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→ SERMONS ←

A COMMEMORATIVE DISCOURSE.*

A GRATEFUL REVIEW OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER.

BY J. G. MASON, D.D., PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, METUCHEN, N. J.

Ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself.—EXODUS xix., 4.

FORTUNATE is the individual who has a predecessor. Fortunate is the Church which has been accumulating its wealth of influence through long generations. Fortunate is the nation which from ancestral beginnings, in self-sacrificing patriotism, on the steps of heroic deeds and of solid growth has been mounting to the heights of its greatness. The recognition of God in the works of the past is necessary to a wise review, whether of the individual, the Church or the nation. The greatest learning cannot eliminate God from the universe, as the mightiest progress of the world's future will not be able to remove God from the place and touch of power in all her increasing machinery.

The new President of our coming university, in his recent inaugural, said : "We are not *afraid to open* our eyes in the presence of Nature, and we are not ashamed to *close* our eyes in the presence of God." True learning is wont to speak thus. It is devout and scientific. To such a spirit God appeals when He says, "Ye have *seen* what I have done." To *see* what God

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distribution, temperance work, on mission-schools and visitation of the sick, and kindred good objects. (The association in my church owns and manages a mission-school entirely.) It comes next to the Sabbath-school—and very close to it—as a practical agency for getting hold of young men and bringing them to the Saviour and training them for a strong, useful life.

Now, here are two answers, among others, to the burning question of how to reach the young. Let us thank God

for Young Men's Christian Associations, and do our utmost to sustain and extend them. But the Christian Church is the divinely appointed agent for making the Gospel of salvation visible, audible, legible, and efficacious for every age and in every condition of life. Every pastor should begin—where the Tempter begins—*with the young*. Every church should keep open doors and open hearts for young men. Failure at that point is fatal. Success at that point will insure victory to this world's only Saviour.—*Independent*.

Christian Edification

New Every Morning.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

We often see, in the public journals or elsewhere, advertisements of lost articles—a watch, a purse, a piece of jewelry or some other valued possession. But what if we should see an advertisement of this kind? "Lost! one day; it was set with four and twenty jewels, and bore the mark of its Maker. Whoever will bring it back again will be liberally rewarded." You and I, good reader, might often make such an announcement, but millions of gold cannot buy back the single hour in which we made some important decision, or which carried with it a lost opportunity. The one day which we shall never see again until the Judgment, is yesterday. The present only is ours. In fact we never have but just one day; yesterday is dead, and to-morrow is not yet born. But among the loving mercies of our Heavenly Father it is one of the kindest that He gives us a fresh day that is new every morning.

1. Was yesterday a day of sickness? Perhaps that good doctor, sleep—who gives such sweet medicines and sends no bills—has made us well. Was yesterday a sad day? We may have left its aches in the land of dreams. Was it a lost day? Then God kindly grants us a fresh probation, and gives us a chance to save the new-born day for Him and for life's high-

est purposes. Commonly we have a supply of bodily and mental vigor that is "new every morning." One hour at the sunrise is worth two or three at the sunset. The best hours for laying plans, or solving questions, or achieving any mental labor, are the first fresh hours after we have arisen recuperated from our beds. Napoleon often called up his secretaries at the day dawn to receive his dictation. Sir Walter Scott wrote nearly all his unrivalled romances before breakfast; and industrious Albert Barnes prepared his back-load of commentaries before his Philadelphia neighbors were out of bed; the night-watchman used to see him unlocking his study-door (in his church) at 4 o'clock in midwinter. Dr. Guthrie kindled his own study fire, in order to be early at his work. To the artist, the student, the merchant, and especially to the minister, the most valuable hours are those which come new and bright from the mint of time. Let me exercise the privilege which forty-two years of experience may allow me, to caution my younger brethren against burning out their brains over the "midnight oil." I have never prepared but two sermons in the evening; as for sermon-making on Saturday night, the only wise man I know of who attempts it is Mr. Spurgeon, who is an extraordinary genius who prepares the bones of his discourses in thirty minutes, and then

puts the flesh on them after he gets into his pulpit. But the forenoon for study, the afternoon for calls and exercise, and the evening for meetings, readings, etc., make a good programme for most of us.

2. There are a great many mercies that are "new every morning." One of them is the benefit of yesterday's experience. This life is but a training school, and each day brings its precious lessons. Experience is a pretty rough teacher; but that is an incorrigible disciple who is not the wiser for the hammering which every day gives him. If yesterday led us astray, then we are fools if we take the same track again. The mischief with bad habits is that we thoughtlessly put them on again every morning, just as we put on our clothes. If they are ever to be broken off, it must be by fixing a time for it, and resolutely taking them by the throat. Suppose, my friend, that to-morrow morning you make a new departure and lop off some bad practice, at whatever cost of self-denial or self-scourging. For example an eminent minister said to me lately, "Hard smoking was killing me, but one morning I stopped it and saved my life." That is a bright morning in every life, on which God's schoolmaster whips a sinful habit out of us, and puts us into a new line of conduct. And how can we advance in the divine life and grow in grace, if we are satisfied to start every day on the same old beaten tracks, and re-enact the same blunders, and let our same old besetting sins cling fast to us?

