OUR POVERTY OF ASKING

The Inwardness of Things Is Held Above the Externals.

Ask . . . that your joy may be full.—John xvi. 24.

Men reproach us for asking too much; the divine complaint is that we do not ask enough. "He wants the earth and heaven, too," said a man by way of criticism upon the inordinate acquisitiveness of another—"He wants the earth and heaven, too." But God is chiefly sorry because men want only the earth and fail to put in any claim for heaven, with all the bounties for which it stands. The Bible fairly yearns over our poverty of asking.

Some one says that there are two sides to every question, and then adds humorously, "The outside and the inside." The eternal emphasis of religion is upon the inwardness of things.

Our fault commonly is that we are satisfied with externals. Real friendship is always an inward possession. It is won in terms of soul. "Purchase not thy friend by gifts, lest when thou ceasest to give they cease to love." As if friends could really be won by champagne at $5 a bottle or at the price of elaborate hospitality. I knew a man who spent half a fortune in

BUYING FRIENDS.

Yet I doubt if he could count upon their coming to his funeral, unless they were assured of a wine supper. Friendship can neither be cajoled nor bribed. What we win by such frank commercial methods is merely a husk. Real friendship never crosses the doorsill of any life, save his who has paid for it an inward price.

Pleasure also has its outside and its inside. A child gets the outside of pleasure when he possesses a multitude of toys, and is not amused by any of them. He has gotten the inwardness of pleasure when, by virtue of a happy heart, he finds happiness in the simplest flower or toy. The fault of our pleasure-loving age is not that it seeks pleasure, but that it concerns itself with the lesser gifts of joy. Real joy is of the heart. It is never born of a multitude of scenes, or a multiplicity of sensations. He who cannot find material for happiness in his own garden in some choice book or in a little group of frends will never find it by going abroad for it.

Goodness also has its outside and its inside. Respectability is the shell of goodness; manhood is its soul. But, by an inveterate practice, most people are still chiefly concerned with tne

EXTERNALS OF GOODNESS.

Pharisaism is by no means an ancient spirit. It is as modern as this morning. Men still broaden their phylacteries instead of their souls. A man can only weigh what he is, whether on a scale or in the scales of eternity. Not the form, but the force of goodness; not the shell, but the strength of truth; not the pretence, but the power of a good life, is the real thing.

I was amused at the evident disgust of one of the squirrels in the park. He had seized eagerly the empty shell which had been flung him. But after satisfying himself that the shell was empty he turned angrily away. To such chagrin multitudes come at length. The cry of Ecclesiastes is a specimen cry of disappointed manhood. No man can really feed his life on externals. We need to be sure that the shell includes the kernel of joy, else "all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

George Clarke Peck, D. D.

THE S. S. LESSON

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, JAN. 17.

The Beginnings of the Christian Church. Acts 2. 22-47. Golden Acts 2. 42.

Verse 22. Ye men of Israel — Peter is still speaking in his address to the assembled multitude at Pentecost. He has just quoted from the prophet Joel, and applies the prophecy of the outpouring of the divine Spirit to the phenomenon of the gift of tongues which had so astonished and puzzled his hearers.

Jesus of Nazareth—Thus was he known to the people generally. Had Peter been addressing a company of disciples, he would perhaps have used the title of "Master" in referring to Jesus.

23. Being delivered up — Surrendered, sacrificed. Peter would have his hearers distinctly understand that it was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that Jesus had suffered by the hand of lawless men. By the expression "lawless men" is meant men who in what they were doing were exceeding their legal rights and prerogatives.

24. Whom God raised up—This is the climax and turning point of Peter's argument. God had reversed the actions of those who plotted against the Christ.

25. For David saith—The reference is to Psa. 16. 8f., which reads:

I have set Jehovah always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.

The quoted verses constitute one of the few passages in the Old Testament in which appears to be expressed a definite hope of a future life. The Davidic authorship of the psalm is uncertain. The idea itself might well be found in a psalm of David, but the mode in which the author works out the idea seems to suggest a later period.

