

GEO. ADAM SMITH AT YALE.

[Continued from 247th page.]

Paul intended by the apparently impossible command to pray without ceasing. Whether the lips be moving or not, the man who has that attitude of heart towards God is the man whose daily life is one of constant and unbroken prayer.

But I pass from this very obvious point to the second, which I desire to present more fully. Besides, defining prayer as the fatherward attitude of the heart, Christ made prayer the real battlefield of life. Now I shall best present this aspect of the subject to you as it has come to me in studying the Scriptures, and in this way. If you were asked what were the quietest moments of Christ's life, and, upon the other hand, what were the moments which were fullest of struggle, effort and even agony, I think your first and most natural reply would be that the quietest moments of our Lord's life were the moments that he spent alone in communion with his Father, and that the moments of struggle were those spent in the heavy task of elevating his dull disciples' mind, of meeting his adversaries, the Pharisees, in debate, and in the exhausting work of healing the sick and caring for the sorrows of men.

This might be the most natural answer, but it would be an answer that was absolutely the reverse of the truth. So far from the hours which our Lord spent in communion with his Father being the quietest of his life, these hours were hours of effort, of contest, of agony. The Gospels have given us several glimpses into Christ's hours of prayer; in these we see him groaning and heavy-laden—and in one of them with heart and mind sore, with the prospect of the Cross, dropping at it were, great drops of blood, and crying, Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." And that this was not the occasional attitude of our Lord in prayer, but his constant habit and temper, is told us by the words "Though he were a Son, yet made he supplication to God with strong crying and tears." And it was just because our Lord made these hours of prayer before God the real battlefield of life, that before the eyes of men and through all the rest of life's experience and the conflict to which he had been called, he moved as one who was already more than Conqueror and who had only to gather in the spoils and harvest of His victory. Christ made prayer the real battlefield of life.

Take those two scenes towards the end of his life, the two which came so closely together; the one in Gethsemane in the night time under the trees, bowed down beneath the intolerable load, the intolerable prospect of the Crucifixion that awaited him, when he uttered the awful words I have quoted; and that other a few hours later in the morning sunshine, when he stood before all the authority of Rome, calm and unmoved, and with these words on his lips, "Thou couldest have no power over me except it were given thee from above." Only He, who had conquered in that great conflict of prayer, could stand there in such majesty and peace. Christ, then, made prayer the real battlefield of life! not the drill for the battle, as our Salvation Army friends do, not the review of parade before the battle, but He made it the battle itself.

GENERAL GORDON'S STRUGGLES.

Now in our age, it seems to me one man has learned, as I read his letters, this secret of Christ's more than others. It may bring the truth home to us more if I tell you of him. General Gordon has told the story of his inner life most fully in his letters to his sister from abroad, and these letters have many such expressions as these: "I had a terrible half hour this morning, hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord." And again, "The foe gave me a bitter battle this morning." Again, "I had a terrible struggle this morning with Agag," etc. And by Agag of course he meant no poor flesh and blood with whom he had to contend to the end, no Chinaman, Soudanese, or Turkish Pasha, but just that old and evil self in struggling with and over-

coming whom consists the warfare and the victory of every man born into this world. General Gordon had followed Christ's secret of making prayer the battlefield of life, and that is why he moved through the rest of his life so calm and peaceful, marched up to the cannon's mouth without fear, and was ready at a moment's notice to go out to the ends of the earth. Now how many of us have learned that secret of Christ, which General Gordon had learned? I believe that it is just because we haven't learned that secret of prayer that prayer to most of us becomes a thing less earnest, less practical, less full of duty than our ordinary studies or business or work in the world. I do not believe that men are driven from prayer today by philosophic arguments, or by various habits, but I believe that many men are drawn away from prayer by reasons which look plausible and honest. We are brought up to prayer as children, in boyhood the heart is still soft and we continue our habit of prayer. But we come up to college, or go out into the world, and our work in the world and our business, when we awake in the morning, is the first thing to come into our mind, and to get to that work as quickly as possible appears our first duty, and consequently the morning prayer is hurried through as a mere matter of form, or else is abandoned altogether. I believe that if you could see into men's lives, these are the reasons of very many for giving up prayer. Now plausible and honest as these reasons may seem, I believe nobody ever made a greater mistake than when he thought a prayer less businesslike, less dutiful than the day's work. He who begins the day without prayer will for the rest of the day be like the man who has an enemy upon his rear as well as in front of him. But, he who summons up the foes he knows he shall meet before the day is over, his besetting sins, his most frequent temptations and then and there in the presence of God asks and receives grace to overcome them, he shall pass through the rest of the day with something of his Lord's own peace and power.

