper subscription laws, even among people of large intelligence.

The National Advertiser has prepared the following valuable resume of law on this subject. We quote as follows:

Few readers or publishers of papers fully and clearly understand the laws governing subscription. The decisions of the United States Courts on this subject are:

1. Subscribers who do not give express orders to the contrary are considered as wishing to renew their subscription.
2. If subscribers order the discontinuance of their periodicals, the publisher may continue to send them until all arrears are paid.
3. If subscribers neglect or refuse to take their periodicals from the post-office, or removing or leaving them uncollected for prima facie evidence of intentional fraud.
4. If subscribers move to other places without informing the publisher, and the papers are sent to the former address, they are held responsible.
5. The courts have decided that refusing to take periodicals from the post-office, or removing or leaving them uncollected for prima facie evidence of intentional fraud.
6. If subscribers pay in advance, they are bound to give notice at the end of the time if they do not wish to continue, otherwise the publisher is authorized to send the paper and the subscriber will be responsible until an express notice, with payment of arrears, is sent to the publisher.

(Nashville Advocate.)

Every minister has an individual interest in the good name of every other one. Whatever damages any member of the fraternity in the public esteem likewise lowers the reputation of all. This fact should make them very careful as to the manner in which they speak of one another. We do not mean—and no sensible person will suspect us of meaning—that it is ever right and proper to cover up gross immoralities, or to use a whitewash brush for hiding the soiled plates in a ministerial reputation. But we do mean that it is a most unbrotherly thing to proclaim from the housetop all the little defects and shortcomings which a minister exhibits in his daily life.

(S. S. Times.)

Good grammar is a good thing, but some good things are said ungrammatically. The man who speaks ungrammatically of a preacher or teacher because he detects in him an occasional fault of speech, or who refuses to open his spiritual ear to words or counsel because he detects in them a few words which slip in ungrammatical, exalts the body above the spirit. He goes into a voluntary bondage to a soulless master. It is a fine and desirable accomplishment to be able always to speak grammatically; but it is a still higher attainment to forget the preacher in his message, and to welcome and enjoy the truth,—to hear the voices of the Spirit, come how they may.

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