26. Dwell—Or, "tabernacle," that is, dwell temporarily as a sojourner.

27. Hades—The Hebrew Sheol, the mystical realm of departed spirits.

Thy Holy One—Peter here applies to Christ words which in the original psalm refer to the writer of the psalm itself, as the omission of the capitals in the Old Testament quotation is intended to indicate. The word "holy" as used in the psalm means "godly" or "beloved." The term implies loving loyalty. The application of these words to Jesus as the Messiah rather than to the psalmist himself is justified by Peter himself in verse 29, where he points out the fact that certain things mentioned in the psalm were not true of the writer.

31. Spake of the resurrection of the Christ—The application of the psalmist's words to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is hardly warranted by the original meaning of the psalm, which is primarily a prayer for preservation from death, and an expression of confidence in Jehovah that this prayer will be granted. Concerning this point Professor Bartlet, in his Commentary on Acts, New Century Bible Series, says: "Such free use of the Old Testament was quite common among the Jews; and indeed the New Testament writings contrast most favorably in this respect with contemporary usage, so far as known to us. The idea lying behind the parallel perceived, even in such a case as the present, is usually profound, admitting of suggestive restatement in terms of our own more rigorous literary methods. Thus, on the assumption that the psalm was Davidic and Messianic—things taken for granted by Jewish opinion at the time—Peter was justified by the Semitic idea of almost personal identity between parent and offspring (even to remote generations, see verse 30), in using the psalm to prove, (1) that David's true scion, the Messiah, could not be holden of death, and (2) that Jesus, whom death had not been able to hold, was indeed Messiah. Behind all this lies, both in the psalm and in Peter's mind, the deep principle—upon which all really depends—that God cannot leave to destruction 'His Holy One,' with whom he is in special covenant relation."

32. Whereof—Or, of whom.

33. By the right hand of God exalted—Exalted by God's power to be a prince and Saviour.

34. For David ascended not—The argument of verse 29 is continued, it being pointed out that David could not be the object of certain prophetic utterances of the psalm quoted.

But he saith—This second quotation is from Psa. 110, where the original verse quoted reads:

Jehovah saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37. Pricked in their heart—Conscience-stricken, realizing in a measure the enormity of the crime committed by their nation in putting the Messiah to death.

38. In the name of Jesus Christ—Thus making a public confession of their belief in the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus, which was the burden of Peter's sermon and the basis of the Christian Church.

39. And to all that are afar off—To future generations, as well as to those whom Peter addressed, this promise was given.

40. This crooked generation—Referring to the collective guilt of the nation.

41. There were added unto them—The words italicized in our text are omitted in the original, there being no grammatical complement to the verb "added." The sense is that this number were added to the membership.

MUSHROOM EMPIRES.

Retire at Night a Republic, Awake in the Morning an Empire.

Most Empires grow by imperceptible degrees. Some, however, like Bulgaria, are born in a day.

Germany, for example! Prior to January 18th, 1871, the German Empire, as we know it to-day, had no existence. Instead, was a jumble of kingdoms, states, duchies, grand-duchies, and principalities—all joined together by a like language and common political aspirations, it is true, but otherwise quite separate and district.

Then came the historic ceremony in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Paris had just been captured by King William of Prussia, and it was held to be a fitting time and place to proclaim him the first German Emperor. Never since the dawn of history was an empire born more dramatically.

By a strange irony of fate, too, its birth took place amid the ruins of the Third French Empire, itself the creation of a day, or rather, to be strictly accurate, of a night. France went to bed on the evening of December 1st, 1851 a republic. When it awoke next morning it was an empire. During the hours of darkness Paris had been occupied by troops, and the Prince-President had become Napoleon III.

Equally sudden, and almost as sensational in its way, was the birth of the modern Greek Empire. After the yoke of the Turks had been thrown off in the War of Independence, the country became a republic. But the people soon tired of that democratic form of government, and promptly proceeded to assassinate their first and only President.

Then they met together amicably, elected a King, and settled themselves down to be ruled by him in a quiet orderly and contented fashion.

SENTENCE SERMONS.

Love leads; greed drives.

Truth hid in the heart never stays secret.

Charity always goes farther than it is sent.

Good nature ought to be natural to the good.

Coals of fire are not intended for roasting purposes.

Honey on the lips does not cure hatred in the heart.

Many think they are shining when they are only glaring.

The sins we wink at to-day are the ones we wed to-morrow.

To-morrow's burdens always prove too much for to-day's back.

The saddest slavery is that of being ruled by our pleasures.

