

## HE LEADS US ON.

He leads us on  
By paths we do not know;  
Upward He leads us, though our steps be  
slow,  
Though oft we faint and falter by the way,  
Though storms of darkness oft obscure the  
day.

Yet, when the clouds are gone,  
We know He leads us on.  
He leads us on  
Through all the unquiet years;  
Past all our dreamland hopes and doubts  
and fears  
He guides our steps. Through all the  
tangled maze  
Of sin, or sorrow, or clouded days,  
We know His will is done,  
And still He leads us on.

And He at last,  
After the weary strife,  
After the restless fever we call life—  
After the dreariness and aching pain—  
The wayward struggles which have proved  
in vain—  
After our toils are past—  
Will give us rest at last.

## "RUN BY A RING."

BY A MEMBER OF THAT CHURCH.

Yea, verily, a ring. Our church was run by a ring. At least some of the brethren said so; and they claimed to know all about it. It is surprising what comfort they seemed to take in ringing the changes upon this phrase. "The ring" seemed to consist of Deacon A., superintendent of the Sunday-school, B., Deacon C., and Brothers D., E. and F. Two of them had considerable means and all of them had a good deal of piety. Whenever anything was to be done, everybody seemed to expect one of these brethren to begin it and the rest of them to help him. They always seemed to be willing to give their time to the church, and they were as generous of their money as of their time. None of them seemed to be ambitious, and even the three who had accepted offices had done so with apparent reluctance. They often urged other brethren to join them, but without much success. So when anything was to be done, any money to be raised, any new measures to be devised, A., B., C., D., E. and F. were the ones to act. They never acted hastily, but somehow nobody in the church seemed anxious to move first, nobody else was willing to accept any appointment which involved the expenditure of money or time, and it almost looked as if things would never be done at all if they were not taken up by "the ring."

But in our church things were never allowed to languish, for "the ring" was sure to discover what was needed to be done, and was also ready to see that it was done. "The ring," unlike most rings, seemed always to act in perfect harmony. (It consisted of three business men, a teacher, a physician, and a farmer.) There was never any jealousy or bickering among its members. They were just as harmonious in a business conference as in a prayer-meeting, and strangely enough every member of "the ring" was a regular attendant at the prayer-meeting.

People in other churches thought things were moving gloriously in the old Main street church. But by and by it began to be whispered about the village that things were not just what they seemed, for the church was "run by a ring." Among the grumblers were some of the wealthiest members of the church, who did not hesitate to drop frequent remarks about the extravagance of "the ring." These wealthier members had never been noted for generosity. When asked for specific items of extravagance they generally changed the subject. When asked if the members of "the ring" were not giving three times as much in proportion to their means as anybody else, they reluctantly admitted that it was so. The Main street church in the village of X. was known far and wide for its activity, its generosity, its cordiality, its large congregations and for the extensive and beneficent influence which it exerted. Pastors held it up as an example to their own lethargic churches. Some of its laymen were well known throughout the state; but it was not generally known outside the village that the church was "run by a ring."

But old Father Time was at work in the village of X. as well as in Chicago. Deacon A. was found one morning, dead at his desk with some memoranda of a missionary enterprise before him which he would have submitted to "the ring" that evening. Superintendent B. was called to a professorship in the Boston Latin School only two weeks later. In the following spring Deacon C. sold his farm and moved to Dakota. Doctor D. was thrown from his carriage one dark night in November and his injuries soon resulted in paralysis. Brothers E. and F. were caught in the financial crash of that year and lost all their property.

Time was working great changes in the Main street church. Some of the members who had talked a good deal about "the ring," began to feel as if the church was meeting heavy losses. Others said that the rest of the church would now have some voice in the management.

Time went on. The prayer-meetings soon began to dwindle in number and interest, for some of the best helpers were gone. Strangers felt that the church was less cordial than it had been; some whose Christian greeting had been better than the sermon were gone. The church-building was injured in a September gale, and nobody seemed ready to move to repair it; some who used to look after such things, were gone. The treasurer reported a heavy falling off in the benevolent offerings of the church "for," as he remarked, "some of our most generous givers are gone." The pastor began to look around for helpers in a new enterprise which he had been planning. He turned to the critics of the old ring, to the men of leisure and the men of wealth, but they were all too busy. They began to feel his loneliness more than ever. In three months he resigned. It was a long time before the old church ever took any step toward securing his successor. All this time the church was running down. At length it made a move, but to everybody's surprise, the pastor who at one time, could have been had for the asking seemed to be afraid of the old church now. At length it secured a young man of great promise just out of the seminary and expected to win all that had been lost. But somehow things did not go as they used to. The pastor did well, but there was a dearth of helpers, and the old prestige was lost.

It is just beginning to dawn upon our church that it needs "a ring," a ring of good, earnest, generous Christian laymen, who will deny themselves for the sake of their church and for the sake of Christ.

The members of the Main street church are praying the Lord to raise them up "a ring."—Standard.

## "NEVERTHELESS" "AFTERWARD."

BY THE LATE REV. H. H. DOBNEY.

Everybody knows how the estimate of things differs—how differently they look before, or at the time, and 'afterwards.'

If only persons saw a thing before doing it as they are sure to see it afterward, what an amount, an immense amount of sorrow, of remorse, of anguish, of misery would be saved. Here is the case put as graphically as we could wish it presented; it is so appealing it appeals to several of the senses at once. And there is not wanting something to persuade that it is not so bad as it is made out to be, that one might well emancipate oneself from the old prejudice about it being sinful. 'What harm can there be in following the inclination? What is the fruit for but to be eaten, and what is he the worse? Lay aside these petty scruples; take up your freedom, enjoy the sweets (so-called) of life while you can.' Ah! I urge you to say, I dare not! What harm can there be! It is just that—the Nevertheless and the Afterward.

There is something within that is more than half willing to be beguiled; that finds all the persuasion to the pleasant. And the inward feelings begin to make the outward thing look more alluring than ever; and the outward tendency, inclination, new-born and not premeditated put down gathers strength. The Eve becomes more powerfully persuasive and the will yields. The fruit is eagerly snatched, eaten, the sweetness tested—enjoyed for long? How long? Not very long, you may be sure. And then the thought 'Nevertheless, afterward.' 'And their eyes were opened.' For hidden fruit once eaten never looks the same again. It may be eaten again; but not under the same circumstances. Why, some will tell how our jaws will be empty if people ask how the things they are impelled to do will look when once done and beyond recall! See a case:—A man of good character, of public position, a favorite candidate with a large number of electors, a director of a company, has been convicted of fraud. He makes a most piteous appeal to the judge, referring to the awful misery of the one night he had spent in the prison, pleading for mercy for the sake of his family—but all, all in vain. The judge told him that if he knew the prisoner would die within twenty-four hours he must do his duty—and then sentenced him to eighteen months imprisonment with hard labor. Now how does getting money by fraud look to him as he finds himself in the prison-dress? Before and after!

Eyes indeed 'opened.' Let anyone who is conscious of any secret dishonesty, of fraud of any kind, fancy himself in a court of justice, in a prison cell, with the prison-dress on him, and how will his ill-gotten gains look to him now? A youth getting into unwise company feels himself called upon for expenses he cannot afford. His companions are noisy, boisterous, full of confidence. He cannot nerve himself to say, I cannot afford this or that.

He trifles with his conscience, he lets himself believe there is no harm in his taking a trifle from his employer. 'He ought to pay him more, and he really is only thus taking what he ought to give him.' He goes out with money in his pocket, but already there is a weight at his heart. He spends this stolen money! He comes back. His self-respect is gone. He feels as if every one suspected him. He tries to throw it off, but brought up by a pious mother, taught by her to love right, he cannot.

The pleasures of sin are but for a season. Wrong has to be repented of and forsaken. The repentance must be as deep as the evil. Even God's forgiveness cannot render unnecessary man's deepest repentance. The two things must occur before the conscience and heart can be right again. And if the sin has involved wrong or by word or deed to another, then reparation has to be made to the full. It may be ever so great an humiliation, but it must be done. The 'Nevertheless afterward,' comes here also.—Bap. Weekly.

## A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

Whether or not our boys shall become virtuous men depends very largely on the warmth of their attachment in boyhood to their home. And how fond they are of home depends almost entirely on their mothers. Not on maternal love and conscientiousness only, but on that graceful, womanly tact which almost every member of the sex displays in a thousand ways before her lover and her husband, and which every woman owes to her son far more than all else. Let us give two instances.

Here is one clipped from an exchange:

"There are those bannisters all finger-marks again," said Mrs. Curry, as she made haste with a soft linen cloth to polish down the shining oak again. "George," she said with a flushed face, as she gave the cloth a decided wrench out of the basin of suds, "if you go up those stairs again before bed time you shall be punished."

"I should like to know where I am to go," said George; "I cannot stay in the kitchen, I am so much in the way; and I can't go into the parlor for fear I'll muss that up; and now you say I can't go up to my own room. I know of a grand place where I can go," he added to himself, "boys are never told they are in the way there, and we can have lots of fun. I'll go down to Nili's corner. I can smoke a cigar as well as any boy, if it did make me sick the first time. They shall not laugh at me again about it."

"And so the careful housekeeper virtually drove her son from the door to hang about the steps and sit under the broad, inviting portico of the village grog-shop."

Mothers who are disturbed by the noise and untidiness of boys at home must be careful lest by their reproaches they drive their children from home in search of pleasure elsewhere.

