

HOW TO GIVE.

"The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."
"Of thine own have we given thee."

Give like a son, faith fixed above,
Not like a trembling slave;
Remember all comes from that Love
Which died our souls to save.

That Love, which now has set us free,
Asks only what it gives;
Would have it spring forth joyfully,
To show on us it lives.

And does this Love beyond all speech,
Deign only what it gives?
This wondrous Love can faith now reach,
While giving, Lord, to thee!

O, blessed Lord! may I thus give
Myself, my all to thee;
Thy glory, Lord, shall see
Thy glory, Lord, shall see.

So wealth shall be a spring of bliss
When given, Lord, to thee;
With true joy, bring Love's own kiss,
While setting others free.

O, holy Lord! mid this world's strife,
All selfish love crush down;
Here let us share thy kindly life,
Thy freedom, joy, and crown!

W. Poole Balfour.

CHOICE AND SERVICE.

The Scriptures everywhere represent God as calling upon men to choose and act. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve," "My son, give me thine heart." "Deny thyself, take up the cross and follow me." "Come unto me." "Believe in me." There is no mistaking the meaning of such language. While it does not at all detract from the importance and necessity of the Holy Spirit's work in the soul, it shows conclusively that there must be a consenting heart before there can be a changed heart. We ascribe no human merit to such a choice, but it is evident from all experience that until the point of decision has been passed by an anxious and awakened soul there is no commencement of the Christian life. And here it is that some make the mistake of supposing that earnest desires, deep emotions, prayers and tears constitute conversion. Unless these exercises lead beyond the line at decision they are fruitless. Unless a sinner turns from his sin with full purpose of heart and endeavor after new obedience, he is not a Christian.

This act of decision is his own voluntary consecrating act. He has been brought to it by agency other than his own. Sorrow may have revealed to him the only true comfort; a sense of sin may have driven him to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world; earthly losses may have led him to seek treasures in heaven; weariness and disgust with the vanities of this world may have taught him to desire and seek satisfying delights; the fear of death may have goaded him on in the quest of eternal life, and these have been God's powerful instruments to bring him to the point of decision, and may have urged him unwillingly or unknowingly up to that point, but when the soul stands there, when the question confronts him: "Shall I serve God now and forever, shall I devote myself to the Being who has made me and who demands my service?" it is for him to answer. He may hesitate, he may shudder at the importance of the issue, he may vacillate for a time, but when he does decide, his choice is as truly his own voluntary act as anything that he ever does in life. No one ever becomes a Christian against his will. When the decision is once made, all good things in the universe of God hasten to confirm and ratify it.

Oh, how many have failed of salvation because they lacked the determination to make the all-important choice! They have come to the door and have not stepped across the threshold. With vague regrets and unavailing fears and half-formed wishes they have wasted time and thrown away eternity. There is sometimes a conflict in the soul, because the man, with his pride and self-esteem and love of the world, will surrender all in a hearty consecration to Christ; before the woman with a taste for fashion or gaiety, or fear of ridicule, or self-consciousness born either of modesty or of pride, will yield to the claims and calls of Christ, which are severe and long continued. But the issue of the conflict is in their own power. Satan cannot prevent the soul that is determined at all hazards to fly to Jesus; and reverently be it said, God does not compel the soul to take him for its eternal portion. The Saviour's words to those who finally reject him are solemn and significant: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!"

In such a decision the soul is called upon to choose its God. Consecration to him, devotion to his service, acquiescence in his will, unquestioning obedience, unflinching love, contentment with him as a satisfying portion—all these are involved in the decision. The soul's god is that which decides and controls its life. That is our god which we love most, which gives purpose to our action, to which our motives may be referred, for which we make efforts and sacrifices, in which we find our happiness. Our god may be personal or material. Thus a parent may live solely for a child;

all the thoughts and plans, the struggles and denials, the care and labor, the love and hope of the narrow circle of this infant or youthful life; or a wife may thus engross all the faculties, the time, the energies, the ambitions of a husband; or the husband may be the idol of a woman's heart, so exclusive and all-absorbing that self-hood is lost in her devotion to his happiness, obedience to his will and consecration to his service; or material objects may engross the mind and fill the soul. We call men who have made to themselves such gods, misers and book-worms and devotees of science, of pleasure, of luxury. Whoever has become so engrossed with any person or thing as to follow it exclusively, to serve it absolutely, to love it supremely, has made it his god.