You have no right to set up your fad as another man't faith.

If you would be farsighted you must learn to live on the heights.

The fool is known by offering his forethought after the event.

You cannot improve the breed by polishing the brass on the harness.

The secret of success lies somewhere between wishing and willing.

It's a sad day when a man lets his interests determine his principles.

Religion has no home in the man who does not show his religion at home.

It's usually the man who opens his mouth widest who drinks in most scandal.

When a sermon only reaches back to Saturday night you can's expect it to last much beyond Monday morning.

WORLD'S WOOD SUPPLY.

Will the world's wood supply of wood ever become exhausted? This is becoming one of the questions of the day. In consquence of the enormous consumption of wood all over the world for the manufacture of paper, for wood paving, for heating, for construction, and so many other purposes, this material is becoming scarcer and hence more valuable every day. In France many large companies have been formed for the purpose of acquiring and cutting down some of the most beautiful forests in the country, and the question of preserving the forests has become a pressing one. The French Society for the protection of Forests has petitioned the French Parliament to pass a law restricting the felling of trees, which it says, is a menace to public health, trees being the great purifiers of the atmosphere.

VELOCITY OF WIND.

The velocity of wind varies very considerably, according to the strength at which it is blowing. A gentle breeze travels five miles an hour, or thereabouts; a brisk wind at ten miles an hour. When a storm is blowing the velocity of the wind is about fifty miles an hour, and it is difficult to make headway against it when walking. Boisterous puffs—spoken of as "blowing great guns"—attain a velocity of anything from eighty to one hundred miles an hour.

STREET CORNER NOVELTIES.

Public story-tellers still earn a good livelihood in Japan. In Tokio alone 600 of them ply their trade, provided with a small table, a fan, and a paper rapper to illustrate and emphasize the points of their tales.

BURIED ALIVE ROMANCES

SOME TRUE "RETURNED TO LIFE" STORIES.

Instances of Miraculous Escapes From Being Prematurely Buried.

When the will of Herbert Spencer was published, a smile was provoked by one of its provisions. The aged philosopher had directed that, preparatory to cremation, his body should lie in a coffin with a loose lid, and easily opened from the inside.

A still more startling clause had a place in the last testament of Miss Frances Power Cobbe, who ordered that her windpipe be severed before her body was committed to the ground. She, like Spencer, feared that she would be buried alive. She had reason. A kinswoman of hers, a famous heiress, was declared to be dead, placed in her coffin, and made ready for burial. The hearse was at the door, the funeral guests all assembled, when by some merciful Providence a friend insisted on having one last look at the body. The supposed corpse revived under this inspection, and lived to marry and become the mother of twenty-two children. This sort of story may read like the weird material of which gruesome fiction is made, but it is only one of many similar cases.

STIMULANTS FOR A CORPSE.

One that has recently greatly excited the public mind is that of a woman residing with her husband and children near Accrington, England. She lay as dead; her husband had prepared her for the interment, and the poor creature came to life while actually being measured by the undertaker for her coffin. The doctor in attendance upon the unfortunate woman had been completely deceived by her symptoms, and certified her death.

She is by no means the only person living in England who has been certified to be dead. There lives a lady in Holland Road, Kensington, who possesses, in the form of a death certificate, a memento of a miraculous escape from the grave. The doctor had certified, the lady was laid in her coffin, and about to be screwed down, when her daughter, who could not believe her dead, placed brandy to her lips. The coffin figure sat up, and is alive today to show her friends her own death certificate.

The well-known instance of the member of Lord Mount Edgcumbe's family who, after having been laid in the family vault, was visited by the sexton for the purposes of plunder and revived, is too well known to need to be told at length.

LIFE SAVED BY MICE.

Somewhere in England is a certain Trooper Holmes, who, according to evidence in the possession of the Society for the Prevention of Premature Burial, was "dead" yet is alive. Grievously wounded in the Afghan War of 1878, he was being brought down to Deolali, en route for England, when he appeared to relinquish hold on life. There were difficulties in the way of an immediate interment, so the body was laid in the field mortuary. There it remained for three days. On the third day the surgeons went to perform a post mortem examination. They raised the tarpaulin beneath which the body reclined, and were horrified to see hundreds of field mice, with which the district is infested, scurry from beneath the covering.

