

THE WONT'S.

There are various spiritual diseases to which Christians and church members are heirs. One of these, and the most stubborn of all, is that which, after a careful diagnosis of the case, can only be pronounced, "the won'ts." If a man has a slight attack he may recover soon, or if the attack is of the acute form skilfully applied gentle remedies will usually give relief. But a genuine case of the won'ts, badly taken, and tending to a chronic state, so cripples its subject as to render him useless in the church.

The won'ts is a disease that is not usually regarded as dangerous or likely to prove fatal; but is nevertheless very distressing and stubborn in resistance of all treatment which seeks its rebuke and casting out. The affliction sometimes appears in a single or singular form, and then it is only the "won't"—a kind of spiritual cramp; but at other times it appears in a plural or legion form, and assumes the name "won'ts," and is worse than the measles.

The symptoms of the disease are readily discovered, but often the most thorough diagnosis fails to discover its causes. But there they are in all their resistance these "won'ts." The disease is common both to men and women, and sometimes seizes an entire family. The forms of the trouble are varied and numerous.

Sometimes the brother or sister will not attend the services of the church. They are pleased to have the visits of the pastor. They wish to continue members of the church. They do not cease prayer or trying to live a Christian life. But they are not able to get to the church on the Sabbath or to the prayer-meeting during the week. They have nothing against the pastor that can be found out so as to correct it. Every member of the church would be glad to have them join in the worship and service of the house of God as in former times. But something is wrong in the world somewhere. Somebody has blundered. It is a bad case of "won'ts." What can the pastor do for it?

Sometimes the development of the trouble is in the withholding of all support from the pastor. The afflicted person has the proper respect for the ministry, and has long been blessed by the association and services of the preacher of the gospel. There is still a love for the gospel, and a belief that it should be and must be supported; but they have the won'ts. The preacher may be a man of God and unquestioned piety and integrity in the gospel work. His sermons and prayers and heart anxieties and visitations are not without appreciation. He has a family that bears the anxieties and privations of this work with a trembling but trustful heart. All this is well-known; but the member has the "won'ts." The church and the work of God and the preaching of the gospel might all stop sooner than this poor afflicted member could be got to move. Something has gone wrong; somebody has done that which the person does not like. Satan is not dead, and therefore the preacher "may go to grass." It is a genuine case of the "won'ts," and they have always been in the church.

This disease sometimes develops into a lack of sympathy and support to the various benevolent interests and enterprises of the church and the cause of God. It is not denied that the poor should be cared for. It would not be right to allow the worn-out preacher and his family to starve or beg. The various interests of the church ought to be maintained, and must be, if the church is to live. The gospel ought to be sent to the heathen, and our missionaries in the far-off field ought be supported. It is the great work of God, and the cause for which Jesus died; but they have the won'ts. That is all. Some one has not treated them just right, or something has gone wrong, or they have heard something, or something is the matter somewhere, and it is brought on the won'ts, and the case is unyielding.

Sometimes the disease affects participation in the devotions of the church. The lips are paralyzed. The "daughters of music" are brought low. There is no voice or song. The music and the time of singing of birds is passed. Some times the person refuses to testify in the meetings of the church or to pray in the prayer-meeting, or sits in the pew, or remains at home during the communion. No one can tell what is wrong, but that something is awry can well be seen. It is apparent in the countenance and the conversation and the conduct. It is a real case of the won'ts.

It is remarkable that any follower of Christ should allow any condition to contravene the performance of those things which are essential to the church, and which afford to the person so much comfort and consolation and make him of one heart with others in the blessed work of Jesus Christ. But so it is with the

won'ts. You can apply no ordinary reasoning to them. They are just the won'ts; and stubborn things they are. The spirits of many a preacher have been crushed and his heart broken by his members over whom he watches, for whom he prays and toils, taking the won'ts. May the Lord save the church and its people from this destruction of stubbornness.—*Telescope.*

ADVICE TO SOMEBODY.

We do not know whose case our advice will fit, but we have no doubt that it is just what is needed by somebody, and we put it on record, in the hope that it will reach the eye of the right man.

You are a professor of religion and have been such for a number of years. So far as is known your walk has been correct. No charge has ever been preferred against you in the church of which you are a member, and in general your brethren have confidence in your Christian character. But they do not know you as well as you know yourself. You have been guilty of grievous sin. If the facts of your secret life were known you would have been excluded from the church long ago. Your conscience torments you. You are sometimes inclined to make public confession, but on reflection you feel sure that this will do no good, but harm only. So you will bear your grief in secret. Conscious guilt gnaws at your heart like the worm that never dies. You feel as if you were having a foretaste of hell. You tell your secret to God; you pray for mercy; you agonize in prayer for forgiveness; yet you keep on committing the same sin, or if not, you gloat over the wicked deed with sinful pleasure, with a real pleasure strange to say, although it is accompanied with pain and shame. You are the victim of your secret sin; it has the mastery over you, and knowing this, you are in despair, and you ask yourself, "What is to become of me?" and you mentally exclaim, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Now for the advice. You either are a converted man or you are not. If you are, come to God and confess your sin with sincere repentance, trusting in the atonement and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and do not doubt your forgiveness. Let faith join hand in hand with repentance. You are just as sure to be forgiven as God is to keep his promises. But remember that you must so repent as to abandon. Sin persisted in is not sin repented of. The repetition of it in cold blood shows that what seemed to be repentance, was not repentance. On the other hand, it is true that a sin may be truly repented of, and afterwards in an unguarded moment that sin may be repeated. In that case we give the same advice. Come, confess, trust, and do not doubt. Your forgiveness is as sure as that God's throne will stand forever. Bless God, and be saved.

If you are not a converted man, then come to God like any other unconverted sinner. All unconverted sinners are invited to come, you among the rest. The fact that you have been a professor of religion and a member of the church for years need be no bar to your coming in response to the call addressed to all wicked people. You are just like all the rest of that sin-polluted multitude, filthy, ragged, wretched, and worthy of nothing but everlasting contempt. But all this need not be in the way of your coming. If you were ten times worse than you are, that would make no difference. The gospel invites all sinners, even the chief. So come. Confess, repent, seize the promises, trust in Christ, and you are just as sure to be forgiven as God is to keep his promises. Do not doubt. To doubt is sin. Your forgiveness is as sure as that God's throne will stand forever. Bless God and be saved.

So, then, to repeat; you either are converted or you are not. If you are, come and be forgiven. If you are not, come and be forgiven. Oh what a precious gospel is this, which offers forgiveness, and not only forgiveness, but eternal life, to any and to all, who repent what ought to be repented and who trust Him who alone is worthy of trust, even Almighty God. Surely, a man who is lost, with such a gospel as this before him deserves to be lost and ought to be lost, and every principle of righteousness and justice would be subverted if he were not lost.

But cheer up, sinful church member who ought to have been excluded long ago. There is plenty of room for hope. You either are converted or you are not. In either case come to God and be safe. Take now a new departure in good hope, and set out afresh for eternal life.

* There are some whose sinfulness consists chiefly, or altogether, in thought or in feeling; their evil disposition not having ripened into overt action. Still, they suffer torment. Our advice is intended for people of this class.

There are some whose hearts are honeycombed as it were with sin;

their sins have been not only in thought and feeling but in outward action in word and in deed; their sins have been outrageous and outrageous. They have kept their secret; they still hold membership in the church, but their consciences are on fire, and their spirits writhe within them every day in this unquenchable flame. Our advice is intended for people of this class. It suits their case exactly. There is no limit to the power of Christ's blood, no limit to the mercy of God. Come to God on the gospel terms which, in our advice, we have set forth. Do not doubt. You have sinned enough already. Instantly seize proffered forgiveness and leap into life!—*Index.*

SECRET OF POWER.

An inward assurance of God's pleasure in whatever we are engaged brings into the soul joyousness and strength. This is the only effectual deliverance from corroding anxieties. All other sources of strength fail us in times of great difficulties—this one never has been known to fail. "Thy favor is better than life;" "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee."

It is easy to show why this is true. All that God is in love, wisdom, and power is pledged to sustain the soul that knows and feels that He is not propitious. In this assurance that soul is encouraged to ask with confidence for help, and never asks in vain.

It was twilight—the beautiful evening twilight of a glorious summer day. A company of joyous believers held converse together concerning the divine leading. After nearly all had spoken, and the deepening shadows had foretold the hour of speedy departure, one earnest listener asked for the opportunity of a closing word. "My life," said he, "is one of great responsibilities. I am so pressed with its daily labors that it is only with constant watchfulness that I am able to reserve proper time for the sacred duties of the closet and the family. No one knows how, after all the systematic division of my time and the assistance rendered by others, the weighty cares of life press upon me."

"How can you live and enjoy religion in this way?" asked one, whose testimony was always ardent, but who was called to a sphere of duty less exacting than that one who had just spoken. "I will tell you," said the thoroughly honest, hard-working business man. "I was early in life converted. I found out, even at the first, that happiness and strength came from the secret evidence of God's favor. In other words, I believed that the Christian might and ought to live in the enjoyment of the witness of the Spirit. I held firmly to this truth. I sought this experience daily. I spoke of this great privilege on all proper occasions. I made it one of the cardinal principles of my life to so live that I might retain the present consciousness of God's pleasure in me and in my work. Hence, I find no difficulty in His service, though my responsibilities are so heavy. He keeps me. He sweetly blesses me. He gives me strength, though I cannot devote as much time as others to the outward services of religion."

We listened to this sweet testimony with joy. It was the tribute of a sincere heart to the blessed Saviour—a tribute all the more beautiful since it illustrated the Divine prayer: "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." Men of the widest business relationships are needed in the world, no less than the men whose time is exclusively devoted to the Christian ministry. While engaged in worldly pursuits they may hold the secret of power with God equally with others. Their hours may be filled with worldly activities. Behind counters they may stand; in marts of trade they may meet the rising or receding tides of human passion; in busy workshops they may spend the day; beneath the glowing sun they may upturn the deep furrows to receive the autumnal seed—but whether employer or employed, each one of all these may enjoy "the witness of the Spirit." Living thus, life is secure—even eternal life. And such a testimony, given in the power of the Holy Spirit, is an evidence that cannot be resisted.

We would say to every one who is bearing life's high trusts—hold fast to this one thing, namely, the inward witness, that secret of power whereby peace and strength are made certain, even amid the severest perplexities and most absorbing, worldly engagements.—*Advocate.*

The highest and most important use of the world is the development of a noble man.—*M. J. Savage.*

If every person would be half as good as he expects his neighbor to be, what a heaven this world would be.—*Luther Norris.*

The aching head may cease to throb when laid upon that softest pillow for human pain—God knows!"

GOOD ENOUGH JUST NOW.

"Well, he is a good man," said the pastor a little sadly. "Yes," replied the deacon, "but he is not good enough just now." They were talking confidentially of a fellow member of their own church, a man of high character, free from many noticeable evil habits, regular in religious observances, and an intelligent and interesting Sunday-school teacher. But there were signs of the Spirit's special presence in the congregation. Here and there the voice of inquiry after the way of salvation had been heard already. It was plain that, if the church would rouse itself to realize and use its opportunity, a genuine, and perhaps a considerable revival would follow. But he of whom his pastor and deacon were speaking, seemed to be unconscious of the situation. There was no fault in particular to be found with his life, but when it would have been natural for him to be all alert with eager activity, especially in prayer for and labor with his own Sabbath-school class, he seemed amiably unconscious that any special duty rested upon him. The deacon had just been lamenting this when the pastor apologetically replied as above, and received the deacon's apt and truthful reply, "Yes, but not good enough just now."

The words contain a suggestion worth general heed. To be a live Christian is not merely to accept the gospel truth, and to conform to the conduct thereto as a habit. It is also the keeping ourselves alive to the needs of the hour; the being not only good but also good for something, good for whatever Christ would have us be doing for him. It is being loyal to him not merely in refusing to ally ourselves with his enemies, nor even in engaging in his work heartily enough to escape the charge of indifference, but also in making a business of doing for him immediately and with all our might any duty which he may wish done at once, and which we are competent to do. Just at present, in scores of churches, it is the bestirring ourselves to pray and labor for souls, in the belief that now is the harvest time, and that prayer, instruction, and appeal, and every form of co-operation with fellow Christians, and of an effort for the consecration of the impenitent, may be expected to secure immediate and large results.—*Congregationalist.*

A TONIC FOR THE TIRED.

Watch the faces as they go by you on a crowded street, and just notice what a tired look many of them wear. If we could read all the hearts around us, we would find multitudes who are weary in spirit, and sometimes sigh for a pillow in the grave. Some are tired out with life's hard struggles with bearing the heat and burden of the day. Others persist in piling up anxieties as high as an old-fashioned peddler's pack. They carry a huge load of care as to how they shall make both ends meet, and how they shall foot the bills that accumulate, and how they shall provide for all the hungry mouths and scanty wardrobes. One is tired from trying to do too much, and another of waiting for something to do. A grievous burden of spiritual despondency makes Brother Smallfith's heart ache, and puts an extra wrinkle in Sister Weakback's countenance. Here is a disciple who is tired of waiting for success, and there is another tired of waiting for answers to prayer.