We have no need to search far to find those who are serving such gods, the worshippers are all around us. Though men do not now set up their statues in public temples, nor carve their effigies upon the houses where they live, and bow the knee before them in adoration, yet there were never more idols worshipped in Greece or Rome, in Egypt or in Moab, than there are in Christian lands, in the hearts of men and women of this nineteenth century. The human heart must have its object of worship and devotion; it must be consecrated to something and if its object of supreme devotion be not the living and true God, then will it be some beloved child or relative, some worldly ambition or grovelling passion, some abstract notion or all-engrossing study or pursuit.

The decision of the soul to love and serve the one living and true God, dethrones these idols and gives the supreme place in the heart's love and devotion and in the life's service and obedience to "the King eternal, immortal, invisible." Henceforth He controls the feelings, He directs the motives, He forms the character. The will is under His sway, the desires are all toward Him, His favor is sought as the chief good, His love as the sweetest reward, His glory as the end and aim of living. The heart is His, and if the heart, then the whole being is consecrated to Him. "To live in Christ." The words of Doddridge's hymn are the real experience of the soul that has decided to serve God with all the heart.

My gracious Lord, I own Thy right
To every service I can pay,
And call it my supreme delight
To hear Thy dictates and obey.

What is my being but for Thee,
Thine ever-sustaining face to see,
And serve the cause of such a friend!

"Tis to my Saviour I would live,
To Him who for my ransom died,
Nor could I undertake to give
Such bliss as blossoms at his side."

—Observer.

WE ARE DOING A GREAT WORK.

The rebuilding of Jerusalem did not seem very important to those who were looking on. They despised the workers and their work. "If a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall." The Jews themselves felt much the same as to the work. They had suffered the wall to be broken down, and had failed to protect the gates. But to Nehemiah, Jerusalem was the centre of the dearest associations and of the fondest hopes. There were the sepulchers of his fathers; there was the temple of God; there were the people of God; and there was to be fulfilled the glorious promises of God to mankind. His heart glowed with the fire of a divine mission, and when he came, he communicated his own enthusiasm to the people. Then "they had a mind to work," and then no toil was too heavy, no sacrifice too great, no gift was too costly. A thousand fears beset them, and a thousand inducements tempted them to desist, but they could neither be drawn away nor driven away, for they were "doing a great work."

This is an essential condition in all great undertakings. A man who despises his work will never do much at it. If a doctor is forever deprecating his profession, it is not wise to invite him into your sick room. The man who insists that his own is the meanest work in existence will be very likely to prove it to you if you employ him. A man must appreciate his work in order to give himself to it with any intensity or zeal.

There is a spirit abroad which counts enthusiasm in bad form. It considers intensity narrowness. But a stream would better be narrow, as some regard it, is to see the defects of every good thing, and to see the favorable aspects of every bad thing, that there shall seem to be little choice between them. Many of our newspapers are forever speaking of the mistakes of temperance men, and of the redeeming qualities of whiskey sellers, until one would think that the whiskey sellers are the persecuted saints, while the temperance men are the fiends who

are threatening society. Some men are constantly apologizing for Satan and taking exceptions to Christ, until there seems little choice between them. Such people are not broad; they are simply flat. A flat morass is not an ideal landscape.

Enthusiasm is not narrowness. We are not in danger of too high an estimate of our work. The danger is all from the other extreme. A low estimate means poor work.

We are in peculiar danger of under estimating religious work. Spiritual things are not easily grasped. We easily lose our sense of their importance. We easily drop to a low plane of judgment, which will unnerve us and paralyze our efforts. We do not easily see the fruit of what we are doing. Nor do we easily see the evil of our neglect. It is so easy to disparage. It requires no genius to ask: "What is the use?" The art of depreciation is very cheap and very useless. We may listen to depreciation until life shall seem an empty shell, and its work a useless care.

But the men whom the world has honored and who have brought the world on in its way, have been men of conviction; men who believed they had a mission from God which was worthy of their best endeavors. They believed they were doing a great work—and so they did a great work.

Spiritual results are slow in coming, and they are not always easy to measure when they do come. It is often only by faith that we can see that God's work is a great work. The difference between fidelity and neglect does not register itself on visible plates as coarser things do. In common life we see the difference at once. If we fail to sow our fields we miss the harvest very soon and very palpably. But if we are slack in sowing spiritual seed, we cannot so well measure the loss. It is a slower and more delicate process. The Sunday-school teacher may not be able to note the results of faithful teaching. They will only appear in the slow unfolding of years, and in a spiritual unfolding which is the most difficult of all to apprehend and trace to its causes.