PRAYER MEANS BUSINESS.

Now, gentlemen, I do not want to present this subject in a sensational light. I want to say to you that prayer means business; that it is a bit of solid work that will tell all the rest of the day. And all I ask you to try is this: Just for a few days in the morning, summon up whatever temptation is likely to meet you, let each man take his besetting sin, and call it by its right name, and ask grace to overcome it. I believe that there is more in learning that secret of Christ than in gaining almost any other truth religion has to offer. Prayer is not the parade, not the drill, but the real, solid, earnest conflict itself.

Now I have only two or three minutes left for the third point, and it is this: We are told that our Lord, after spending a long Sabbath day (and you remember that our Lord's works of healing were largely done in the valley of the Lake of Galilee, where the temperature is scarcely ever below 80 degrees and where fever abounds), our Lord, instead of spending the whole of the following night in slumber, was missed by his disciples, rising long before morning, and was afterwards found by them engaged in prayer. That is to say, Christ not only had the secret of making prayer the battlefield of life, but He followed up the battle and He crowned the victory by renewed prayer—by a new enlistment and consecration of Himself to the work before Him. Now it seems to me that the secret of a great deal of the broken progress in our moral growth, of the backsliding and falling away, is due to the forgetfulness of this third secret of our Lord's prayers. You know what dangerous citizens disbanded soldiers make, and

[Continued on 254th page.]

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From the "Hartford Courant," Jan. 25, 1899.

THE PHENIX MUTUAL LIFE.

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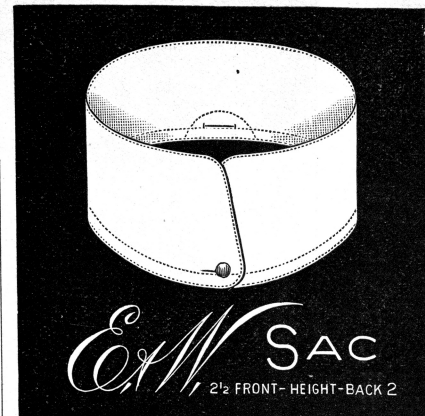
The forty-eighth annual statement of the Phenix Mutual Life Insurance Company is published elsewhere this morning and gives gratifying evidence of the wise management and healthy progress of this large Hartford concern. The gross assets exceed \$11,660,000, having increased over \$600,000 during the past year. The surplus is now over \$660,000, and the amount of insurance in force is \$51,170,782, represented by 31,592 policies.

The assets are all figured at conservative valuations and are worth decidedly more than they are set in at. The company has disposed of about \$50,000 of its real estate during the year, and has added over \$500,000 to its stocks and bonds. Its strength is very great and it has the confidence of all in the insurance business as well as the general public. The drift of new business toward the Phenix Mutual is shown by the figures. During the past three years the new policies issued were respectively 5506, 6570 and 7757 for respectively \$9,871,601, \$11,770,989 and \$13,068,715—an increase of over 2000 in number and \$3,200,000 in amount in two years.

The growth of the company is strikingly illustrated by looking back a little and comparing the figures of say, 1889 with those of 1898. They are as follows:—

	1889.	1898.
Policies in force,	17,101	31,592
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Renewal prem. rec'd,	609,513	1,552,260

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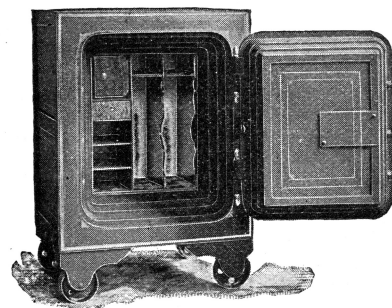
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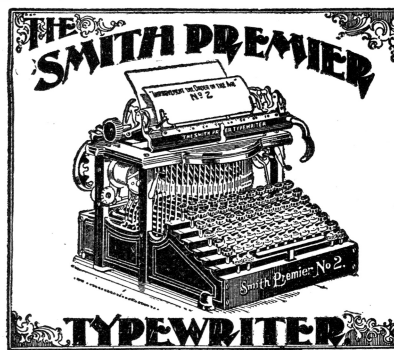
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