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"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

An Old Man's Experience.

"You want my experience," said old Jacob Adams, as he lifted himself slowly and stood leaning on his cane. "Well you shall have it, as well as my reason for the hope that is within me."

The little congregation were very silent.—Could this be Jacob Adams, the God-forsaken the out-cast from every good thing? The broad, seamed brow, rigid as iron; the deep-set eyes, playing like lambent fires under the shaggy brows; the lips that might have been cast in bronze for the will that never yielded; bespoke a man apart from his fellows—a thinker, a resolute actor.

For forty years he had stood aloof from all religious advice or instruction. There were few Christian men fearless enough to beard old Jacob in his den. He was a mighty wrestler with Bible arguments, and boasted of having thrown his fifties. But at last the Spirit of God had got hold of and thrown him.

There were few lamps lighted in the little parish church, and they only threw into strong relief the outlines of his rugged form—but there came in from the upper windows a thin lucent beam of moonlight, white as silver, that laid sometimes over his face, and sometimes brightened into a clearer shining the gray hair that hung shaggily across his brows.

"Yes, I want you all to hear my experience, men, women and little children—and the smallest of you can understand me. I have been from my earliest youth a despiser of Christianity, and a hater of the Lord Jesus Christ. As I see it now—no man can hate the Saviour who died for us, and love his brother—accordingly, I have hated and despised my kind—but in particular my own kin. I have a brother I have not spoken to for forty years. When I parted from him with a curse in my heart, I was thirty years old—he was a few years my junior. I know not whether he is living to hear this good news of me, and to grant me his forgiveness—but one day last week I wrote to his old address, not sure that the letter would ever reach him. I have a son whom twenty years ago I sent from my hearth-stone in anger, threatening him also with my curse if ever he came within my sight. Heaven be merciful to me a sinner"—he added, in a choked voice—"I know not where he is. He knew me too well ever to venture near me or to write to me. To him also I sent this wonderful intelligence. Of my boy, my son, I humbly begged pardon, as I have of my God. Whether the letter has reached him I cannot tell. But O, my friends"—he stretched out his hands, his thin voice grew tremulous, and tears filled his eyes—"I wish they knew how I love them now; I wish they could see as I can feel, how the Spirit of God has taken away all hate and hardness from my heart. A new man—yes, I am in my old age a new man. There is nothing left of the bitter persistence, with which I loved to persecute Christians. My very soul is melted within me. I am a wonder to myself. I look upon my present state as the greatest miracle ever performed—every thing gone but this beautiful hope, this sweet, sweet faith that makes me feel like a child—O, I could die for Jesus!"

Thus he spake, and sat down, bathed in tears, his hoary head falling over his folded arms. There was not a dry eye in the little congregation, and silence reigned, until a stranger, tall, white-headed and bowed, arose in their midst. His voice trembled even more than had that of the last speaker. Lines of sorrow were traced over his pallid face, and the hands that leaned on a large cane were very white and thin.

"I, too," he said, "have a somewhat similar experience to give,"—but at the voice the old bowed head was raised—a new and finer light kindled the gray eyes—he arose stretched out his arms as he cried beseechingly,—
"Brother—brother Samuel!"

So they both came forward, met midway, and fell upon each other's necks sobbing like babes.

"I am here, too, father," said a deeper toned voice, and the old man's emotion became indescribable, as his arm fell from the form

of a brother to be pressed around that of his son. Well might he say, "All this and heaven too!" as the little meeting was broken up and the congregation closed round to congratulate and shake hands, and feel for a time something of the bliss of that better land where there will be so many joyous meetings.

Jacob Adams lived ten years after that—beloved, respected, always abounding in the work of the Lord. And he said on his dying bed that he was going to his Saviour, a feeble but believing child—ten years old. W. & R.

Design of the Lord's Supper.

If we turn to the Scripture accounts of our Saviour's instituting the Lord's Supper, we find that he designed it to be both a memorial and a symbolical institution, setting forth his sympathizing, suffering love.

1. He designed it to be a memorial of himself to every believing heart. "This do in remembrance of me," he enjoines. "This do as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." The apostle adds: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye show the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. 11: 24-26. How exceedingly proper is it, from a human point of view, and how profitable to our souls, thus to

Remember Jesus, "that dear Friend
On whom our hopes of heaven depend!"