Do you suppose that the dear Master does not see all these tired bodies and exhausted nerves and weary hearts? To those who are honestly run down with honest toil, he says: "Come ye apart into a quiet place, and rest awhile." God puts a night of sleep after every day of work for this very purpose of recruiting lost force. To Christians with small purses he kindly says: "Your life consisteth not in the abundance of things ye possess. I counsel ye to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayst be rich. My grace is sufficient for thee; at my right hand are treasures for evermore." There is not really money enough in this land to give everybody a fortune; but there are promises enough in the Bible and grace enough in Christ Jesus to make everybody rich to all eternity. Just think what a millionaire a man is who has a clean conscience here and a clear hope of heaven hereafter. To poor Brother Smallfith and sorrowful Mrs. Weakback he gives a wonderful lift in these words: "Lo! I am with you always. No man shall pluck you out of my hands. It is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—*Dr. T. L. Cuyler.*

Self supreme will blight life, self subdued will find life. The true source of power to help us overcome selfishness is the life, cross and spirit of Jesus Christ.—*Dr. R. R. Booth.*

KINDLY DEEDS.

The world is not made much better by essays and sermons on goodness, but by the sight of the story of acts of goodness. And if these stories are rightly sung they do their work all the same whether the people concerned in them were rewarded or not. Philip Sidney dying gave a cup of water to a soldier, and in that communion service he made a thousand other hearts beat tenderly and bravely. So we scarcely speak of a bit of self-forgetfulness by a dying man without thinking of Sidney as if he were somehow a dear friend. The quarrel in which he was fighting is forgotten, but the deed of kindness lives forever, and in every generation quickens a thousand lives and makes a thousand men die bravely. And what when we have the story without Sidney's name? We read of some lifeboat shattered off Hatteras, that so many brave men died in the performance of their duty. We know nothing of their names, nor in detail of their motives, but life is larger to us, duty easier and death a change more simple.—*E. E. Hale.*

WORD TO EMPLOYERS.

Do not say of the young men in your employ, "If they do their work in the business hours that is all I ask to have." God has made you that young man's guardian. I want you to understand that many of these young men are orphans, or worse than orphans, flung out into society to struggle for themselves. A young man is picked up in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and a plank is pitched after him, and then he is told to take that and swim ashore. Treat that young man as you would like to have your son treated if you were dead. Be a father to that clerk. There is nothing more beautiful than to hear an aged merchant addressing his clerks and saying "my son." That young man in your employ has a history. His father was a drunkard. His first remembrance of his father, was the father coming home intoxicated, and the children hiding under the bed frightened. And that young man has stood many a time between father and mother, keeping her from the brutal blow.

WATCHING.

A general after gaining a great victory, was encamping with his army for the night. He ordered sentinels to be stationed all round the camp as usual. One of the sentinels, as he went to his station, grumbled to himself, and said: "Why could not the general let us have a quiet night's rest for once, after beating the enemy? I'm sure there's nothing to be afraid of." The man went to his station, and stood for sometime looking about him. It was a bright summer night with a harvest moon, but he could see nothing anywhere; so he said: "I am terribly tired; I shall sleep for just five minutes, out of the moonlight, under the shadow of this tree." So he lay down.

Presently he started up, dreaming that someone had pushed a lantern before his eyes, and he found that the moon was shining brightly down on him through a hole in the branches of the tree above him. The next minute an arrow whizzed past his ear, and the whole field before him seemed alive with soldiers in dark-green coats, who sprang up from the ground where they had been silently creeping onward, and rushed toward him. Fortunately the arrow had missed him so he shouted aloud to give the alarm, and he ran back to some other sentinels. The army was thus saved; and the soldier said: "I shall never forget as long as I live that when one is at war one must watch."

Our whole life is a war with evil. Just after we have conquered it, it sometimes attacks us when we least expect it. For example, when we have resisted the temptation to be cross and pettish and disobedient, sometimes when we are thinking: "How good we have been!" comes another sudden temptation, and we are not on our guard, and do not resist it. Jesus says to us: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."—*New York Observer.*

"CRUEL AS THE GRAVE."

There is a great deal of jealousy among otherwise good men. They see others occupying positions which they would like to fill, but to which they are not called, and this, instead of prompting them to qualify themselves for such positions, only excites unkind feeling toward those who fill them, and whom they regard as more fortunate than themselves. Men who are always seeking responsible positions are generally the least fit to fill them, while men of real worth seldom seek the place, but wait for the place to seek them. Positions of trust are always positions of responsibility, which men of true merit, unless duty absolutely requires it, do not care to fill. Ambition would lift a man up; but jealousy would pull others down. It is a mean spirit, which no good man should indulge.—*Methodist Recorder.*

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