

"He Knoweth All."

The twilight falls, the night is near
I fold my work away,
And kneel to One who bends to hear
The story of the day.

The old, old story; yet I kneel
To tell it at thy call;
And cares grow lighter as I feel
That Jesus knows them all.

Yes all the morning and the night,
The joy, the grief, the loss,
The roughened path, the sunbeam bright,
The hourly thorn and cross.

Thou knowest all—I lean my head,
My weary eyelids close,
Content and glad awhile to tread
This path, since Jesus knows.

And he has loved me! all my heart
With answering love is stirred,
And every anguish, pain and smart,
Finds healing in the Word.

So here I lay me down to rest,
As mighty shadows fall,
And lean confiding on his breast
Who knows and pities all.

—Selected.

STRIFE IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Controversy, strife, division—these have been the sorrowful lot of the church. These human aspects have always been too apparent, and these signs of the church being militant have not been lacking. These, like the sprouts on the tree, have often largely absorbed the sap of the church and destroyed its fruitfulness. These controversies have usually been severe and scathing. Even between Paul and Barnabas there was discussed a question until "the contention was sharp between them."

It is noticeable that these controversies and divisions have often been attended with bitterness, which was evidently furnished by the depravity of human nature rather than by the spirit of Christ.

Nor is it less noticeable that these dissensions have often grown out of unworthy beginnings and over unworthy objects. The whole history of the church presents this fact before us. Among the disciples of Jesus during his personal sojourn on earth this spirit was manifested. It was almost under the shadow of Calvary that we are told, "there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." It would shame the church before the world, and many promoters of strife in the church of our times, if the real issues underlying them were presented before men. It would be the old case of the disciples repeated before a loving, serving, dying Christ. Personal ambition, personal pride of opinions of self—alas, how they gender strife!

It is a sorrowful thing to notice how this spirit of contention and strife troubled the early apostolic church. We can only form some idea of it from the epistles of the apostles which have come down to us.

Paul in his letter to the church at Philippi gives us a view of this feeling at Rome, where he was a prisoner. Though he was a prisoner, there were those who still envied him. They therefore so framed their preaching as to even reflect upon Paul, supposing to add affliction to his bonds. A darker picture could hardly be presented. Could it be that his kinsmen were members of the household of Caesar or in public office, and that from his favor and success in preaching among these, though bound with a chain, his brethren envied him?

In Paul's epistle to the church at Corinth, almost at the very beginning of the epistle, in the first chapter, his heart painfully tells them how he has heard, and from whom he has learned, "that there are contentions among you." This strife was about their ecclesiastical standing, or the preachers who had received them into the church. One boasted that he was a convert of Paul, another of the eloquent Apollos, and another of Peter while others perhaps more vain than the rest said they were of Christ or had been converted under the preaching of Christ himself. How this grieved the heart of Paul. They had almost lost Christ in discussing how they had found him.

In the eleventh chapter of this same epistle we see how Paul again is led to consider this same question of divisions or schism among the brethren at Corinth; and this same time it is about traditions or rather about men and women wearing long hair. This schism had even debauched their sacramental service.

So Timothy had in the church persons who in their pride knew nothing, but were "doting about questions and strifes of words whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of truth, supposing that gain is godliness."

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians plainly shows that "envying and strife and divisions" are the product of

carnal natures. These things come to us when we "walk as men," or according to man, after the way of the carnal-minded. Discussions upon worthy subjects and proper exchange of thought and opinion in any community between brethren may bind to unity and purity of conduct, but the larger amount of divisions, factions, and strifes in the church are to be traced to a lack of high conceptions of Christ and to carnal views of his blessed work of salvation in the world.

The evils of strife are many. James talks about a "meekness of wisdom" in contrast with a wisdom which he calls by the hard words, "earthly, sensual, and devilish." He commends that knowledge and good conversation which is from above, but tells us that "where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." What James points out to the church in his time as the result of strifes in the church has been found to be true in our times in every society where these contentions have found a place. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits without partiality [wrangling], and without hypocrisy."—*Rel. Telescope.*