In contrast to that read the following from the pen of Mr. George W. Copeland, an old subscriber. In a letter commenting on the attitude of *The Christian Advocate* on the temperance question he thus alludes to his home training and its beneficent consequences:

"My father was a miller, and in connection with his mill kept a 'store' and sold whiskey. Whiskey could not be drunk in the store, but it was brought into the mill and drank, and all I had to do was to walk up and help myself; but a good Methodist mother gilded home with delight and saved me. I have fought liquor for seventy years. I was but seven years old when I first set my face against it. I have even been threatened to be gagged with whiskey, but I stood firm."

This venerable man has lived in neighborhoods where the power of the saloon was dominant. But the love of home and the high ideals of conduct which he got from his mother made him proof against temptation, and turned him into a champion of virtue.—*Christian Advocate*.

## A GENUINE LOVE STORY.

If all husbands treated their wives with as much tenderness as the one herein described, possibly there would be fewer applications for divorce. The story is said to have been told originally by Mr. Spurgeon:

A young clergyman and his bride were invited guests at a large party given by a wealthy parishioner. In all the freshness and elegance of her bridal wardrobe the young wife shone among the throng, distinguished by her comeliness and vivacity and rich attire; and when, during the evening, her husband drew her aside and whispered to her that she was the most beautiful woman in all the company, and that his heart was bursting with pride and love for her, she thought herself the happiest wife in the world. Ten years later the

same husband and wife were guests at the same house, where was gathered a similar gay company. The wife of ten years ago wore the same dress she had worn on the previous occasion; and, of course, it had been altered and remade, and was old-fashioned and almost shabby. Toil and care and motherhood and pinched circumstances had taken the roses out of her cheeks and the little spring out of her form. She sat apart from the crowd, care-worn and pre-occupied. Her small hands, roughened, with coarse toil, were ungloved, for the minister's salary was painfully small.

A little apart the ten-year husband stood and looked at his wife, and as he observed her faded dress and weary attitude a great sense of all her patient, loving faithfulness came over his heart. Looking up, she caught his earnest gaze, and noticed that his eyes were filled with tears. She rose and went to him, her questioning eyes mutely asking for an explanation of his emotion; and when he tenderly took her hand, and placing it on his arm, led her away from the crowd, and told her how he had been thinking of her as she looked, ten years before, when she was a bride, and how much more precious she was to him now, and how much more beautiful, for all her shabby dress and roughened hands, and how he appreciated all her sacrifices and patient toil for him and their children, a great wave of happiness filled her heart, a light shone in her face that gave it more than its youthful beauty, and in all the company there was not so happy a couple as this husband and wife, their hearts and faces aglow from the flaming up of pure sentiment that transfigured and ennobled and glorified all the toils and privations they had endured.

## BLUNT PEOPLE.

Kate Thorn says there are people who take great credit to themselves because, as they say, they are blunt. Blunt with them means honest. They say just what they mean, no matter whom it hits or whose feelings are wounded. They abhor shams, they tell us; they don't want any hypocrisy; they don't pretend to anything; they are blunt.

And our prayer is, the Lord deliver us from blunt people! They are a nuisance in society. They are the rock on which all friendships split. A dozen of them in a community would break up all the good feeling that would naturally be bred in a century; and a full-grown cyclone as a bosom friend would be infinitely preferable to such a person; for anybody could dig a hole in the ground and get away from the cyclone, but from the person who speaks his mind on every occasion there is no escape.

Your blunt man will speak to you across the room—and when the room is full of company—and ask you if it is true about you losing ten thousand dollars dabbling in stocks. And he will supplement the question by the remark that he thought a man of your age would have known better. As for him, he never goes into anything unless he knows it is sure. He will tell an unmarried woman who flatters herself that with her hair crimped and her false teeth in, she looks young; that he remembers seeing her mother lead her to church fifty-five years ago, a little thing seven or eight years old. And if you should remonstrate with him for speaking thus, he would stare at you, and wonder if there is any disgrace in being led to church by one's mother.

The blunt man will ask you what you paid for your teeth just as readily as he would inquire as to the cost of your hat; and he likes to tell you that you are prater than Mr. Simpson, who is about your age; and he suggests to you that, probably, you will have the rheumatism, as your father had! Rheumatism is hereditary.

A blunt woman is worse than a blunt man, because a woman can always find such nice opportunities for saying provoking things.

## RANDOM READINGS.

Unshed tears are never wiped away.

He that respects not is not respected.

—George Herbert.

Where there is no hope there can be no endeavor.—Dr. Johnson.

He who really fights sin always strikes his own faults first.—*Zion's Herald*.

If God gives us food for our lives, let us not, with murmuring Israel, ask food for our lusts.

He that is afraid of solemn things has probably solemn reason to be afraid of them.—*Spurgeon*.

I never think he is quite ready for another world who is weary of this.—*Hattie A. Hamilton*.

When alone, guard your thoughts; when in the temple, guard your temper; when in company, guard your words.



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