

NO ONE CAN DO OUR PORTION.

"Impress this truth upon me—that no one can do my portion which I leave undone; Each one in Thy vineyard has a spot To labor in for life, and weary not, Then give me strength all faithfully to toil, Converting barren earth to fruitful soil."

The Pulpit.

HALF HEARTS AND WHOLE HEARTS. BY THEODORE L. CUYLER.

All physicians know that in the human frame the heart is the most delicate and vital of all the organs. Disease at that point is always dangerous. What is true of the physical heart is equally true as to that seat of the understanding, the will and the affections, which both the Bible and moral philosophy style the "heart."

One secret of success in life is concentration; and many of our young men find it out too late. Sir Isaac Newton's famous explanation of his splendid success was, "I centered my whole mind upon it."

It takes a great many half-Christians, to make a single whole one. Many Churches exert no purifying or converting power in the community, simply because the few who are intensely earnest for Christ and for the salvation of souls, are neutralized by the daily influence of their fellow-members, whose constant pull is towards formality, fashion, and worldliness.

Of such compromising Christians we may well be said, "their heart is divided; now shall they be found guilty." They offend God, who demands the homage of the whole heart. Their punishment is to be what they are. They rob themselves of all the sweetest satisfaction, and the richest comforts, and the joyful experience and the installments of heaven in advance, which Jesus gives to His whole-souled followers.

If a divided heart is so enfeebling and demoralizing a disease when found in a professed Christian, it is the secret cause of the impotence of tens of thousands in our congregations. They have nearly all had their times of serious thinking, when they were half-inclined to become Christians.

promised with you, and let you hold on to what suits your lust, you would have struck a bargain with Him gladly. He demanded the whole heart, and that ended it. Perhaps, under some powerful discourse, or severe affliction, or in the atmosphere of a powerful revival, you did actually set out on some steps toward a new life. You prayed and asked others to pray for you. But, instead of pushing straightway, with your face set like a flint toward the cross of Christ, you faltered and halted, and looked back. That backward look divided your heart, and when it required the whole man to go forward, the part of you which held back was too much for conscience and the drawing spirit.

Felix committed your blunder. His conscience sided with Paul; but his sinful inclination pulled him back into the rapids, and he went over the cataract. There is really no half-way house of safety between hell and heaven. By and by your whole undivided self is in one or in the other. Christ will not compromise for half of you. You have got to cut loose from the old life, before you can lay hold of the new, to come over to Christ's terms and accept them without condition.

BEARING CHASTISEMENT.

I suppose that it is impossible for us, immersed as we are in a Christian atmosphere, to put ourselves in the place of the early Christians, and to conceive of their constant sacrifices and daily trials. Tertullian, an early Christian writer, says, in substance: "Nowhere were the Christians anything but Christians. Everywhere, on the street, in the home, they were Christians. They avoided all that would seem like denying the faith."

They had to abstain from all heathen exclamations. Often, too, the Christian must give up his livelihood, as when he had been an attendant in the temple, or had been a teacher of those who were to engage in gladiatorial shows. A Christian slave might be ordered to do something which was innocent enough from the heathen point of view, but which he could not do. A Christian wife of a heathen husband might be urged or commanded to violate her faith.

All these circumstances involved danger, scorn, sneering. We cannot imagine what it cost to be a Christian. The early Christian Hebrews found the same necessity of confessing Christ in the face of danger and opposition. In Jerusalem, for forty years after the time of Christ, there stood the resplendent temple, with the sacrifices and the robed priests and the choir with its responses. All the feelings of the Jew centered about the temple, his shrine and his pride. Suppose a Jew to believe in Jesus, the Nazarene, who had been crucified, who was a criminal in the eyes of the better classes; you see what a terrible series of sacrifices he would have to make; every day he would stand alone; the tenderest ties might be snapped; and he might be thrust out from his father's house and be disowned as a son.

The great mass of the early Christians were from the lowest classes. Many were slaves. When one of the higher classes, a priest, or a man of property like Barnabas, became a Christian, what the confession of Christ cost!

Of course, there was great danger of apostasy. We think that the little social sting that comes to us because of our being Christians is hard to bear. But what were their trials?

It was to this danger of apostasy that the Epistle to the Hebrews was

directed. These Christians were subject to constant chastisement. I wish we might bear in mind the difference between punishment and chastisement. Sometimes I go to a home where a child has just died, where the cradle is vacant and the coffin is full; and the mother says, "I don't know what I have done to call for this punishment." Do you know that Christians are never punished? Christ has received the punishment that would have fallen on us. Punishment is for the vindication of law; but on the cross, law has been vindicated as it could have been nowhere else. If any great trouble comes to you, do not go back and think, "What great sin have I committed that has deserved this?"

But Christians are chastened. Chastisement is the infliction of pain for the best good of the sufferer. While Christians are not punished (because Christ has paid it all on the cross), they are chastened. There is great comfort in the distinction. You see how these early Christians were liable to chastisement. A Christian went into a friend's house; there was an altar, a sacrifice to a heathen deity; he cannot unite in it; then here comes sneers, hatred.