2. He designed it to be also a symbolical institution. "And taking bread, he gave thanks, and broke it and gave to them, saying: This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. And the cup, in like manner, after supper, saying: This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for remission of sins." Luke 22: 19, 20; Matt. 26: 28. The bread, then, is a symbol of Christ's body, offered up for us, that we might feed on it unto everlasting life; and the wine is a symbol of his blood, shed for us, to procure the remission of our sins.

The words of Jesus, on instituting the sacred Supper, express no other design than these two; nor do we find any other asserted elsewhere in the Bible. Consequently,

3. The Lord's Supper was not instituted to enable his people to show their fellowship for Christians of other churches and denominations. And yet our observing it in each of our churches, and not inviting all Christians to partake, is complained of as uncharitable;—as disfellowshipping Christians of other denominations, and treating them as if we considered them not Christians! But there is a vast difference between considering them not Christians, and considering them simply as Christians not walking in gospel order, according to the instructions of Christ and his apostles, given in the New Testament. Those instructions require that the Lord's Supper be observed by believers when they "come together into one place as a church" (1 Cor. 11: 20-33); and that the church relation be entered into through regeneration, and conversion, and baptism, and consistently maintained by observing all things which Christ and his apostles have commanded. (See John 1: 12, 13, and 3: 5; Matt. 28: 19, 20; 1 Cor. 4: 17.) Can we do otherwise than strive to obey those injunctions, and encourage the same obedience in others? especially when we hear Jesus saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14: 15.

4. The Lord's Supper was not instituted to enable Christians of the same church to show their love and fellowship for each other. Yet there are church members who absent themselves from it, because they think some brother or sister in the church has done wrong, or injured them; and therefore they plead, they "cannot fellowship him, or her, at the Lord's table." But how, then, can they "fellowship" such a brother or sister in the church or in any other act of worship? And why should they single out this one act, beyond all others? And with what show of reason or Scripture, or of fidelity to Christ their Lord, can they neglect their own plain duty to Him because some brother has not done his duty? "What is it to thee? Follow thou me," said Jesus to Peter. John 21: 22. Besides, have they, in the spirit of Christian meekness and love done what they could to "restore" the

erring brother or sister, in accordance with Gal. 6: 1, and Matt. 18: 15-18?

"This do," says Jesus, not in token of your love and friendship for each other, but "in remembrance of me." And the more we become united to Christ and conformed to his image, and through the bread and the wine we feed upon him as "the Bread of Life," (John 6: 35), and commune with him in his sufferings and death for us, the more we shall be in harmony with each other, and exhibit the characteristics of the "one bread and one body," in a true Christian union! (See 1 Cor. 10: 16, 17.)—N. Y. Ex. & Chron.

"Little Sins."

By Mr. Alexander Balloch Grosart, First United Presbyterian Church, Kinross. A Sermon printed for private circulation, 1863, on Sol. Songs ii. 15.—
"Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

The metaphor of our text brings out with peculiar vividness this characteristic of "little sins." Except to those who know their habits the Eastern fox, especially the young or "little fox," never would be suspected to be such a depredator.

I remember that when I was shown one, it was with the greatest difficulty I could persuade myself that the little, very little creature—not larger than a jerboa, or our ordinary kitten—playing with doft foot-fall and kindly-intrigant eye about its cage, really was the destructive spoiler represented. It so happened, however, that the keeper of the gardens where it was, on coming round to arrange its crib, made a discovery that satisfied me of the character, or no character, of the very "little" deceiver before me. Lifting up the floor-straw, he discovered beneath the separating wall of the adjoining den—a tiger's; and with a start, examining it, the keeper found that another hour of secret working would have

