

WHO CARRIES HIS BUSINESS ON.

Men don't believe in a devil now, as their fathers used to do; they've forced the door of the broadest creed to let his Majesty through; there isn't a priest of his cloven foot, or a fiery dart from his brow, to be found in the earth or air to-day, for the world has voted so.

But who is mixing the fatal drought that palsies heart and brain, and loads the earth of each passing year with ten hundred thousand slain? Who blights the bloom of the land to-day with the fiery breath of hell?

If the devil isn't and never was? Won't somebody rise and tell?

Who dogs the steps of the tolling saint and digs the pits for his feet?

Who sows the tares in the field of Time where God sows His wheat?

The devil is voted not to be, and of course the thing is true;

But who is doing the kind of work the devil alone should do?

We are told he does not go about as a roaring lion now;

But whom shall we hold responsible for the everlasting row

To be heard in home, in Church, in State, to the earth's remotest bound,

If the devil, by a unanimous vote, is nowhere to be found?

Won't somebody step to the front forthwith, and make his bow and show

How the frauds and the crimes of the day sprang up, for surely we want to know,

The devil was fairly voted out, and of course the devil is gone;

But simple people would like to know who carries his business on.

The Pulpit.

"THOU DIDST IT."

BY REV. THEODORE L. CULVER.

"I was dumb; I opened not my mouth, because *Thou didst it*." David the singer has become David the silent. The great musician is mute. His harp is hung up; the most eloquent of his generation is speechless. Why? Is his heart so utterly broken that he is struck dumb? Overwhelming grief does indeed sometimes seem to paralyze the tongue, so that the sufferer cannot speak, and congeals the fount of tears so that the sufferer cannot weep. The most pathetic picture of grief that I ever saw was a noble woman, who on her marriage day heard the terrible tidings that the man whose hand was to clasp hers had suddenly died while on his way to their nuptials. Her brown hair blanched with the shock, and she sat speechless without a tear. We pastors often encounter cases of crushing bereavement in which even the relief of tears is denied. Congested grief is the worst kind of all grief.

But the Psalmist's silence was not of that character; he has told us why he opened not his mouth. He had been brought face to face with this tremendous fact. *Thou didst it!* An Almighty and All-loving Father had laid his hand heavily on David's back in chastisement, and the Psalmist lays his own hand upon his lips. "I am silenced now; I will quiet myself as a child that is weaned of its mother. God did it."

Ah, my dear friends who may be reading these lines to-day with a smarting heart, it is a glorious discovery which we make when we discover God's hand in an experience of sorrow. If a fellow-man has wounded us, or wronged us, we may accord at his stupidity, or vent our indignation at his unkindness; the charity of forgiveness is the utmost grace we can exercise. But when we come up to face our Heavenly Father, and recognize his great over-shadowing hand in the cloud of sorrow, then there is nothing for us but silence and submission. Questionings will bring no answer; God keeps his own secrets. Murmurings only aggravate the suffering. Rebellion is—ruin. Push as far as we can, and press as hard as we may, we cannot force that solid gate of mystery on which is inscribed "God did it."

Well, then, as we sit and read these words through our tears, let us try to take in their wonderful instruction and their precious consolation. Did my All-wise Father do it? Then it was no blind stroke of Fate, and no hap-hazard blunder of ignorance. He makes no mistakes. Just wherein the wisdom of God's treatment of me lies, I do not comprehend any more than your little boy comprehends the inside works of the clock when he looks at its face and reads the figures "VIII."

He says, "It is eight o'clock, and I must be off to school." He accepts the fact without going behind the clock-face. So you and I are to accept the transcendent truth that God doeth all things well, although He does not admit us into the mysteries of His providence. Our peevish and rebellious *Whys?* will only chafe and worry our sore hearts and bring no answer. Infinitely better is it for us to be still, and know that He is God.

If he did it, then there was not a shadow of cruelty or shred of unkindness in the affliction. This is a precious discovery; for we can bear almost any blow more patiently if we feel sure that pure love held the rod. Love never wrongs us. Love never tortures us, never deceives us. Love never inflicts a wanton wound. The same love that "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for our

redemption, took your son and my daughter out of our clinging grasp; and did it, too, without asking our permission.

"But I cannot understand how a loving Father could take my darling away, while other people have a household of children undisturbed;"

and another says, "If I had not been so perfectly happy with my husband, then I should feel more reconciled;" and another says,

"This is a strange way of showing love." Good friends, this is not the world to unravel mysteries in, or the place to demand explanations. Up yonder is another world, in which we "shall know even as we are known."

This world is God's primary school; you and I are the little ignorant scholars. When the All-wise and loving Teacher is speaking, the dutiful child should keep still.