ASSURANCE

There are three classes of persons in particular who lack assurances in the Christian religion: (1) The church-members who have joined the church in order to be converted. These will never have peace until they have reached personal renewal. (2) Those Christians who have no testimony to render. The man who has assurance will not be speechless. (3) The proud and arrogant, who are without the loving spirit of the gospel. The church is full of haughty, unloving Christians, hindering the progress of the kingdom by their unforgiving spirit toward the brethren. The truth for us all is that we all need assurance, we cannot help others until we have rid ourselves of foolish doubts, and settled it that we are born of God. Read John xxi. 20. See also 1 John v. 13. The whole epistle is full of thoughts of assurance. "Know," the key-word to the Book occurs thirty-two times. There are six verses in particular to which your attention might be called, viz: 1 John iii. 5, 19, 14, 15, 24, 3. (Mr. Moody read the verses in the order given, commenting briefly as he turned from one to the other.) Christians ought not always to be bewailing their sins. Christ has made provision for the sins of the Christian; and we have all sinned since conversion. Leave those sins with God, asking his forgiveness. And now as he has forgotten them, having asked his pardon, let us forget them too. It is dishonoring to God to be constantly confessing old sins. It does not please the earthly parent to have his child constantly refer to an old, forgiven fault. So with God. There need be no fear of the judgment to the Christian. His judgment is finished. Give God your trust. If you want to be distressed, look within; if you want to be distracted, look around; if you want peace, look up to God.

Take the eighth of Romans and learn it, if possible, by heart. "There is therefore now no condemnation." Believe it. Some have said, "Moody, you are ahead of Paul, are you? He feared he might be a 'castaway.'" Read the passage, 1 Cor. ix. 24-27. Paul is not talking of salvation here, but of the crown. You work for the latter; the first is a gift. Stars differ in glory, so shall our heavenly estate be. Our rewards shall vary according to our works. All who believe shall enter, but some shall be saved, though as by fire, others shall have "an abundant entrance." Will some of these lazy Christians of to-day have the same reward as Paul? Not so. Our vessels will be full, but there will be some very small vessels. Assurance does not depend on outward circumstances. You say, "Moody, have you ever had the dyspepsia? If you had you wouldn't be so sure." Thank God, assurance is not so dependent on the constitution. We ought all of us to be able to read our title clear. If a man threatens to take my house from me, and I am sure I have a clear title to the property, I tell him to go ahead, I am not afraid of what he may do. And this we have regarding our heavenly estate: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Do you want a token that you are saved? The young man I met at Cambridge came back to say that he was afraid he was mistaken about his conversion. He ought, he thought, to have waited for a token from God. "When I promised to meet you here," said I, "did you ask me to give you my watch for a token?" Have faith in God. Zechariah doubted Gabriel and wanted a token. Gabriel gave him a token and he was struck dumb until the child was born. Some one has said that the reason why we have so many dumb Christians to-day is that they

are asking for a token outside the word. "No man," says Christ, "shall pluck them out of my hand"—that is enough, surely. When the seventy came back to our Lord he told them to rejoice because their names were written in heaven. Could they have rejoiced then without assurance? That was just before the cross. Away on the other side the cross, Job lifted up his voice out of his difficulties and said: "I know that my Redeemer liveth" and David said of his dead child: "He cannot come to me, but I can go to him." Stephen looked up into the heavens with a face all shining with assurance. As Dr. Bonar once said at Northfield, whilst Stephen was speaking of Moses whose face shone with God's presence, his own face became shining. I waited to-day for a dispatch from my sick boy. It did not come and I was nervous till this afternoon it arrived, and I learned that he was better. Then my heart was at rest. Why not trust God's messages and be at peace? "Fear not" occurs in the Bible over nine hundred times. May we trust God and Christ for eternity, and let the church of the Lord Jesus nurse us peacefully through this wilderness journey.—*D. L. Moody.*

MEETING HOUSE RELIGION.

BY REV. SAM P. JONES.

What a little idea of religion some people get! Why, there are grown people, gray-headed people, I expect in this church that when you get a religious idea, if it was at midnight, sister, brother, you would jump up and dress and run to the church with it. You have no idea or conception of religion except something to run to the meeting house with. That's the truth. I have got a religious notion in my head, husband, and what will I do with it if I don't run to the meeting-house with it? That's right where the folks have religion in this country—at a meeting house. Oh, my brother, listen! I have the profoundest contempt for that man who simply has the faith, the receptive faith, the take-all-you-can-get faith, the hold-on-to-all-you-have-got faith. I have a contempt for that business. Every time you come to church you bring a basket or a bucket. Lord, I have come to get something. Give me something. Well, what do you want? Oh, anything; anything in the world you have got to give me. I have brought a basket and a bucket to get it in. Ah, you come in here and pack off, and carry off and tote off until you go home about empty. Now ain't that about the truth of it? Lord, give me something. Brother, I say to you this: Say, Lord, give me marching orders, and you never sent a man to the front that thou didst not send a forage wagon to take care of him. That's it. God got an army out of your starving to death? Ain't that ridiculous?