It was to the Hebrew Christians that this Epistle was addressed. They were warned not to be overcome by the chastisements. The chastisements would but mature and develop their piety. If only chastisement would work in us the result that we might be partakers of Christ's holiness! I have just come from a funeral. The death was a great chastisement to the widow in her loneliness; but if she endures, holding on to God, the chastisement will be a blessing, making her a partaker of Christ's holiness. It makes a great difference how we are to use chastisement. How does the 13th chapter of Hebrews tell us to use it?

(1) We are not to despise it. When we stand out against it, when we say that God is unjust and cruel, that is despising chastisement. We ought rather to go to school to it; we are to ask God what it means, and what we are to learn from it.

You have, perhaps, a temper that is apt to slip beyond your control; and you are placed in trying circumstances where your temper breaks forth. You think that if you were in other circumstances, you would be sweet and serene. But if the circumstances were changed, you would be much the same. What you have to do is to learn a lesson from these circumstances.

(2) We are not to faint under the chastisement. You know, sometimes people give up and say with Jacob, "All these things are against me." At such times, life looks very dreary; there is not much inspiration in it. We refuse to do the duty that lies next to us. This is to faint under the chastisement.

(3) We ought to be sure that God makes no mistake about our chastisement. Earthly parents chasten their children "after their own pleasure," that is, they do the best they know; but they make mistakes. I suppose there is not a parent here to-day that does not feel that he has made mistakes. I suppose that, looking back to our childhood, we feel that our parents made mistakes, even though they were among the crowned ones, as mine are. It is very easy to give good rules, such as "You must never punish a child when you are angry;" "never do this" and "never do that to your child." But who keeps these rules? We all make mistakes. But God never does. He chastises us for our profit that we might be partakers of his holiness.

(4) We are to be sure that some great and wise design will come out of our chastisement. Of course, the chastisement is not for the present joyous. It was not joyous for the early Christians. It was a terrible thing for a Hebrew young man to be disinherited by his father and disowned by his family, because he had begun to worship the despised Nazarene. It is of no use to deny it—Gethsemane is Gethsemane. People come to you when you are in trouble and say to you, "Oh, you must not feel so." "You must not feel so. They say, "You must not think it is hard." Yes, you may. It is hard. You are not to tell a lie. But there is the result; afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. God will work out from it some mighty and beneficent design. All things work together for good to them that love God. What seems sorrow and what seems joy are both from the hand of the same God.—Dr. Wayland Hoyt, in National Baptist.

When God would educate a man he compels him to learn bitter lessons. He sends him to school to the necessities rather than to the graces, that, by knowing all suffering, he may know also the eternal consolation.—Celia Burleigh.

RICHARD BAXTER, MAN-CATCHER.

Richard Baxter was to deliver a lecture at a private house on a neighboring common. The time of worship was generally a very early hour. Mr. Baxter left Coventry on the following morning. The night being dark, he lost his way, and, wandering about a considerable time, he came to a gentleman's house, where he asked for direction. The servant who came to the door informed his master that a person of very respectable appearance had lost his way. The gentleman, thinking it would be unsafe for such a person to be wandering on the common at so late an hour, requested the servant to invite him in. Mr. Baxter readily accepted the kind proposal, and met with a very hospitable reception. His conversation was such as to give his host a very exalted idea of his good sense and extensive information. The gentleman, wishing to know the quality of his guest, said after supper:

"As most persons have some employment or profession in life, I have no doubt, sir, that you have yours?"

Mr. Baxter replied, with a smile: "Yes, sir, I am a man-catcher."

"A man-catcher!" said the gentleman, "are you? I am very glad to hear you say so, for you are the very person I want. I am a Justice of the Peace in this district, and am commissioned to secure the person of Dick Baxter, who is expected to preach at a conventicle in this neighborhood to-morrow morning. You shall go with me, and I doubt not we shall easily apprehend the rogue."

Mr. Baxter very prudently consented to accompany him. Accordingly, the gentleman on the following morning took Mr. Baxter in his carriage to the place where the meeting was to be held. When they arrived at the spot they saw a considerable number of people hovering about; for, seeing the carriage of the justice and suspecting his intentions, they were afraid to enter the house. The justice, observing this, said to Mr. Baxter:

"I am afraid they have obtained some information of my design. Mr. Baxter has, probably, been apprised of it, and, therefore, will not fulfil his engagement, for you see the people will not go into the house. I think if we extend our ride a little farther our departure may encourage them to assemble, and on our return we may fulfil our commission."

When they returned they found their efforts useless, for the people still appeared unwilling to assemble.