When he appoints us hard lessons, we should learn them, even though the tears fall fast upon the page. The mightiest, deepest lesson to be learned in this world is to let God have his way.

Your brain and my brain are not big enough to comprehend all the mysteries of Divine providence; but your heart and my heart may trust our gracious compassionate Father enough to say, "Lord, not as I will, but as thou wilt; I open not my mouth because *Thou didst it*."

If we could push ajar the gates of life and stand within, and all God's workings see, we could interpret all this doubt and strife, and for each mystery could find a key.

But not to-day. Then be content, poor heart! God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold. We must tear the close-shut leaves apart; Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.

And if through patient toil we reach the land where tired feet, with sandals loose, may rest, when we shall clearly see and understand, I think that we will say, "God knows the best."

WITNESSES FOR CHRIST.

BY REV. ABBOTT E. KITTREDGE, D. D.

The credentials of Christianity are the living exemplars of the power of her doctrine, when those doctrines have been engrafted upon the individual character, as Daniel Webster said of Massachusetts in the Senate Chamber at Washington, "There she is—behold her and judge for yourselves." So Christianity needs no defense from human lips, for the record of her miraculous power is written in the lives of millions in the Past and the Present, and all can see and read the story for themselves. I disagree totally with those who blame the world for judging of the Christian faith by the lives of its professors, like a good old deacon in the church of my childhood, who used to say in the prayer-meeting, "Now, my impenitent friends, you must not look at Christians, for they are so imperfect, but you must look at Jesus and judge of our religion by his perfect character."

But the world cannot see Jesus and they do see the church-member, and whether we wish it or not, they will continue to judge of the value of the gospel by your life and mine.

I remember reading a very beautiful passage in a sermon recently, where the writer compared the Christian's life on earth to a half-finished organ in the manufactory, and to the artist's rough outline on the canvas, and he said: "Judge the organ-builder by the instrument, as it stands in the great cathedral. Judge the artist by the picture as hung up in the Academy of Art."

Even so judge Christianity. Its organ—the Christian life—is not half-finished here in the workshop. Yonder, in the great cathedral of eternity, you will see it in perfection and feel the inspiration of its harmonies. The painting is not finished here in the studio—its figure is half formed and blotched and scarcely a feature is accurate. See it in the great gallery of the heavens, finished, and an exact copy of the Son of God himself, who is the image of the Father's glory.

Now this is very eloquent and very true, for no one has yet attained, nor is already perfect, and for inconsistent professors it is a very convenient way of evading personal responsibility, by pointing criticizing eyes away from themselves to Christ, the faultless model, but still the world will go on as before, judging of the gospel by our lives, and to be afraid of this acuteness is to be a coward in the army. But some one who reads this article may say, "What? Do you mean that my daily life may be and should be a perfect copy of the holiness of Christ?" No; you do not profess that it is in process of development toward perfection, and I believe that the spectacle of this sanctifying process, this slow but sure growth in grace, this steady gain in the battle with sin, this daily flowering of the character into the full and heavenly beauty, though only a tiny leaf appear to-day, and only an unopened bud to-morrow, is a more wonderful and convincing witness to the divinity of the gospel than could be the finished organ and the perfect painting in the New

Jerusalem. Just as I see more of God and admire more his wisdom as I watch the steady and mysterious growth of the plant in my garden, than I can as I study the beauty of the bouquet on my table.

We say therefore boldly to a caviling world, Study the lives of believers in the past and present if you would the divinity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for with all their sins and imperfections they are unanswerable witnesses to his power to save and sanctify.

When you have eliminated all those in the church who by their inconsistent walk and conversation are proved to be either hypocrites or deceivers, there will be left a great multitude, who are witnessing a good confession, who are fighting with the devil and overcoming by prayer, and in the midst of worldliness on every side, are manifesting a growing Christ-likeness of character, which is the pure gold of the eternal life.

I thank God for the trophies of grace in every land all over the world—for the broken fetters which strew the highway along which pilgrims are marching Zionward, and for the chorus of heavenly song increasing in volume every day, as the army presses on to the final triumph, when Satan shall be destroyed, and the last trace of Death shall be swallowed up in victory. The Rev. John Newton, when reading at family prayers the words, "By the grace of God I am what I am," said, "I am not what I ought to be—ah! how imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be. I abhor what is evil, and I would cleave to what is good—I am not what I hope to be. Soon, soon shall I put off mortality, and with mortality all sin and imperfections. Yet though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say, I am not what I once was—a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle, and acknowledge, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'"

By and by we shall drop this body of death, and enter into the City on the other side, where the robes will be spotlessly white, the heart organ will be perfectly attuned to the praises of heaven, the painting will be completed, a copy of Jesus, to hang on the sapphire halls in glory, or, rather, the completed copy will be a sanctified soul to do the will of God, in ecstatic service forever and ever.—*Presbyterian Observer.*

THE POWER OF LITTLE THINGS.

Many persons become discouraged in their efforts to work for Christ, because they do not accomplish a great and signal result at once. Believing their influence to be very insignificant, they excuse themselves from activity in the church, and, with folded hands, stand in the way of others who are ready and willing to work. No man has ever leaped into greatness by a single effort.

The hill of science is climbed by men of earnest purpose, who ascend step by step. Perfection in holiness is attained by those only who patiently "go on to perfection." Progress is the law of Christian life. Grace develops little by little, as the physical powers do, by being kept in exercise. So in Christian work. If we wish to accomplish great things for Christ we must begin at once and do something specially for him.

It may be but little that we can do; but if that little is done in faith and love it will live and testify for Christ. To-morrow let us add to the little done to-day, and thus continue to work patiently and hopefully for the Master, and in the end the result will be glorious.

The tower scatters the seed, only a handful at a time, and that step by step. The process is a slow one, but when the harvest comes the whole field is rich with the ripened grain and the reaping time is full of joy. It may be but a few words spoken by a little one for Christ, but they have awakened a sleeping soul and brought a wandering sinner to the cross. An infidel has just left the church, where he has listened to a learned argument in proof of the divine origin of the Christian religion. He is walking down the steps leading from the church door, when a little child, meeting him and gently taking him by the hand, looked inquiringly and tenderly into his face, and asked, "Mister, do you love Jesus?" It was but a little thing this little one did, but it was accompanied by the saving influence of the Holy Spirit, and the proud, philosophic unbeliever was brought to Christ.

If you cannot speak long and learnedly for Christ, speak "just a word" for him; it may prove to be the word that saves. If it does not, speak again and again. Weary not in well-doing, for "in due time you shall reap if you faint not." You may be able to do but very little; only do it with your might and the blessing will come. God has promised it. Fainting and wearying in your work will rob you of the blessing and make what you have done vain. "You shall reap if you

reap." If Christian people would not tire in their working for Jesus, there would soon be such a reaping-time, such a glorious harvest of souls gathered into the garner as would astonish the angels of God.

We tire in our work, because harvest does not come as soon as we had expected. The immediate results are not great enough to satisfy our sanguine hopes. God is trying our faith in him and our love for his service, and our patience fails us and we cease our efforts. It is not because we are insignificant and our influence is small that we are unsuccessful, for God can work as effectively by little things as by great things; but because we do not patiently continue in well doing and trustfully await God's own time for the results.

Will not our God, who ordains praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, bless the efforts of the least in the kingdom of heaven, in the building up of Zion, and in the conversions of souls? You may only be able to bring the smallest stone to the workmen who are building up the walls of the temple, but it that is your special work and you do it not, God will employ some other more willing servant to bring that same stone to the Master-builder, and you will lose your reward.

The coral insect that constructs the rocky islands in the midst of the ocean is very small, and yet, it does not become weary of its work. It begins its work early in life and continues perseveringly, day by day, to add little by little till its life-work is done. Upon its completed labor, its successor, small as itself, builds up his part of the wall or rock, till, in time, the thousand little workers, laboring without weariness, have constructed an island, on the surface of which a nation may flourish.

God has honored little things in nature by conferring upon them power to do great things, as the mustard-seed and the leaven.

When the Church of Christ realizes the power that God has given to each member for the upbuilding and extension of his kingdom in the world and utilizes that power, then will she enlarge her borders and strengthen her stakes, and the world will witness the fulfillment of the prophecy—"the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." We are drawing near to that time. Little children are forming mission bands in all our churches, and putting their pennies in the Lord's treasury. The little drops are caught and turned into the channel of the world's redemption, and God is blessing the combined effort, and will bless it, till the earth shall be girded with one continuous song of triumph—"Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."—*Interior.*

PLAIN SPEAKING.

"Your sincere friend," is the signature appended to a letter which, though doubtless meant to be kind, is anything but complimentary. And the thought comes to me that of all much abused virtues, sincerity, in her white garments, is the greatest sufferer. People think themselves privileged to say whatever they choose, so long as it is true, the consideration of whether or not it is agreeable entering into it not at all.

Certainly we ought never to speak anything but the truth. Falsehood has never any justification, and cowardly silence is equally to be condemned. Is a principle involved, is a friend's reputation at stake, are you a witness for facts which have a bearing on a decision which shall affect interests of persons or property, then it behooves you to speak with utter plainness, and tell all the truth, and the truth only. But there are many occasions when it is quite as clearly a Christian duty to hold your peace as to speak. It is as imperatively your duty, sometimes, to mind your own business and not your neighbor's, as it is to interfere where meddling can do no good, and may do harm.

It is never worth while to tell uncomfortable truths, when nothing is to be gained by so doing, and when the telling violates Christian courtesy. For example, A meets B, who has grown older and grayer since they last conversed. Now, there is an undoubted beauty in the snowy lock, and venerable age is worthy of respect from those who are young and strong, yet few of us like to be bluntly reminded of our declining years, and unregenerate nature is very apt to be resentful when suddenly accused of wrinkles and decrepitudes. "Why! How you have fallen off! I never should have known you! How changed!" are not pleasant exclamations in the ears of B, who is too dignified or too amiable to retort that if he has aged, A also has lived through an equal number of years, and needs only to gaze into the mirror, or to compare his present face with his photograph of a decade ago, to be aware that he, too, has undergone change under the silent hands of time.

Your neighbor has invested her

money in a dress which would better suit her daughter than herself, or she has purchased a bonnet which does not become her complexion, or the new hangings at her window make the colors of her carpet appear faded and dim by comparison. Pray, of what earthly use will it be for you or any one else to give your gratuitous opinion on the subject, now that she has completed her arrangements and made her selections? Tastes differ. She has a right not only to gratify hers, but to enjoy that gratification, without your criticism to take off the edge of the pleasant satisfaction.

There is far too much indulgence in plain speaking at home. The courtesies of social intercourse, and even the conventional forms of politeness, which we observe because it is customary among gentlemen not to be rude and brusque, or brutal, are all guards which keep the peace, and make life possible among men. Remove them, and the centrifugal forces let loose would speedily send us all to seek some lodge or hermitage in a boundless contiguity of shade, where we should be safe from insult and meddlesome caprice.

Husbands and wives, of whose mutual love there is no question, constantly wound each other by thoughtless speech, plain to roughness. Brothers and sisters use a candor which is fatal to home sunshine, if it does not kill home affection.

If fault must ever be found, the Scripture is explicit: "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." We are not to blurt out our reproofs and rebukes in the presence of any third person. If a servant or a child has fallen into error, or done a wilful wrong, it is nearly always better to deal with the offender in private, getting the aspect of the case before him or her, when no one else is by, than to put the sensitive vanity in arms, or arouse evil passions in stubborn opposition to rebuke. "The truth is love!" Let us remember this injunction.—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

WITNESSING BY SUFFERING.

You will pardon the narration here of one of the reminiscences of my early life. Shortly after my licensure I supplied a pulpit in an obscure country village. During my brief sojourn I visited one who was generally spoken of by the respectful and loving title of Aunt Mary. She was a poor and aged widow, who had been confined to her bed for more than fifteen years by an incurable and always painful disease. Her sole regular human attendant, according to my recollection, was a daughter, who supported herself and her mother by the hard labor of her toil worn hands.

I remarked concerning the sufferer, after I had left her room, that I had never seen one who gave such manifestation of happiness. After a ministerial experience of nearly forty years, in which I have witnessed much of joy as well of sorrow, I deliberately, thoughtfully, repeat the assertion. I have never witnessed such happiness, such abounding joy, as I was privileged to behold in that strait abode of poverty and pain.

The sufferer had embraced the cross her Father laid upon her; she felt that it was good to bear it—she gloried in it. Jesus, according to His promise, came and manifested Himself to her, ministering by His presence and with his own voice and hand those wondrous consolations for which she had been prepared by suffering, thus lifting her up to the very joys of heaven, causing her to partake on earth of the bliss of those who in the upper sanctuary have awakened in his likeness and behold his face in righteousness. That narrow chamber was one of the courts of heaven.

Can you wonder that the light that streamed forth therefrom was one of the most blessed influences of that community—quickening the faithful, arousing the slothful, confirming the doubting, encouraging the despondent, comforting the mourning, rebuking the gainsaying? The memory of my one brief interview with that suffering saint has continually been with me; it is as fresh to-day as though it had taken place but yesterday; it has been one of the influences of my life.

Through me—feebly, I know, yet truly—and doubtless through others, she has ever been witnessing for Jesus; she is witnessing to-day. Doubtless long years ago she was transferred from the personal service of the Master in the Church below to His higher, nobler service in the Church above. Who may imagine the special, glorious service she now renders and shall continue to render throughout the ever-unfolding, ever-uprising æons of eternity?—service for which, as an instrument, she was refined and tempered through long years in a furnace sevenfold heated, and forged on earth's anvil by the smithings of one of the heaviest of its trip-hammers. Truly to her, as to Paul and to the Philippians, it was granted to suffer in the behalf of Christ.—*Dr. E. R. Craven.*

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