I often think of the incident during the last war, when Gen. Early at the battle of Fisher's Hill won such a victory, and how he captured the forage wagons and guns and routed the army of his opponents there, and how they all commenced gloating over their victory. They fell in possession of more nations and more everything than they had in months, and they commenced gloating over the victory. That night the cavalry came rushing in on them and routed Early's army, and ran them off and recaptured the whole business, took Early's wagons and everything away from them, guns and all, and it took his army three days to get together any more, and they came in from the woods half starved, just literally starved to death nearly. Early had them all form in line and he was riding up and down in front of the ranks. And directly some soldier up at the head of the line hollered "Bread," and they caught it up and it came from the bottom of their stomachs, too: "Bread, bread, bread." They meant it, too, and they taunted him with it: "Bread, bread, bread," and you know how soldiers could holler. Finally, when old Early stood it as long as he could, he reined in that bloody bay of his, and straightened himself up in his saddle and got his eye up and down the line, and raised himself up in the saddle, and said: "Fisher's Hill, you cowardly scoundrels!"

Never heard any more about bread. You see they had had bread enough there to do them for three months, but got routed and ran away from it. And I have thought about God's host up in the meeting-house many a time hollering "Bread, bread, bread." Where's that bread you had? That's the question. "Fisher's Hill you cowardly scoundrels!"

That's the way it works. It is not how much bread you want, it is not how much bread you need, but what did you do with the last bread I gave you?

That's it. Good Lord, show us that loyalty to Christ means marching orders, gun in hand, at the front ready to die, and Jesus Christ will put the angels on half rations before He will let a soldier in an army like that suffer one minute for bread.

Difference of Experience—Why?

Dr. Bonar tells us of one who claimed to be a respectable member of an Evangelical Church, who accosted a poor man, lately recovered from vice through faith in Christ and obedience to the Gospel; "So you say you have found Christ and have peace with God?" "I have, indeed," he replied; "I have found Him; I have peace, and I know it." "Know it," said the respectable man. "And have you the presumption to tell me this? I have been a member of the Church for thirty years, and have not got peace nor assurance yet; and you, who have been a profligate most of your life, say that you have peace with God?" "Yes, I have been as bad as a man can well be, but I have believed the Gospel, and that Gospel is good news for the like of me; and if I have no right to peace, I had better go back to my sins; for if I cannot get peace as I am, I shall never get it all." "It's all a delusion," said the other. "Do you think that God would give a snip like you peace, and not give it to me, who have been doing all I can to get it for so many years?" "You are so respectable a man," replied the new convert, "that you can get on without peace and pardon, but a wretch like me cannot; if my peace is a delusion it cannot be a bad one, for it makes me leave off sin and makes me pray and read my Bible. Since I got it I have turned over a new leaf." "It won't last," said the professor. "Well, but it is a good thing while it does last, and it is strange to see the like of you trying to take from me the only thing that ever did me good. You never tried to bring me to Christ; and now when I have come to Him, you are doing all you can to take Him away. But I'll stick to Him in spite of you."

Worldly Christians.

Many Christians seem to have the desire to live as near the world as they possibly can, to have as much of the world as they can, and have Christ at the same time. My experience has been that such Christians are the most wretched people on the face of the earth. They neither enjoy the world, nor Christ. They are what are called border Christians, running over the line, mingling with the world to-day, and coming back among Christ's people to-morrow. The best way is to keep as far from the world as you can. Some one asked Billy Dawson how the world was getting on. He said he didn't know; he hadn't been there for a number of years.

We are told that if we lift the standard too high, many people will leave the churches and chapels. There is no doubt about that, but you will get a good many more. The power of God will be with you, and then many souls will be added to the Church. What do we see to-day? A low standard of Christian life, and therefore little power in the churches and chapels, and few sinners converted. People go on with their grand choirs, and their organs, and their preaching, but there are no conversions. What is the trouble? The world has come into the Church. It is a popular thing now to belong to some church or chapel. We want to see where we are, and to be separated from the world, if we would be faithful to our Lord.—*D. L. Moody.*

One's Best is Enough.