The magistrate observed to his companion that as the people were very much disaffected to the Government, he wished he would address them on the subject of loyalty and good behavior. Mr. Baxter replied this would not be deemed sufficient, for, as a religious service was the object for which they were met together, they would not be satisfied with advice of that nature; and, if the magistrate would begin with prayer, he would then endeavor to say something to them. The gentleman replied, putting his hand in his pocket: "Indeed, sir, I have not my prayer-book with me, or I would readily comply with your proposal. However, I am persuaded that a person of your appearance and respectability would be able to pray with them. I beg, therefore, you will be so good as to begin with prayer." This being agreed to, they alighted from the carriage and entered the house; and the people, hesitating no longer, followed them.

Mr. Baxter then commenced the service, and prayed with that seriousness and fervor for which he was so eminent. The magistrate standing by was soon melted into tears. The good divine then preached in his accustomed lively and zealous manner. When he had concluded, he turned to the Justice and said: "Sir, I am the very Dick Baxter of whom you are in pursuit. I am entirely at your disposal." The magistrate, however, had felt so much during the service, and saw things in so different a light, that he laid aside all his enmity to the Nonconformists and ever afterward became their sincere friend, and it is believed also a decided Christian.—Christian Statesman.

THE DEAD-PRAYER OFFICE. What becomes of all the unanswered letters? Thousands of them find their way to the Dead-letter Office. Some never reach the person for whom they are intended because the postage is not paid, some fail because they are directed to the wrong office; some cannot be sent because the address is illegal, and some because the matter inclosed is unavailable. These float through the mails, are examined at different offices, marked "mis-sent," and finally they fall into the Dead-letter Office. There they are opened and read, and, if valuable, are forwarded; if not, they are given to the flames. Such is the accuracy and skill of the postal officials that no very valuable

letters ever fail of reaching their destination.

Some prayers never reach God, because they are not addressed to God's office. They are directed to the audience. Here one prays a "sharp-cut" to some stubborn brother, or drives some keen-edged blade of censure into another, directs a severe criticism to some who are running into fashionable follies, and sometimes (shame on us!) the very supplication, which we offer in tenderest tones, in behalf of the weeping widow and helpless orphans, is intended more for those who kneel in mourning before us than for God who sits in glory above us. God's office is not in our neighbor's care, and if we direct our prayers to that point they will certainly go to the "dead-prayer office."

Again, there is a prayer upon which the address is illegal, not because it is rough, scrawling "hand-write"—these can always be deciphered—but because it has so many flourishes. This prayer is uttered in a pompous, grandiloquent style. It is full of long words, scientific terms, and classical quotations. The writing on the envelope is very much in keeping with the style upon the inside. The ink was fancy, and it soon faded; the pen was the tongue, and it did not set the color in the prayer. How different when indited by the heart! It is no wonder that this prayer gets lost and finds its way into the "dead-prayer office."

The last prayer we notice is the unavailable prayer. There is a great latitude allowed us in the postal matter of our government, but there are a few things which cannot even get into the mail bags. Sharp-edged tools and corroding acids, no matter how securely wrapped, will not be transported through the mails; these are put in a separate box and sent to the "Dead-letter Office," or they are captured by the first post-master that handles them. Many of our prayers, if answered, might be blessings to us, but they would fall like a shower of daggers upon our neighbors. Sometimes in our prayers we half-way complain of the strange providence which has befallen us, and argue the case with God; then the prayer is full of sharp-pointed arrows. Is it at all strange that kind answers are not returned? The corroding acid of selfishness or sensuality or pride is sometimes in our prayer. Such a prayer is lost on the way. It is poured out in mid-air. It is never answered and well for us that it is not.

No legally "stamped," sincerely directed, and well-meaning prayer is ever lost. The answer may be delayed, but the prayer is "on file."—Advance.

THE KEY TO A USEFUL LIFE.

Robert Annan, the Christian hero, was one of the most successful workers for the Master. His remarkable growth in grace was not to be wondered at when we reflect that the key note of his Christian life is found in the following extract, pasted on the fly leaf of his well-worn Bible: "I will therefore just name a few of those things which every true Christian can safely pray for—the knowledge of our complete acceptance in Jesus; a more decided growth in grace; increase of holiness; greater spirituality of mind; more devotedness to God; stronger faith in His Word; more habitual reliance upon Christ for all things; a spirit of grace and supplication; a conscience increasingly tender; a greater regard for God's glory than our own advantage; a more grateful heart for our numerous unmerited mercies; enjoyment of every new covenant blessing; a more growing hatred of sin, and a more steady resistance of even its first approaches, to be enabled to bear a more decided testimony before the world of the truth and importance of religion, and furnish clearer evidence of our being the children and servants of God."

"My Presence shall go with Thee."

What a comfort this is! No burden is too heavy if we are thus favored. No disciplinary tests will fail to produce their intended benefit. No schemes of evil, though formed against us with consummate skill, will succeed. More than this, God's presence with his people is an infallible sign of the truth of religion. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church is, for this reason, the most effectual means of exterminating all forms of infidelity and vice in that community. Moses said, "Wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us?" How are we to live so that this benign, invisible presence will evermore be our portion? This question has numerous answers. Consider but one, namely, the voluntary and habitual exercise of believing prayer. The psalmist said: "I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."—Christian at Work.

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