But though the seed be slow of growth, the plant is long of life. Other plants die with the season, this keeps on growing through all the seasons, and will be more conspicuous in eternity than in time. A slight upward inclination of a soul, involves the upward inclination of a whole life. It may be so slight you cannot perceive it. But it grows greater every year, and what you cannot perceive in the beginning, you cannot measure in the end. How much do we all owe to some inspiring word which gave our souls an upward lift? Who can estimate the fruitage of a single moral impulse coming to a young soul from some inspiring word? And who can estimate the power of steady faithfulness which every day adds its mite? Each addition is too small for measurement, but the aggregate is beyond computation.

"Faithful continuance in well doing," is always worth while. The harvests that come slowly are none the less sure to come. Because they do not ripen immediately they are none the less sure to ripen and all the more rich when they do ripen. In all the best things in the world we walk by faith and not by sight. It must be burned into our hearts so that no delay and no doubt can efface it, that God's work is a great work, worthy of our best endeavor, worthy of our increasing devotion, and worthy of our warmest enthusiasm. To every one who would hinder us or divert us, or discourage us, we should have but one reply: "We are doing a great work, so that we cannot come down."—The Advance.

THE CAUSE OF REACTION AFTER REVIVAL.

"How is it that after times of revival, some Christians lose the extraordinary power they received during the special services?"

The above question was asked by a member at a class-meeting. In the conversation which followed, various reasons were given, the leader suggesting, as a cause, the resting on man rather than God. He said that Christians ought to live more alone with God. I took up the opposite view of the case, namely, the withdrawal of the human help, as a cause of reaction. We had quite a long discussion, which was suggestive on both sides. The following are my own thoughts upon the subject:

Before we answer the above question we must ask another—What are the signs which mark a true revival? First, a number of Christians "gathered together with an accord in one place," the preacher—whatever other gifts he has or has not—having the one essential gift, the baptism of power. Secondly, the result—the souls of preacher and people blending together as the soul of one; when they separate, the preacher, in his intercession, carrying the congregation before God, the people praying for the preacher, and both

unitedly praying for the unsaved. Love flourishes at these times. Lacking love, prayer is as a chariot without wheels, or a bird without wings. Prayer, winged by love, travels two ways at once—up into God's ears, and down into man's heart. It will set invisible wires vibrating music into the souls of the individuals prayed for. [We want some Professor Drummond to describe to us the natural law in this part of "the spiritual world."]

One thing is clear, revivals have their human side as well as their divine. We influence each other, in a mystical, unconscious way, far more than we think. Spiritual influence is as penetrating as the sunlight, and as noiseless, and travels as fast.

But to return to the reasons we give why piety flourishes during a revival. Christians are at work, instead of feeling their spiritual pulse, and if they are at work they haven't time to criticize others. Just as the sun will put out a fire, so do little fires of dissension die out before the Sun of Love shed abroad in the Church. We should say, the cause of a revival is united faith, love, obedience.

Now we take up the question with which we started: How is it that when the services are over, the tide of joy and power ebbs with some Christians? (We are not now speaking of converts.)

In rare and isolated instances the cause may be attributed to the minister. If he speak slightly of the mission preacher, or of the work, the Holy Spirit may be grieved, and the hearts of the people will turn against the minister, and that may be the first "little rift within the lute." Thank God, such causes of reaction are exceptional!

The Christian may think too much about the wages, and too little about the work. "He that watereth others shall be watered himself," is just as true when read *vice versa*.

But I believe the great cause of the declension is in the individual soul falling away from that living, loving, real Christian fellowship which characterizes the revival. We want to get cemented to the souls of others, in order to enlarge our focus for attracting the electric light of heaven. God has nowhere drawn the sharp dividing line between the love of himself and the love of fellow-man. He has married the two. Christian fellowship, and communion with him are joined together.

In my youth I once wrote a lady friend, "The less we get of the human, the more of the Divine." My friend replied, "I don't believe in your doctrine, 'the less of the human, the more of the Divine.'" She was right. I would write now—"The less of the selfish, the more of the Divine." Luke Wiseman and Charles Garrett have both remarked, "If I do not find free access to God for myself in prayer, I begin to pray for others." John Wesley showed his insight into human nature when he formed "the bands," and the great Master recognized this need of the human heart, when he taught the disciples to pray, "Our Father," and gave them the promise, "If two of you shall agree," etc., and also gave the measure of their love for each other, "As I have loved you."—Guardian.

BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The first few weeks after conversion determine, in a great measure, the entire subsequent Christian life. In view of this what are we doing to help our converts? Are any of us so concerned about our own spiritual welfare as to forget the tender lambs of Christ's fold? If so, we may be sure that we not only do them a grievous wrong, but we also miss the divine method of our own spiritual growth. At the present time, when multitudes are being enrolled as members of the visible church we would offer the following suggestions: 1. Welcome new converts with a genuine love. Do not survey them with a half-averted glance, as though you questioned their sincerity. Greet them with an approving smile. Do not discourage them with apprehensions of their possible downfall. Rather make haste to speak of Christ's ability to keep them. 2. Do not demand the maturity of godly experience at the beginning. Be patient, after the manner of our Lord's forbearance when upon earth. If their apprehensions of truth are indistinct or purposes vacillating, do not be swift to chide. Observe long-suffering and gentleness. 3. Teach converts that progress is the necessary law of spiritual life; stagnation the inevitable sign of decay and death. 4. Set before them the possibility and privilege of perfect love, as an experience in this life; a fulness of inward life wholly in Christ, by which the soul is able to love God with all the heart, and his neighbor as himself. 5. Impress upon them the importance of maintaining a constant and conscious union with Christ, avoiding whatever tends to interrupt such fellowship. 6. Urge the faithful study of God's word as

the uniform habit of the entire life. 7. Show them the nature and reality of prayer, as God's method of bestowing the grace needed, as well as relieving us in all trials of whatever kind. 8. Teach the value of Church fellowship, and the benefits to be derived from honoring the means of grace. 9. If not identified with the Sunday-school, induce them to unite without delay. 10. Give converts something to do for Christ. Show them the field, so wide, so inviting. 11. Let them be encouraged to testify of the grace already received; doing this in an informal, unconstrained manner. 12. Finally, let the example of older Christians be pure, scriptural. Let there be only sincerity in word and deed. Let there be an earnest endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. Above all, let there be prevailing intercessions for the descent of the Holy Spirit, whose abiding presence will insure spiritual power for service.

DIED AT HIS POST.

A few weeks ago their was a funeral in Paris. Pastor Monod officiated. The deceased was a Swiss Christian who had fallen under the murderous blows of those whose souls he tried to save. He was a splendid fellow, six feet in height, was magnetic in influence, had a melodious voice for singing and held the people breathless as he told them of Jesus. Stopped on the street to tell strangers of the way of life, he said to a friend, as he resumed his course homeward, "O I would give my life to save them!" Little did he think that this would be literally true. January 29th, he received his death blow, but said nothing of it and the following day insisted on visiting the cafes seeking the lost.

But the pain in his head compelled him to desist and he was carried to his bed, leeches applied, three surgeons called, but nothing could save him. His sufferings were agonizing but he was happy in Jesus and only wished to have the privilege to serve him longer. He had not a word of reproach for his murderers, but as death approached his face was lighted as with a view of heaven and he passed away with the ejaculation, "It is too beautiful!" Over his dust multitudes wept. Rough fellows in their blouses wiped their eyes with their hands as they passed the casket of the Swiss martyr. Being dead he still speaketh. His heroic example reminds us of that of Pastor Rey, a Huguenot who gave his life for Jesus just two hundred years ago, in 1686, at the early age of twenty-four. His sufferings on the rack and scaffold were unspeakable yet his prayers and songs of victory ceased not till the drums drowned his voice. "I sup to-night in Paradise" was his exultant cry. A Roman servant once saved his Master's life when in peril by putting on his garments that he might be mistaken for his master. He was put to death. The master lived and reared a monument of brass as a token of gratitude for the servant's loving act. But Jesus commenced his grace by dying for his enemies. What monument have we reared? What suffering have we borne for him?

"Unscourged of any whip, unpierced by any sting—
O Christ! how weak my fellowship with thy suffering."

We are not called to die, but to live, for the Master. Shall not our loving fidelity to him bear some resemblance to his unflinching and heroic devotion to us?—Baptist Weekly.

PURPOSE IN LIFE.

A man's purpose should be like a river, which has reached its manhood in the plain. Though if you watch it you shall see little eddies that seem as if they had changed their minds, and were going back again to the mountains; yet all its mighty currents flow changeless to the sea.

If you build a dam across it, in a few hours it will go over it with a voice of victory.

It does check it at its mouth, it is only that when they ebb it may sweep on again to the ocean.

So goes the Orinoco or the Amazon across a continent, never losing its way or changing its direction for the thousand streams that fall into it on the right hand or on the left, but only using them to increase its force, and bearing them onward in its resistless channel.—Selected.

Pharaoh's chariot-wheels dragged heavily, for God fought against him. Elijah's ran smoothly, for they went on heaven's errand. The grave hides the good from view, but it cannot kill the fragrance of their memories nor blast the influence of their gracious acts. "Thou God seest me," impressed on the mind and heart of a child, is worth more than a diploma granted for proficiency in study where the fear of God is not taught. They who work under God's orders may rest under his smile. The best memory is that which forgets wrongs. It is most like the memory of Him who says of his pardoned people: "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

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