But they had been the means of saving that soldier's life. The warmth of their little bodies had had a reanimating effect upon his. More important still, however, they had nibbled his calves, and so brought him to. He was breathing slowly when found, was nursed back to convalescence, and went forth bravely to rejoin his regiment at Meerut.

A well-known character in Guernsey used to be an old soldier who had been cast into and redeemed from the grave. After a sanguinary battle in the Crimea he was picked up with scores more to be thrown into the huge trench where the dead were to lie. Before the work could be completed, one of the burial party thought he observed a movement in this man's body. Efforts at revivification were successfully attempted, and the soldier lived to fight again many another day. A similar instance is recorded of a French soldier at the Battle of Borny, near Metz, but he revived in the mortuary, thanks to the delay of the burial party in arriving.

BATTLEFIELD MYSTERIES.

Not long ago, it may be remembered, a Russian Pole committed suicide in a London synagogue. Some time previously he had been placed in his coffin as dead, but he revived when being screwed down. The horror of that awful event so preyed on his mind that he went mad, and eventually took his own life. Eight years back the police found a child apparently dead in Regent's Park. The body was removed to Marylebone Mortuary, and placed in a coffin to await an inquest. When the coroner and jury arrived, the child was alive and well in its grim surroundings.

A similar thing occurred at Cambridge, where the deputy coroner was called upon to inquire into the death of Charles Lawrence, a Great Eastern Railway fireman. The coroner, however, was so well satisfied with the evidence of the doctor that death was due to valvular disease of the heart, that he declined to hold an inquest. It was as well that he did. Five days afterwards Charles Lawrence stalked out of his coffin, and went to work.

It is always hard to prove a case of a person having been buried alive there are obvious difficulties in the way, and so distressing a subject is naturally avoided by relatives. Still, there is indubitable evidence as to its having occurred in many instances. Doctors say that, could the battlefields speak, the world would be shocked by the frightful stories of men who have been cast into their graves alive to awake in the tomb and be stifled by the superincumbent earth.

A TRAGIC NOTE.

Unimpeachable authority exists for the story of a girl having been prematurely interred in New York, and of her having afterwards revived. When the coffin was opened it was found that her shroud had been torn to shreds and the fingers of both hands eaten off.

The effect of a tragedy of this sort in another family was to make it a solemn rite for the head of the house to plunge a knife into the heart of any member of the family who died. It was done once too often. The weapon pierced the breast of a beautiful girl who was, in reality, not dead, but in a trance. She gave one terrible groan and expired, and her father, who had innocently struck the blow, died soon afterwards, raving.—London Answers.

THE COOL CAPTAIN.

How a Lisping Lieutenant Got Even With His Tormentor.

A good story is told of a lisping officer being victimized by a brother officer (who was noted for his cool deliberation and strong nerves), and his getting square with him in the following manner. The cool joker, the captain, was always quizzing the lisping officer, a lieutenant, for his nervousness, and said one day in the presence of his company:—

"Why nervousness is all nonsense. I tell you, lieutenant, no brave man will be nervous."

"Well," inquired the lisping friend, "how would you do thpose a thell with an inth futhee thould drop itthelf in a walled angle, in whith you had taken thelter from a company of tharpthootherth, and where it wath thertain if you put out your nothe you'd get peppered?"

"How?" said the captain, winking at the circle; "why, take it cool, and spit on the fusee."

The party broke up, and all retired except the patrol.

The next morning a number of soldiers wre assembled on the parade and talking in clusters, when along came the lisping lieutenant. Lazily opening his eyes, he remarked:—

"I want to try and experiment thith morning and thee how extheedingly cool the captain can be."

Saying this, he walked deliberately into the captain's quarters, where a fire was burning on the hearth, placed in its hottest centre a powder canister, and instantly retreated. There was but one mode of egress from the quarters, and that was upon the parade ground, the road being built up for defence. The occupant took one look at the canister, comprehended the situation, and in a moment dashed at the door, but it was fastened on the outside.

"Charley, let me out, if you love me!" shouted the captain.

"Thpit on the canister!" shouted he in return.

Not a moment was to be lost. He had at first snatched up a blanket to cover his egress, but now, dropping it, he raised the window, and out he bounded, sans everything but a very short undergarment, and thus, with hair almost on end, he dashed upon a full parade-ground. The shouts which hailed him brought out the whole barracks to see what was the matter, and the dignified captain pulled a sergeant in front of him to hide himself.