overthrown the wall, and let loose the fierce beast of prey. The whole had been done within a few hours. Those "little," greyish-white feet, licked pure and clean of all betraying soil; and that "little" sharp nose, so innocent and "pitiful" looking, had done their stealthy work; and appalling might have been the issue. I remember well how (as the littered, concealing straw was raised) the consciously guilty "little" hypocrite slunk back with drooped brush into the corner.—Well! exactly so it is with what are called "little sins." From their very apparent littleness, they are, like the "little foxes," stealthy and insidious, and all-unsuspected in their working. We are not upon our guard against them. The floor of the great tiger and of the other mighty beasts I found of solid masonry; but that of the "fox, the little fox," of earth-work. It was so "little" no risk was thought of. Similarly, the believer—for I would apply my remarks to him—is alert and watchful as against the greater sins so-called. He surrounds the "vineyard" of his soul with wall ringed all round; erects the sentinel watch-tower, as in the "vision" of Isaiah. But all this is possible with synchronous neglect of lesser things. Nor is it difficult to understand how this should be. For, first of all "little sins" do not flash out upon the individual who commits them—do not loom up large and threatening to his eye—do not take the aspect of something done—do not, unless conscience be spiritually sensitive like as the "apple of the eye," pain as they ought to do. Again, "little sins," so-called, are often disguised to even the believer by the smooth soft names under which they pass in the world's vocabulary. The world speaks very daintily, very indulgently of what it likes. Such and such is only "a little gaiety" while it is in His verdict "revelling, and such like." (Galatians v. 21): a little "pastime" [pass-time], when it is perilous "banqueting" (1 Peter iv. 3). Or such and such is hisped about as "levity," or the innocent frailties of our fallen nature" and so on, in terms which seem expressly coined, under the influence of the "god of this world," to varnish over the surface of sin, or (changing the figure) to whiten the festering sepulchre; to pass off what the Holy Bible calls sin as a mere "trifle," and to slander the servant of Christ who sets forth His God's hatred of sin, and all sins' real and unchangeable sinfulness—as sour, and harsh, and over-righteous. Once more: "little sins," so-called, are, like the

"little foxes," insidious, in that their results and issues in the past are forgotten. Oh! if man would but mark the slow-sure advance of the very least sin, how would the stealthy burrowing, unsuspected working of the "little foxes" be exposed!

Specifically here then my friends, I observe that "little sins" are under-estimated because those who commit them fail to realize that the most tremendous issues have sprung from them rather than from larger. We do not keep before us the indisputable Bible fact that all man's woe came of what we may call a "little sin." We see the vast, many-rivered, ocean-like flood of sin and guilt; but will not trace it up to the small fount in the glades of Eden. My brethren! let us be alive to this insidious self-deception in the matter of "little sins." Look at the awful consequences that have resulted in this life to the whole human family from the imputation of one sinless of Adam. "By one offence judgement hath passed upon ALL men." All the complicated sufferings of the body, through pain, disease, and death—all that keener anguish which the soul undergoes through the ever-shifting afflictions of life—the tumultuous passions, evil and unsoftified desires, restless dreads and anxieties, with which the mind of man is agitated—the huge aggregate of human misery that has been thus borne by man since the creation of the world, and that must be to the end of it and beyond it in a dark dreary eternity, may in effect be followed up to the punishment inflicted by a holy God on account of that "one offence." Now, my friends, we all more or less cover up this tremendous fact, and so fail to be moved by it. We let the eye "look" its looks, and the tongue talk its light talk, guiltily oblivious of what "little sins" of eye and tongue have wrought.

Worth quarreling about.

Shrewd, worldly men often wonder that people can quarrel about religious matters.—Any question relating to doctrine or ordinance seems to them of so little moment, that they care little how widely others may differ from them. But to those to whom religion is life, including all important interests both in this and in the future world, cannot look on departures with indifference. The late Chief Justice Parsons, who would not be regarded as an over-religious man, once put this point in a clear light.

He was visiting in Salem, and a friend rallied him on the extreme violence with which certain religious controversies were conducted in Newburyport, in which he had taken a prominent part.

"Why do you make such a disturbance about these matters?" said the friend.—
"Differ, if you like, but don't quarrel. Why not keep things quiet and comfortable, as we do in Salem?"

"Because," was the prompt reply, "we in Newburyport look upon religion as having a real importance. We think it worth quarreling about: you don't."—W. & R.

Fashion and Amusement.

The growing laxity of the age gives peculiar meaning to the exhortation, "Be not conformed to this world." The rule of most is corrupt and dangerous; it is to do as others do. The consequence is mutual injury and perpetual declension in the church. You will find professors, who, as they increase in wealth constantly enlarge their license. It requires a keen eye to discriminate between their pleasures and expenditures, and those of the ungodly. If they abstain from the theatre, they go freely to the opera, or, if they scruple at this, they linger on at the midnight ball. The step is so easily taken from apparently innocent dancing to that which is free, indiscreet, amoral and licentious, that a tender conscience will find it best to reject all. Apply, if you can to such assemblages, however elegant and however common, the divine maxim, "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." That young communicant is near his fall, who is often asking how near he may go to the brink of sin and yet be safe. Observe the families which have made this passage from ancient strictness to fashionable