

## The Fireside.

### ONE WHO TARRIED BY THE STUFF.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord," or, as it more literally reads, "Roll thy way upon the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." This is not a specific direction for any one individual alone, in a peculiar set of circumstances; it is a general word of counsel for every child of God and son of man, as to his safest and wisest course of conduct and feeling all the way through life.

A man has his choice between assuming all the responsibility for his own way and work in life and risking the consequences, or of rolling off that responsibility upon the Lord and then trusting him fully. There ought to be no half-way work in this matter. A man should roll off his burden, or struggle under it; he should trust utterly, or not at all. Either the man has the responsibility for his course and its consequences, or God has. There can be no division in supreme authority.

Years ago, I was acquainted with a Christian worker in New England who was widely recognized as a man of more than ordinary sweetness and force in spirit and conduct. His influence, both direct and unconscious, was felt to be always positive and always in the right direction. He had good report of those who were without and of those who were within the church of which he was a member and an office-bearer. While his manner was exceptionally quiet and undemonstrative, he was looked up to in his church and in the community more confidently than many who were louder in words of profession and exhortation. In short, he was what is called in New England, "a man you can hitch to." His business, with that of his brother, was the manufacturing and selling of stoves, ranges, grates and furnaces.

This much I had known of him for years, before I learned that which put him in a new light before my eyes as "an example to them that believe," in permitting God to choose his field of service, and in trusting God utterly in that field. It was at a gathering of representative Christian workers that the question was under discussion as to a believer's duty to trust God daily in his ordinary business life. This brother arose and quietly gave his testimony, which I repeat in substance without the names which might identify him.

Speaking of his early personal plans as to Christian service, he said: "My purpose was to go as a missionary to South Africa. I gave myself to the Lord for that work, expecting and desiring to serve him in that field; but the Lord unmistakably turned me from the foreign missionary field, and put me into the stove business. And now for more than twenty years I have kept at the stove business, with just as firm a conviction that I am carrying that business on for the Lord as I should have if I were in the foreign missionary field in South Africa, where it was my purpose to be."

How that testimony rang out in the spiritual ears of those who listened! That reminded all that it is for God—not for man—to choose the field of his servant's service, and that man is not to say that one plane is higher or

lower than another where God needs and places his child!

David, God's chosen soldier-shepherd chieftain, rightly made it for a statute and an ordinance for all time in Israel, that "as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the stuff; they shall share alike." A man deserves higher honor, according as he is where his commander sets him, whether his assigned place be on the battle line or in the camp guard. He who judges otherwise misjudges whom he should serve loyally. The right spirit is that which John Newton illustrates and commends when he says, "If two angels were sent down from heaven to execute the divine command, and one was appointed to conduct an empire, and the other to sweep a street, they would feel no inclination to change employments."

Our friend, who was God's chosen missionary in "the stove business," went on to tell us how he had had occasion to trust God utterly in the vicissitudes of that business, and again he gave us a lesson. He referred to the great financial panic in 1857, when strong business houses and rich banks in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and other cities were forced to suspend payment, when, in fact, it was not a question of assured credit, but one of immediately available funds with which one could meet his obligations at the bank. Ordinary bank accommodations were for a time being out of the question. All who remember that dark time understands this.

There came a day when a note of this firm for six hundred dollars was due at the bank, which must be paid before three o'clock or "go to protest." That meant failure. Our friend, the senior partner, exerted himself to the utmost to raise the money. He omitted no effort in any direction, but every earthly avenue of help seemed closed. Then he went on his knees in the special emergency, as he was accustomed to go day by day in ordinary times, to lay the matter before the Lord in prayer and trust. After this, about two p. m., he went into his counting-room in a composed frame of mind, and met his brother, who asked him what he was going to do to meet that note due at three o'clock.

"I told my brother," he said, "that I laid the matter before the Lord, telling him that our business was his, and was being carried on now as always for him; that, if he could afford to let us go down we would. It was for him to say. At this my brother said, 'that is very well to say, but we've got that note to meet, and we ought to meet it. We must talk sensibly.' I answered, 'Brother, I've done everything in my power already. If you know anything else that I can do, or that you can, let us try it, but as I see nothing else to do, I leave it with the Lord.'"

"Just then there was a knock at the office door. I called 'Come in.' Our trusted ported entered. He said, 'Mr. Blank, here is six hundred dollars that I've drawn from the savings bank, because I'm afraid of the banks. Won't you take the money, and do with it as you please? I can trust you, if I can't trust the banks.'"