"Why didn't you thpit on it?" inquired the lieutenant.

"Because there were no sharpshooters in front to stop a retreat," answered the captain.

"All I've got to thay, then, ith," said the lieutenant, "that you might thafely have done it; for I'll thware there wathn't a thingle grain of powder in it."

The captain has never spoken of nervousness since.

CHILD NOT TO BLAME.

"My infant, madam," said the lady in the bus with dignity, "appropriated and clawed your muff, not from mere wantonness, but under the impression that it was a pussy cat, as I have no doubt it once was."

Only blind beggars are allowed to solicit alms in the streets of Madrid.

NO FRONTIERS NOW.

Duke of Argyll Speaks on Possible Aerial Invasion.

The Duke of Argyll had some trenchant things to say of the general apathy of Great Britain in matters appertaining to aeroplaning and ballooning in proposing the toast of the Aero Club of the United Kingdom at the annual dinner at the Ritz Hotel, London, a few days ago.

"I think it is remarkable," said his Grace, "how little attention the subject has attracted, and how very casual has been the attitude of the British public in regard to this really momentous question."

There could be no doubt that no country could now be considered by those who were building aeroplanes and dirgible balloons as having any frontiers at all. We could all be overlooked and spied upon, and in all probability it would be dirgibles capable of carrying besides equipment a weight of between 1,300 pounds and 1,400 pounds, that could make themselves extremely disagreeable.

"The best thing that could happen to awaken the public in England to a sense of its position is that someone, preferably a Frenchman or a German, should have the goodness to direct a large dirgible balloon to hang over the Bank of England. The excitement it would create would be wonderful, and it would bring home to the minds of the people of England that we could not always have England to ourselves."

Sir Hiram Maxim is by no means sceptical as to the possibilities of a German aerial invasion.

"I should say there is no doubt about it," he said, "that machines could be built to-day of from 80 to 100 horsepower, slightly larger than the Wright machine, which would travel at the rate of fifty miles an hour, carry a load of half a ton, and remain in the air five hours at a time.

"Such machines would cost, if thoroughly well made—and they must be for military purposes — £1,500 each, and each one would be able to land, say, twenty men on the English coast in one night. To take 100,000 soldiers across in the darkness of one night would require 5,000 machines, costing seven and a half millions sterling."

SENTENCE SERMONS.

Hatred always hinders.

Giving grudgingly is sowing sparingly.

It will not make you Godlike to call others godless.

It takes more than a few words to wash the world.

The cynic is one who has found stolen fruits not so sweet.

To praise a good action is to participate in its repetition.

He cannot defend the truth who is afraid of any truth.

It takes adversity to show whether we have any real prosperity.

He who has nothing to do always does worse than nothing.

Getting sore at the world is a ready way of faming yourself in the race.

He does not know what forgiveness is who is too lazy to resent a wrong.

Trying to get even with an enemy is a sure way of sinking below him.

The worst of all failures are those who can never fail because they never try.

The man who has nothing but reflection puts his headlight on the caboose.

It's a waste of time to fix up your statistics for the benefit of the recording angel.

Many a man thinks he is a saint because he has dreams of heaven every Sunday.

The man who talks to please himself soon has an audience well pleased with itself.

One resolution to do the right thing is worth a bushel of resolutions not to do wrong things.

If your faith does not justify itself by its fruits there's little use worrying over its roots.

It's no use preaching against the sins of people in a way that provokes them to profanity.

There never was a church that went down except it had first failed to get down and serve men.

More aches than help come from the honey the preacher puts into his sermon on Saturday night.

HOW THEY FACE DEATH.

Of the Sexes, Women More Quickly Give in to Inevitable.

A British medical man thus tells his experience of how men and women face death: Tell the man of higher type and greater intelligence, he says, that he is facing death, and he begins to fight, demands a consultation, talks about going to specialists and fights grimly to the finish. Tell a woman the same facts, and she lies back to await her fate. All women are fatalists. On the other hand, tell a man that he has one chance in a thousand to recover if he will undergo an operation, and he will trust to his own strength and endurance rather than undergo the knife. The woman will choose the thousandth chance, and submit to the operation with astounding calmness.