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→ SERMONS ←

A SUMMONS TO FRESH CONSECRATION.*

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Behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.—ST. MATT. xxviii., 9.

THERE is no one who has had any experience of Christian spiritual religion in his life, who has not at times felt periods of great depression, and consequent thereupon, languidness for spiritual activities and disability for spiritual work. Mark, we do not say that every "Christian" has felt depression, because there are a great many persons who bear the name of Christian who have never had any genuine spirituality in their religion. They have been Christians in the technical and nominal meaning of the word, but they have never had their souls stirred by the energizing influence of the love of Jesus, and thereby been spiritually vitalized; as, also, there are a great many others who would certainly not *wish* to come under the influence of such Christianity, who feel that if they were to be asked for any more than an external following after Christ, even to yield to the promptings of deepened spirituality, they would not desire it at all, nay, they would feel as if the little

* This sermon—the first preached after the summer vacation in 1889—was entirely extempore and without notes, and we are indebted to an amateur reporter for so much as could be caught in the rapid utterances of the preacher, and which is to the sermon itself rather as a woodcut to a landscape—a resemblance rather than a likeness.

move in curves, and illustrate rather than emphasize. Such an attitude can be acquired, and carries a persuading power that no words ever possessed.

An *æsthetic* character is revealed by a similar graceful, buoyant carriage, with

the peculiarity of the gestures being mostly upward and outward, illustrating the grand thoughts that strive for utterance. This is the summit of persuasive attitude; this combination of geniality and imagination.—*Religious Herald.*

Christian Edification

In the Sunshine of Christ's Love.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

One of the historic landmarks of the Church of Christ was that "upper room" in Jerusalem where the Master instituted the sacrament which commemorates His atoning love. After He had broken the bread, and given the cup to His disciples, He summons them to "arise and go hence," and leads them out towards Gethsemane. What a wonderful walk was that, and what a wonderful talk He gave them as they moved through the silent streets to the vale of Kedron! That chamber had been redolent of His redeeming love; the atmosphere was laden with its sweet fragrance. The first thing He speaks of is the vital union which He has formed between them and Himself—an union as close as the parent vine to all its branches and tendrils. Then He tells them that even as the Father had loved Him, so did He love them, and tenderly charges them, "Abide ye in My love." Not their love to Him, but His love for them. He had created a warm, bright, blessed atmosphere of love, and He urges His little flock to continue in it.

Is it possible for all of us Christians to live steadily in this bright sunshine, where His love is falling in a constant stream of warm effulgence? It must be possible; for our Master never commands what we cannot perform. Sinless perfection may not be attainable in this life. But there is one thing which all of Christ's redeemed people can do, and that is to keep themselves in the delightful atmosphere of His love. It is our fault and our shame that we spend so many days in

the chilling fogs—or under the heavy clouds of unbelief, or down in the damp, dark cellars of conformity to the world. There are three conditions which Christ enjoins upon us. If we fulfil them we shall abide in the sunshine of His love.

1. The first one is obedience. "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." A boy leaves home for school or college, and his mother packs his trunk, with many a tear moistening his wardrobe. She puts a Bible there, and says to him, "Now, my dear boy, this you will read every morning and night; and while you are on your knees in prayer, your mother is with you."

In like manner we who call ourselves Christians should abide in the bright warm atmosphere of our Master's love. We must heartily accept a whole Christ, both as Saviour and Lord, and accept Him without any reserves or limitations. He has a right to command; it is ours simply to obey. Stephen Girard, the Philadelphia millionaire, was once called on by a poor man who wanted employment. Girard told him to go into a vacant lot near by and carry all the stones on one side of the lot to the other side, and the next day to move them all back again. At the end of the week, when he came for his wages, Girard said to him, "I like you."

2. The second direction for keeping in the bright beamings of the Divine love is, Growth in godly character. Turn to the Epistle of Jude and read this: "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, keep yourselves in the love of God."*

The construction of a Christian character is like the construction of a house. There must first be a solid foundation. But some Church members never get much beyond this. Up yonder on Lafayette avenue are long lines of massive stone work, laid there twenty years ago. Those grass-grown stones are the foundation for a Romish cathedral, but no cathedral stands there yet. Some people start with a certain amount of faith in Christ, and profess that before the world. Then they stop there. They do not "add to their faith, courage, temperance, meekness, patience, godliness, love," and all the other stones that enter into a solid and beautiful Christian life. Every Sunday they come and draw away more bricks and stones in the shape of truth; but they do not build them into their character. Such self-stunted professors know but little of the sweet sunshine and joy of Christ's smile. They may be growing rich, or growing popular, or growing in self-esteem, but they are not growing in grace. They try to live out in another atmosphere than the love of Christ, and their piety is "winter-killed" and withering away. Such religion is a poor, joyless thing; it succeeds no better than an attempt to raise oranges among the freezing fogs of Newfoundland.

3. There is one more essential to a strong and a happy life. Keeping Christ's commandments and constructing a solid, godly character cannot be done without Divine help. Therefore the Apostle adds: "Praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God." I can understand why a back-slider does not pray; or if he does, makes it a hollow formality. But every one who desires to be lifted into the sweet, warm atmosphere of communion with Christ must use the wings of fervent prayer. Those who make it their business to battle down besetting sins, and to build themselves up in Bible holiness, cannot make headway without constant laying hold of the promises of Divine strength. Prayer keeps us in the love of Jesus; and while keeping in that warm, pure, healthy atmosphere, we find that prayer has wonderful power. Jesus • told His disciples that if they would only

abide in His love, they might ask what they would "and it shall be done unto you!" Then, my good friends, do you want to be happy? Do you want to have power with God and peace with yourself? Do you want to get some instalment of Heaven in advance? There is only one sure way, and that is to live in the light-giving, warmth-giving sunshine of your Saviour's love.—*New York Evangelist.*

The Greatness of Love.

BY REV. S. W. ADRIANCE.

1. Paul in speaking of love, uses a word which describes God's character. It is most of all through love that we become like God. All our gifts, our sacrifices, our wisdom may, after all, exist in a selfish life. But if love be their motive, we become like God.

2. The love mentioned as so great is general love. Family love may not be great. It may be merely selfish; and often is no more than a bear shows for its offspring. The love of friends for one another is not meant, nor the love of a man for his church, or town, or neighbors. These are all limited, and these same people may not love God, and may decry all attempts to send the Gospel to the heathen. The love which Paul speaks of is positively unlimited.

3. Its greatness is shown by the worthlessness of the best outward attainments without it. The Apostle mentions five qualities which are always considered marks of greatness. But with all these, the world would be poorly off if all love were shut out. The love behind the gift gives it a value of its own.

4. Then see what herculean things we can do through the power of love. What are the accomplishments of love? Long-suffering, kindness, freedom from envy and conceit and pride, orderly conduct, unselfishness, patience in spite of provocation, generous forgetfulness of injuries, sorrow at wrong, joy in the truth, tender ministry, faith in others, hopefulness, endurance.

5. Love is eternal. Greatness achieved through outward advantages is short-lived. To become great through the power of love is to obtain eternal greatness.

6. Even among the great graces, love is chief. It is greater than faith, for much of faith will some day be lost in sight; "hope shall change to glad fruition"; but the great unending bliss of Heaven must be in love.—*Golden Rule.*