"I took the money, giving him a receipt, and as he closed the door when he went out, I said to my brother, 'John, the Lord doesn't want his business in

our hands to go down just yet. We met that note and we are still carrying on the Lord's business as he directs."

As I heard that simple recital, more than forty years ago, I thanked God anew that there are children of God who serve him wholly, and who trust him utterly; and ever since then I have wished that more of them were ready to do this. Is there any better way to live—H. Clay Trumbull.

### ABOUT DEBT.

The Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon was mighty in the Scriptures, but there was one text which perhaps earlier than any other he had drilled into him, and that was the exhortation, "Owe no man anything." The Rev. John Spurgeon (whose own father, James Spurgeon, minister of the Independent Church at Stambourne, Essex, who died at the age of eighty-six, in 1864, was known as "the last of the Puritans") had stern ideas as to how children should be brought up. Charles Spurgeon, in his autobiography tells how, as a very small boy in pinafores, he got into debt at a little shop to the extent of a farthing for a slate pencil. His father (who recently died in England at the age of 91) heard of it, and the son thus described what happened: "He gave me a very powerful lecture upon getting into debt, and how like it was to stealing, and upon the way in which people were ruined by it; and how a boy who would owe a farthing might one day owe a hundred pounds and get into prison, and bring his family into disgrace. Then I was marched off to the shop—like a deserter marched into barracks—crying bitterly all down the street, and feeling dreadfully ashamed, because I thought everybody knew I was in debt. The farthing was paid amid many solemn warnings, and the poor debtor was set free, like a bird let out of a cage." Not all parents at the present day would have the courage or would take the pains to give a similar exhortation to their offspring who should happen to go into debt to the extent of a cent or so. Nevertheless the anti-debt teaching is a form of instruction much needed by the young.

### BY THE POWER OF A POEM.

The following pretty story is told of Will Carleton, the popular poet.

In a hotel some years ago, Mr. Carleton asked for his bill.

"There is no charge to you," Mr. Carleton," said the proprietor.

The author naturally inquired the reason for such unusual treatment, and asked again for his bill, but was again refused.

"But," protested Mr. Carleton, "I don't know you."

"Mr. Carleton," said the landlord, "some years ago my wife and I had serious differences, and we finally decided to separate. We had been married a good many years. I sent for a lawyer, and he drew up an agreement about our property and how it would be divided. Just about that time I read your poems, 'Betsy and I are Out,' and 'How Betsy and I Made Up.' I was struck hard by the poems, and I took them to my wife and read them to her. She cried, and—well, we've been together ever since, and there'll never be a bill for you in this house, Mr. Carleton."

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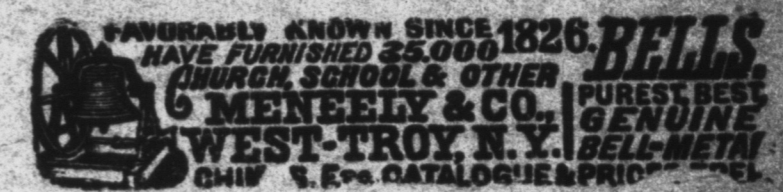
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### THE MINISTER BEATING HIS WIFE.

The story was all over town. Everybody was talking about it. It was too bad, they said. What was too bad? Why, the new minister had been beating his wife! Was it possible? Yes, there could be no doubt about it. Mrs. S—who lives next door, heard a shriek about ten o'clock last night—a woman's shriek—from a chamber in the parsonage. She looked across, and through the curtain she could see that a man and a woman were running about the room in great excitement. He was flourishing a stick and striking with it. The blows could be plainly heard. And as he struck she screamed.

Mrs. S—could hardly sleep that night, she was so excited by what she had seen. She was up early next morning. She hurried through her breakfast, and then started out—to see the poor, abused, minister's wife and comfort her. Not a bit of it. She went to Elder A—'s, found the family at the table, and told the news. Then she footed it on to Elder B—'s and Deacon C—'s and over half the town. The half that she had no time to call on soon heard it from the other half, and before noon there was great excitement in Ballville.

The officers of the church discussed the matter with heavy hearts. Such disgraceful conduct could not be endured. Something must be done. But what? Call at once on the minister and his wife, and inquire into the matter? Oh, no. That would not be dignified and official. Besides, there could be no doubt about it. Did not Mrs.