3. In the next place, new opportunities are given to us every morning. The beautiful morning-glories which opened under my window yesterday are all withered away. So went some precious opportunities to serve my Lord and Saviour; they will never bloom again. But there are fresh flowers that opened with this morning's sun; even so doth our Master give us new opportunities to serve Him and to do good to our fellow-men. Here lies a generic difference between profitable and unprofitable servants of Christ. The one class are always looking out for opportunities to do a kind act, to gain an influence, to win a soul to Jesus.

Two rich biographies have lately been published—Lord Shaftesbury's in England, and William E. Dodge's in America—which illustrate grandly the glowing piety of two Christians who grasped every day's opportunities to strike a stroke for Christ. Harlan Page was another such worker: he never talked with a person fifteen minutes without saying something to profit that person's soul. Our days are very much what we choose to make them; the happy days are those in which we improved the golden occasions. And the most terrible spectre that can haunt us is the ghost of a lost opportunity. That is what will make hell so unendurable to those who flung away Christ's offers and the time for repentance.

4. Let us take a more cheerful view of our topic, and rejoice that with new duties come new supplies of grace every morning. We cannot live on yesterday's meals. As the children of Israel gathered the manna fresh every morning, so must we look upward for a fresh stock of "rations" for the day's march. The early hour is the hour for prayer and for feeding on the Word. That glorious Baptist Christian, Garret Noel Bleeker, was a model for all business-men; he never ventured into the toils and temptations of the day without putting on his armor, in his closet and on his knees. At noon-day he used to go home for a few more quiet moments with his Master. Such piety has a green leaf to old age; it is full of sap and flourishing. One reason for laying in a daily supply of grace is, that we never know what the day may bring forth in the shape of sudden temptations. The most dangerous temptations are the unforeseen. They come down on us often, through the fog, as the steamer "Celtic" ran down upon her sister ship. Unless watchfulness is on the lookout, and grace at the helm, we get terrible blows; some Christians have been stoven in, and nothing but sovereign mercy kept them afloat. Look at the two cases of Joseph and David, upon whom the same temptation was suddenly sprung. The one was prepared for it, and flung it from him; the other seems to have been assailed when unarmed, and he went down into

the dust. Now God offers to us His strength equal to the day. There is no surplus to draw on; we must live by the day, and just as Christ teaches us to pray for "daily bread," so must we draw on God for grace that shall be new every morning.

5. The word "every" has its significance. Sufficient to each day are the duties to be done and the trials to be endured. God never built a Christian strong enough to carry to-day's duties and to-morrow's anxieties piled on the top of them. When to-morrow comes it will bring God with it; don't worry. Some days in our lives are extraordinary by reason of their events—birth-days, wedding-days, or those on which the chief occurrences of life have hinged. But the vast majority of them are commonplace; and it is just out of such commonplace threads we have got to weave the fabric of a Christian character to be carried up and exhibited before the throne of Judgment.

Let us then make a fresh start every morning in the path that God marks out. He who stood on the Easter-morn, waiting to meet His disciples, stands at every day-dawn ready to take us by the hand and lead us through the unforeseen toils, temptations and duties, the joys and the sorrows that lie before. The last morning is not a great way off from any of us. But oh! when it comes, what a gloriously new morning it will be if it reveals the splendor of the New Jerusalem and the sight of the King in His beauty!—*Examiner*.

Holiness.

BY REV. L. C. HIBBS (METHODIST
EPISCOPAL).

How many of us have ever realized the deep meaning of that one short word? And how many have ever studied to know the real meaning of the Scriptures in regard to holiness? I feel incapable of touching on any point in this deep subject, and only with God's help will try to express some of my views in regard to it.

The Scriptures say in II. Cor. vii., 1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all

filthiness of the flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Now, can we perfect holiness without obeying the Scripture? How are we to cleanse ourselves from those things? Surely we cannot if we cling to them. If we have the filthy habit of using the obnoxious weed; or if we have envy, pride, malice in our hearts, and hold fast to them, though we should continually cry, "I am wholly thine, O Lord, and am willing to let them go when Thou showest me," but in our hearts cling closer to them, what will it profit us, when by the teaching of His Word and Spirit, we know we should obey, and let go of them? For we see by the reading of this passage that we have something to do personally in this matter. God has given us the will power; why not use it for our good and His glory?

And again, read Gal. v., 24: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." How can we crucify the flesh and affections, if we continually hold to them, and serve our own lusts and not God? May God help us to accept the light that He gives us. How many profess to be wholly the Lord's and to be led by Him, when in outward appearance they do not serve Christ? Can we, as teachers, and true worshippers of God, walk hand in hand with the world; can we, even in outward appearance, be like them? Should not our whole bodies be in subjection unto the Lord? We find in I. John ii., 15, 16, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Now, can we as examples to others, and followers of Christ, dress in the fashions of the world, and to uphold ourselves argue the fanaticism of our forefathers, as some choose to call it? Can we do these things without feeling troubled in our own souls? Having the holy Scriptures and the Spirit of Christ to guide us, can we not comprehend such plain teaching as in I. Tim. ii., 9? "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefaced-