

SOME ONE AT THE DOOR.

Awake, O heart! and sleep no more!

Though chilling dews have wet his locks

For Christ it is who deigns to stand

He comes to save you by his grace;

JOSIAH REDBUSH.

Josiah Redbush was not a bad man, as men go. He had many admirable qualities, and he never suspected himself that he was not a pattern member of society.

A New England town ten miles from the railroad, entirely rural in its surroundings, has not many suggestions to fire the ambitions of a poor boy engaged in a dull round of a farm.

Thus Josiah had a chance to learn something every day. Most boys would never have cared, but Redbush secretly determined to know as much about farming as David Lawton, and what little he said was questioning as to the why and wherefore of every progress of farm life.

Thus, although Josiah started in life hampered by circumstances—for a "bound boy" must exercise many self-denials—yet at twenty-one he was as well able to grapple with life as any boy of his region.

At the time of our sketch, Josiah was forty years old; nineteen years had made him a rich man, the richest in all that region. He was strictly honest, as he understood honesty, always did as he agreed, but was particularly careful how he accepted of terms, usually dictating them himself, his terms were always profitable to himself, those dealing with him must look out for themselves.

Yet Josiah Redbush was a heathen; the gospel of gracious living he knew nothing about; his name was good for a hundred thousand at any bank; he carried weight with him into business circles, he was sharp, sagacious, keen; his judgment was esteemed above others, but he was not wise in heavenly things; he was a fool after all; he had no acquaintance with Christ, no treasure in heaven. Like many another, his calculations had concerned but one world; he had never lent to the Lord by giving to the poor.

It came about that among Josiah Redbush's debts was a poor widow, poor from the fact that she had lost a most excellent husband, but having a fine farm. Josiah held the mortgage; he had looked with envious eye on the goodly acres for some years; indeed he had proffered money when Hanson was sick, with the hope that some time he might add this valuable property to his scores of homesteads acquired in a similar way. His offer had been accepted, with the expectation that health would return and the claim might be met. But alas! death came, and Alice Hanson found herself at the mercy of a rich landholder.

But there was one element in this problem that even Josiah Redbush had not regarded with his sharp vision, the divine. There is a God in Heaven! Alice Hanson was "acquainted" with him. She knew there was mercy with him; and often she cried for deliverance, asking that

he who turneth the heart of man, as the rivers of water are turned, would move the heart of an obdurate soul. One summer evening in the early harvest, Josiah was wending his way toward Alice Hanson's home. He had been thinking of his past life; how he left his mother's roof at nine years of age to battle with fate, and the success he had; the hard blows he received, and the lessons he had taught fate. His heart swelled with pride as his bank account, his real estate, his influence were presented to his mind. But his errand to-night did not please him altogether. The widow's face as he last saw it haunted him, and her words: "Josiah Redbush, your mother was a widow; have you no mercy on us who are left like her, alone?" He remembered it to-night, and he wished the business settled. The farm was just what he wanted; he had a customer for it; he could make a number of thousands on the operation.

As he approached the house—having fastened his horse to the post beyond the white gate—passing up the trimly kept path, he heard a voice; and as he listened he heard the words of prayer. It was a long time since he had heard anyone pray. Away back in his boyhood, his mother—and she a widow—had taken him with the other children into the bedroom, before he left home, and prayed. It was strange, but he remembered some of the words, and it was thirty-one years ago: "Oh, Father, keep my boy as he goes forth into the great world to-day. Make him successful; but, above all, make him thy child." The years of struggle, success, accomplishment, faded, and he was a little boy again, with his mother's hand on his head. She was under the grasses now. But he raised his hand to knock, when the words came to his ear, and his arm dropped again: "Oh, Father, thou hast brought me into sore straits. Thou didst take my husband, and now my home is threatened. I appeal to thee, the widow's God and the orphan's Father." Josiah started; strange emotions tugged at his heart-strings. "Wilt thou deliver us now; wilt thou save; wilt thou show to our oppressor what he owes to the God of the widow and the orphan?" Josiah could catch the sobs behind the words; his own eyes were wet, and he looked about to see if any one was in sight. But the words were growing calmer, and thanksgiving were succeeding petition. "Even before thy call I will answer." Verify to us thy promise," cried Widow Hanson.

Redbush waited to hear no more. He found his horse, but he was a long time unhitching him, and he allowed him to walk all the way home. The Lord had appeared in his life, and he was before the judgment seat. He slept little; his life faced him and he was speechless. Scores of people seemed to pass by him: the widow and the fatherless he had robbed; and the Judge put down the items until the page was covered. No one appeared for him, until a woman, fair but careworn, approached the Justice. It was Widow Hanson. "Give him one more chance," she cried, "he has a praying mother." "But as the Judge was about to speak he awoke; the sun was pouring its rays into his window; another day had begun.

It is probable Josiah Redbush never spent a more profitable day, although his bank account was not increased. It had been said Josiah could make more rubbing his nose, a habit he had when working out some financial problem, than other men in exhausting toil. But to-day he was puzzled with the hardest sum of all his life. The Almighty called for his soul. He found there was little of it. All that day he sat alone and thought, and the hosts of eternity seemed watching him; but at sunset he could endure it no longer, and he fell on his knees and cried, "God be merciful unto me a sinner." But mercy seemed denied him for many days, until in his agony he said, "Pardon me and I will pay thee all."

And then the change came. He began to make restitution. He became a poorer man, but he was rich toward God. The treasure increased beyond. Alice Hanson's prayer was heard, the mortgage cancelled, the heart of stone melted. The mother's petition had been kept in one of the "golden vials," and now its fragrance blessed many lives.—Observer.

REFRESHMENT OF REAL SYMPATHY.

There was an old negro woman, some twenty years ago in North Carolina, who was called by Union prisoners and Confederate conscripts as well "Cheer up Honeys" and "Glory day." Sometimes they called her by one name, and sometimes by the other, but generally by both, as a kind of double description of the humble saint. Because every day, when prisoners were marched in to the stockade, or conscripts were halted within her reach, she stood at the gate or hobbled along

the line of worn-out and suffering men, and with the music of Christ's own sympathy in her voice she cried in the ears of all: "Cheer up, honeys, glory day is coming!" How she refreshed them! Why, they coined a laugh out of their sorrow with the very name with which they saluted her.

There are wants of the soul and hunger of spirit which can never be satisfied with the bread which one may purchase. There is a loneliness of heart which no fulness of material resources can remove. There are wounds and bruises of men, of women, and of children that must have something better than penance, that furnish oil and wine for the victim half dead by the way-side. There are sorrows where contributions can only be a mockery and the adding of chains to the captive. Nicodemus does well to bring his costly gifts of spices and fine linen for the burial. But what has he of cheer and sympathy for his suffering Lord? It would have been better, Nicodemus, if you had last night followed the Nazarene to the olive-garden, and helped the disciples to watch, and brought them refreshment when their hearts were so heavy with sorrow that they could not do their duty. Joseph, the rich Arithmathean, does well to open his new tomb, prepared at so much cost, and give the body of his Lord a resting-place away from the public gaze. But will he bring gold to the weary sufferer on the cross or to God's Lamb that has fallen in the street? It would have been better, Joseph, had you gone down into that howling mob and helped to bear the cross with your stronger shoulder; or if you had taken your place, along with John and Mary and the other women, where the dying Sacrifice might be refreshed by your presence.

There are sufferers who need us, not ours. They are abundant, and all about us. They may be found where least we are looking for them, and with the smallest effort we may refresh them with all the fresh air they need. Years ago, one dark, blustery night, I was awakened in the middle of the night by a warm little hand which was gently pressed upon my face. I reached out in the darkness, and found my precious little boy, whom long since God took to himself. He was standing by my bed and trying to lay his head beside mine on my pillow. I said: "My dear boy, what is the matter? Why are you out of your bed? What is the matter?" He answered in a whisper, "Nothing, papa."

"But what do you want?" I said. "I want you," he answered, with a sob that shook his little body, and a very soon shook mine. He soon grew quiet, and as I said: "My child, are you sick?" "No," he said. "Are you hungry? Don't you want something?" "No," he said, with his lips pressed to my ear; "I just want you; it is so dark."

Brethren, there are thousands of God's lovely children that have crept from their resting-place, and are wandering in the dark, and it is so dark. They want you. They want nothing but you. Give yourself to them. How near to God they will bring you if you search them out diligently and refresh them! Their prayers will crowd the gates of God's mercy, and bring you mercy in that day. God help us all to refresh his needy ones.—The Rev. S. C. Logan, D. D.

KEEPING CHURCHES TOGETHER.

There are many churches who think they need a hired and settled pastor to keep them together. They forget that men are kept together by work, that if you want a man to be on hand regularly at his place, you must have something for him to do which will not be done if he is not there. Men often get weary of hearing things which they knew before, and which in many cases they could declare as acceptably as the preacher himself; but if they have work to do, the work holds them to their places.

Much money is wasted upon poor preachers and poor preaching which accomplishes little or nothing. Less preaching and more gospel would be a great improvement. A multitude of men who cannot preach acceptably, and who starve the churches while the churches are starving them, might well seek to find their calling in the shop or on the soil, giving them such time and strength as they could to the work and cause of Christ; while others whom God has called and anointed for the ministry of his word, and who may be making tents like Paul, could enter the open doors and preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and gather souls to the kingdom of God.

Many a man is preaching to a few dozen people, doing them often very little good, but securing his bread thereby. The man who was seeking employment, and was directed to move a pile of stones and place them in a certain position and when he accomplished it was order-

ed to move them back where they were before, refused to do it, though his pay was sure. He would not take money for doing that which was useless. Many men are revolving in narrow circles, who should be reaching out into wider fields and doing grander work. They stand like the silver apostles on the cathedral altar, waiting till some one should melt them down and coin them into money and bid them to go about doing good. Paul said that his brethren were "able to admonish one another." Churches need to be set at work, to have responsibilities laid upon them, to be equipped and trained for service and then taught to know their duty and to do it in the fear of the Lord. A band of brethren working together with all their might are bound by the strongest ties. A working church is likely to be a united church, and a church which faithfully works for God will be blessed of God and cannot fail to have prosperity.—The Christian.

ENTIRE SELF-SURRENDER.

We miss the lesson contained in the story of the young ruler, if we do not learn that following Christ implies self-renunciation at the outset. Suppose it otherwise, then there must be continual quarrel and resistance throughout the whole after career. Not a few of the hindrances and painfulness of Christian life are entirely due to foolish efforts to retract this absolute surrender, in certain cases and circumstances. Nothing less than divine grace, maintaining a devout and joyful remembrance of the fact that we are not our own, can save us from the antagonisms and irritations which inevitably spring from any attempt at self-assertion. Therefore it is necessary to teach this lesson of entire submission and surrender at the threshold. Where this is lacking there can be no true life. If the necessity of this supreme devotion be duly and fairly pressed, formalism becomes difficult, if not impossible. It is to be feared that many seek, with some earnestness, to lead a Christian life, who never reached the faintest conception of what it implies. They toil on, doing unwelcome tasks, and performing unpleasant duties, in the hope that the very reluctance which they find it so hard to overcome may be reckoned to their credit. They imagine that God is pleased with the drudgery which displeases them. To escape dreaded pain, and to win the hope of a happy hereafter, men may be willing to suffer and toil during their stay on earth; but such suffering and service, unwillingly borne, and rendered, are not worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

Does that test seem too severe? Does the condemnation of all who are thrown out by it seem too harsh? Nay, what other test can suffice? Or what other judgment would be just? Nothing less than whole hearted acceptance of God's will can secure spiritual health and happiness. Nor must we forget that he who asks this surrender at his hands has been beforehand with his own gracious self-surrender. He who asks me to become altogether his own, first made himself mine, altogether mine. "He loved me, and gave himself for me." And it is the very same love, in its wise tenderness, which prompted the first surrender, and demands the second. Though our short-sightedness is not always apparent, it was no less necessary for our well being that he should give himself for us than it is that we should give ourselves gladly and unreservedly to him.—Word and Work.

EVIL HABITS.

The despotism in evil habits is awful. Beware therefore of the beginnings of evil. Beware of the "little foxes" that spoil the vines. Resist beginnings. "What is the harm in smoking a cigar? surely a man will not be kept out of heaven for smoking a pipe, or drinking a glass of wine." Spurgeon claimed he could smoke a cigar to the glory of God. Some of the best men we ever knew smoked tobacco and drank wine. All this is true, yet the despotism of the tobacco habit is terrible. The despotism of the drinking habit is still worse. And the tobacco habit grows step by step, until the victim is enslaved. We knew a highly respected Presbyterian elder who smoked tobacco till he was three score years old. He then saw that his pipe was doing harm, flung his pipe aside and never smoked again. But he was a man of exceptionally strong will. We knew a most admirable Methodist leader and S. S. Superintendent, a man who had fought and won the battle against strong drink, but who fought and struggled in vain against the tobacco habit. He deplored his bondage; strove for freedom, but never succeeded in breaking the abominable chains of a most pernicious habit. Beware then, young man, of the first step. Smoking is a bad habit in itself; but it is the ordinary associate of a worse habit. Your body is a temple of the Holy

Ghost; do not defile it in any way by any means. We are not called upon to sit in judgment on the men who could drink wine or smoke to the glory of God. To the Judge of all they are responsible. Our duty is to live up to our own light. Those whose habits are formed, and who are well advanced in years are not to be judged by the rules and standards we adopt when speaking to the young—especially to those who are regarded as examples to others. Teachers and ministers are under special obligations to be watchful. Young ministers and students should be doubly careful. They should keep aloof as from deadly peril from every form of evil, and every way that leads to evil. Do nothing that will weaken your hands in the fierce battle with evil in the world.—Presbyterian Witness.

WE ARE ALL MISSIONARIES.

Every Christian man is, by his allegiance to Christ, a missionary. There is not one law for minister and another for hearer. The gospel does not bind the preacher and absolve the people. There is not one solitary line in God's revelation which says that the one must work, and sacrifice and give, and the other may board and keep. You may be tied down to the dull routine of daily toil, and yet your life, hid with Christ in God, may make you one of the best preachers of righteousness in the world. You may be a great stammerer, and your life of love go straight to every heart. We can all give our examples. A chance word of reproof, a wayside word of warning, a loving invitation, an act of Christian courtesy done in a Christian way, may lead others into Christ. It is not so much where we are, as what we are, and it is not alone what we do, but the way we do it.

A man who loves the Saviour must in some way be the refuge of the weary. If he speaks it must be as one tempted man speaks to another who is battling with temptations. It is not done by fierce warnings. It is not by assailing sinners as you would besiege a city. It is the old and blessed story of God's love leading weary souls to Jesus, helping them to grope out of the dark and tangled wilderness, and cheering them at every step on the way to deliverance and safety. There is no one so poor that he cannot do something for Christ. Whether it be the widow's mite or the rich man's gift, God will bless it.

"HAPPY PLACES."

The following paragraph is not likely to have come in the way of our readers, but it expresses so skillfully and so well a point of great importance in relation to our school life, that we give it in reference to words of our own: "I would mention the importance of doing all that can rightly be done to make our Sunday-schools happy places. Order, discipline, drill, attention to the superintendent's bell and so forth, are doubtless necessary; as also is the well prepared lesson. But the tone, the moral atmosphere of the school, let not these be overlooked. Let love rule all; let it shine in the teacher's face; let it speak in the tones of his voice. Let the child who is neglected and ill-treated at home, who comes from a wretched home where the father drinks and swears, and the mother is cross and fretful, turn to his Sunday-school as to a true place of rest, and to an oasis in the desert; let him turn to his Sunday-school teacher as to his best friend. It is related of Whitefield that a child heard him preach on the love of God to men as displayed in the work of redemption. Soon after the child sickened and died, and when dying he said: 'I want to go to Mr. Whitefield's God.' The more our Sunday-school teaching succeeds in winning the hearts of the young, the more abiding will be its results.—Baptist Teacher.

"IT PAYS TO BE MANLY."

This what Alfred Stauley said to a boy standing idle in front of a store, who jeered at his manly appearance. Alfred spoke, and would have walked quietly on, but the boy said, "It does, eh? How much a week?" Something in the tone made Alfred stop. "I am paid every day, and every hour, and really every minute," he replied. "Come, now, no fooling." "I am truly paid," said Alfred, seriously; "and I invest capital in a place where it is safe, I can never lose it." The boy's attempt at raillery fell before Alfred's earnest face and manner, and he listened with something more of respect than he had shown in a long time, as Alfred continued: "I am not paid in dollars and cents; they won't last forever, you know. My pay is the trust of my friends, the knowledge that no honest deed ever dies, and the promise that the pure in heart shall see God." It was only a seed by the wayside; but who shall say that it was lost?

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