Sometimes the lesson is hard to be learned that all which God asks of any one is to do one's very best. We look back upon a given experience, whether it has been happy or sorrowful, and, although we are conscious of having made our utmost endeavors, we seem to see how what we felt obliged to leave undone might have been done, or how what we did do might have been done more skillfully and usefully. There is no pain keener than that which conscientious persons often feel because of the revelations which the present thus occasionally makes concerning the past, and the bitterest element of it is the fact that those better things really might have been accomplished.

But there is no need of remorse, or even of regret. Whether it actually were possible, or not, to act and succeed as it now appears to have been, makes no difference. If we did all which the light which we then possessed revealed to us, as involved in our duty, and if what we did was done honestly in the best way open to us, then we did all which we could have done, and may rest in peace. God's best and our best usually are two quite different things, and it is only the latter for doing which He holds us responsible.

To allow ourselves to become morbid and miserable for not having attained an impossible ideal of conduct, is a sin.

Nevertheless, two facts must be accepted unquestioningly. We may not be happy, or even content, unless we truly have done our very best. Nothing other or less than this, as a sensitive and enlightened conscience decides, can be accepted as a substitute. No body must delude himself into playing the hypocrite. Furthermore, our best must grow better continually. We must welcome and use the new light, the fresh knowledge, which comes to us, raising our standard steadily, and using every success, whether complete or partial, as a stepping-stone to something better.—*Congregationalist.*

Giving, and Giving Up.

"He certainly is a most generous man. He has just given five thousand pounds to the work of foreign missions. It's one of the most magnificent gifts we have ever received."

"Not quite so," was the answer. "I know of at least one more generous giver."

"Really? Well, I was looking through the reports of the last few years, and I saw nothing like that sum on the donation list."

"No; the gift to which I allude has not appeared in print, and will be known by very few except the Lord. The other day I was calling on a friend of mine, a very aged man, who told me, with tears running down his cheeks, that his only son was about to leave home for missionary work in a far-away land. The father had discovered that the young man felt called of God to such service, but was tarrying at home for his sake. 'How could I keep him back?' said the old man. 'I had prayed all my life: Thy kingdom come; Send forth laborers into thy harvest;' and with the pain of parting with my boy, in the certainty I should never see him again on earth, there is a deep joy in giving him up for Christ's sake."

I said to myself, on hearing this conversation, surely here is a true test of love—not giving only, but giving up. For though love cannot exist without giving, there may be large giving without love; but we can hardly doubt that it is love alone which for another's sake gives up what is held dear.

Pastoral Suggestions.

The Sunday morning service is, by emphasis, the Christian's service, devoted to worship and religious instruction. Every Christian, for his own sake, needs to be regular in attendance upon it.

The Sunday evening service is, by emphasis, an evangelistic or working service. For the sake of others, every Christian should attend, should be prayerful of heart and watchful for souls.

The weekly prayer-meeting stimulates devotion and generates spiritual power. Never stay away from it.

The Sunday-school is large and interesting. Join a Bible class.

Let the young of all ages attend the young people's meeting.

Read the daily home readings and make much of secret prayer.

Constantly invite your friends to attend our services.

Be cordial to strangers and introduce them to the pastor.

Talk much about religion with both the saved and the unsaved.

When you are sick, inform the pastor, by note or by reliable messenger, if you wish to see him.

Do not think of the church as a "Saint's Rest," but rather as a "Life-Saving Service," in which each member is to "lend a hand."

Persons wishing to join the church, by letter or baptism, will inform the pastor or one of the deacons.—*Rev. Gilbert Frederick.*

THE LUXURY OF DOING GOOD.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—*Mal. iii. 10.*

The language of Malachi iii. 10, is often used in prayer by those who are not aware that it is rather a challenge than a promise—"Prove me now herewith, said the Lord of hosts." We naturally ask whether God does "open the windows of heaven and pour down blessings" upon the faithful givers of tithes. Instances are not wanting among ourselves to supply the answer. No workers in our day have enjoyed larger blessings than George Muller and Charles Spurgeon, both of whom have, from the beginning of their work, put the sacred rule into practice with believing and humble hearts. Years ago Mr. Spurgeon said: "I knew a lad in Christ once who adopted the principle of giving a tenth to God. When he won a money prize for an essay on a religious subject, he felt that he could not give less than one-fifth of it. He has never since been able to deny himself the pleasure of having a fifth to give. God has wonderfully blessed that lad, and increased his means and his enjoyment of that luxury of luxuries—the luxury of doing good."—*Old Testament Anecdotes.*

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