

RESOLVING AND DOING.

I am quite clear that one of our worst failures is at the point where, having resolved like angels, we drop back into the old matter-of-fact life and do just what we did before, because we have always done it, and because everybody does it, and because our fathers and mothers did it; all which may be the very reason why we should not do it. . . . There is no station of life, and no place of one's home, where, if he wants to enlarge his life in caring for people outside himself, he may not start on a career of enlargement which shall extend indefinitely. And we shall find the answer to our question to be the man who enters upon infinite purposes lives the infinite life. He enlarges his life by every experience of life.—*Phillips Brooks.*

PRAYER MEETING.

"I never make a social engagement on the evening of our prayer-meeting." "Is that a rule with no exceptions?" asked the friend to whom Miss Belle had spoken. "Almost, yes, altogether. One cannot call a visit to the sick or bereaved a social engagement, can one? Only such a visit ever interferes with my attendance on the prayer-meeting when I am well."

"Do you never find the meetings uninteresting?"

"Some are less interesting than others. But I never in my life went to a prayer-meeting without receiving some benefit. Why, how could it be otherwise? Jesus is there, and some of his dear ones. A blessing must follow attendance in a place where the disciples go to meet their Lord."

Miss Belle passed on. Her friend thought she would endeavor to be more faithful in her own attendance on prayer-meeting.—*Lois T. Brunnell.*

SELF-LOVE AND SELFISHNESS.

It seems to be a very common notion that self-love is a thing absolutely prohibited by the teaching of our Lord. But we do not so read the record of his utterances. As a matter of fact he distinctly recognizes self-love as a thing allowable. Nay, he goes so far as to make it a primary duty. No one will deny that he requires us to love our neighbors; but it must also be kept in mind that he requires us to love them in the same sense as we ought to love ourselves. Even in his loftiest word he does not hint that we must love them better than ourselves. That would be an impossibility, a mere straining after an end beyond the limit of the attainable.

But what is the self-love which we are allowed to cherish? Certainly it is not the same as selfishness. The two things are often confused in thought, but are wholly distinct in fact. Perhaps it would be better to say that selfishness is the exaggeration of self-love, the abnormal and unnatural growth of a natural and innocent instinct.

A rational self-love may be known by these two marks: First, it never fails to choose the higher ends of life in preference to the lower, the things which are spiritual rather than the things which lie within the sphere of sense, duty instead of pleasure, honor in preference to gratification; and, secondly, since it knows that it can derive no real and permanent good from injuring another, it is as careful of the rights and interests of its fellowmen as it is of its own welfare.

Selfishness, on the contrary, often takes the lower road, and chooses the inferior good. It lives in the world of sense and in the present hour; and is so much concerned to secure immediate delights that it loses sight of the larger issues which the future holds.

It is likewise blind to everything except its own supposed interests; it cares nothing for the rest of mankind, but rides roughly and coarsely over everybody and everything that gets in its way. A selfish man cannot be a good Christian; if he be radically and profoundly selfish, he cannot be a Christian at all.—*Christian Advocate.*

DEAD MEN IN CHURCH.

"Have you ever read 'The Ancient Mariner?'" Mr. Spurgeon one day asked his congregation. "I dare say you thought it one of the strangest imaginations ever put together, especially that part where the mariner represents the corpses of all dead men rising up to man the ship, dead men pulling the rope, dead men steering, dead men spreading the sails. I thought what a strange idea that was. But do you know that I have lived to see it done? I have gone into churches. I have seen a dead man in the pulpit, a dead man as a deacon, a dead man handling the plate, and dead men sitting to hear."

NOT A SUCCESS.

Often it is said of a man, "He is not a success." But who can tell what success is? Columbus discovered a new world, and died in misery. Napoleon created an empire and died like an eagle chained to a rock. Caesar stood as the first man in Rome, and fell assassinated by friends whom he trusted. Alexander founded an empire, conquered nations, and died as the result of a drunken debauch. Nebuchadnezzar re-built Babylon and filled it with his glory, and yet was driven to dwell among the beasts of the field. Mozart composed strains of matchless melody, and yet died in poverty and was buried in the potter's field. Herod reached the acme of his glory when the acclamations of the people hailed him as a god, and then was smitten by the angel, eaten with worms, and sunk into a dishonored grave.

"Count no man happy till he is dead," said the ancient monarch; and who is there who can tell what will be the outcome of any of his enterprises or undertakings? No matter what a man may do or undertake to do in this world, the results are for ever uncertain. But he who serves God, works for the Lord and wins souls, may be sure of the results. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."—*H. L. H.*

WORDS OF CHEER.

If you are not able to go and invite the people to hear the gospel, you can give a word of cheer to others and wish them Godspeed. Many a time when I have come down from the pulpit some old man, trembling on the verge of another world, living perhaps on borrowed time, has caught hold of my hand and in a quivering voice said: "God bless you!"

How the words have cheered and helped me! You can speak a word of encouragement to your friends if you are too feeble to work yourselves.—*D. L. Moody.*

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So selfishness defeats its own ends. He who refuses to give himself for others, who closes the petals of his helpfulness, and withholds the fragrance of his sympathy and love, finds that he loses the very thing he hoped to gain. The very springs of his manhood dry up. His finer nature becomes petrified. He grows deaf to the cries of help, and he stares at misfortunes without wincing.

Refuse to open your purse, and soon you cannot open your sympathy. Refuse to love, and you soon lose the power to love. Your affections are paralyzed, your sympathy atrophied from disuse, and you become a moral cripple.

But the moment you open wider the door of your narrow life, and, like the rose, send out, without stint, your fragrance and beauty upon every passer-by, whether peasant or millionaire, you begin to develop a marvellous power.—*Success.*

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