

Ye Did It Not.

BY MIRIAM L. MERTON.

"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Matt. 25:45.

Ye did it not; they passed your street
With ragged dress and naked feet;
Ye knew the wretched place of home
Was but a low erected dome,
To cover filth and misery's lot;
And yet to these ye did it not.

Ye did it not, and yet ye read
How Jesus laid on childhood's head
His hands, and said "Forbid them not,"
Thus made those curls a holy spot;
Those baby curls, like rippled seas,
And yet ye did it not to these.

Ye did it not; ye knew his soul
Was taking flight towards Satan's goal
Ye knew his untaught mind was filled
With thoughts that only Satan willed.
E'en he was Jesus' own, I wot;
And yet ye passed, and did it not.

Ye did it not; ye knew Christ gave
His blood, and that his mark would save;
Ye sprinkled 'bove your door the sign;
Ye knew this mercy-pledge divine
Was made for all—for all on earth,
And yet ye did not tell its worth.

Girding The Loins.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

"Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind," is the stirring exhortation of that same enthusiastic disciple who had once girded his fisherman's tunic about him, and leaped out of the boat to swim to his Master. The ancients, as our readers know, were accustomed to wear loose, flowing garments, and when any strenuous exertion was required, they gathered the folds of their drapery, and bound a girdle about their waist. A spiritual process similar to this, is essential to a vigorous, effective, Christian life.

Jesus Christ does not put you or me into His Church just to make us comfortable. Nor is getting to heaven the sole object, or even the chief object of becoming a Christian. Obedience to Jesus Christ is the first thing. This is the core of Christianity. The phrase "girding the loins," implies readiness for duty. On that last night in Egypt the children of Israel were commanded to stand with girded loins and sandalled feet and staves in their hands, ready to be off on their exodus at a moment's notice. Paul at the start of his grand career, inquired "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" At the finish he exclaimed "Now I am ready to be offered up!" We pastors soon discover who are the minute-men in our churches. Whether it be work, or money, or service of any kind that is required of them, their cheerful response proves that Christ has the first hold on their hearts. Eagerness for the fight marks the true soldier; eagerness for the run made the successful Olympic racer; eagerness to do Christ's will, or even to endure hard blows for his Master, marks the happy, ready-hearted Christian. The moment that a minister counts sermon-making a drudgery, his girdle has broken.

2. Another idea suggested by the Apostle's phrase, is the compacting of all our powers upon the work we have in hand. Consecration is not enough without concentration. Paul's "this one thing I do," tightened his resolves, and kept him from frittering away life on trifles. Sir Isaac Newton's secret of success was "intending his mind upon the thing." Pericles only knew one street in Athens, the street that led from his own house to the Executive Chamber. At this chilly season of the year, the feeble sun-rays may be so focused by a burning-glass as to set wood on fire. I know some men and women of moderate abilities, who under the concentration of the love of Christ, make wonderfully useful Christians. This compacting of one's self for the duty at hand, is well described by the current phrase of a man's "pulling himself together." Some church-members go to pieces for want of a stout girdle.

3. Loins-girding also implies a wholesome idea of restraint. Laxity is the curse of the times in doctrine, in preaching, in social life, and in church life. Loose thinking leads to loose living. The very word "religion" signifies something that holds us together, and binds us to God. We cannot do just as we like. The people who clamor for liberty to do as they please, and who scout at Bible restraints as a yoke of bondage, are the very people who drift away into vagabondage. A robust Christian, like a robust soldier, understands the value of drill and discipline, and learns to obey the higher powers. It is not a good sign when a follower of

Christ begins to loosen his girdle. He is preparing to shirk, or sulk, or go to sleep. Tighten the loins, brother, and make up your mind that a noble, victorious, Christian life is not the easiest thing in this world.

Easy things, like cheap things, are of small value. The best attainments must be paid for. God has put some pretty steep hills on His road to heaven, and you will need to gird your loins if you expect to climb them. He provides the girdle; you have but to clasp it about you. He offers you a belt embroidered with these words: "My grace is sufficient for you." Clap it on, and you will find that the things which seem impossible, become possible to a resolute, unshrinking faith. Mr. Moody's negro woman was about right, when she said that if God ordered her to jump through a stone wall, the jumping was her party and the getting through was His look-out and not hers. God promises that He will "gird us with strength," and that strength is always equal to the load to be carried, or the cliff to be clambered.

It may be a timely text to preach about in this age of "liberal" thinking and mucilaginous theology. Some people are falling all apart, and going to pieces from very looseness of principles. Weakness becomes wickedness. All backsliding in the Church starts from loosening the hold on Christ. Conscience loosens its grip. The very garments which, the Christian wears become entangled in all manner of worldly and sinful practices, until he can no longer make headway.

Wherefore, let us gird up the loins of our souls and "be sober." Life is not a frolic, and the service of our crucified Lord is not child's play. The end of all things is at hand with each of us. There is an exultant joy in the dashing and the dash, the push and the climb, the conflict and the victory of a well-girded soul on his way to his crown. The prize is for the racer, and none else. They who would fain go to heaven in what Rutherford calls a "close-covered chariot," may not gain admission at the gate; or if they do, they will be ashamed to look God's heroes there in the face. Let your loins be girded, and your lamps be burning, and ye yourselves be like unto men who wait for their Lord. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching; He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

My Friend Smith.

BY FRANKLIN JOHNSON, D. D.

My friend Smith, having much money and little occupation, fell into discontent—that vice of the idle.

He discovered that his residence was not such as he desired—it was not grand enough; its situation was objectionable; and the neighborhood around it was lacking in intelligence and refinement. He placed it in the hands of an agent for sale, and began to look for another, better suited to his tastes. He drove hither and thither with his wife, who sympathized with his views, and studied all the placards in the windows which they passed. He examined with care the advertisements of real-estate in the daily papers. At length, to his gratification, his eyes lighted on a description which exactly corresponded to his wishes. He was delighted with the prospect which it placed before him. The property was but five minutes' walk from the station; the city was only a quarter of an hour distant; there were two churches and the best of schools near at hand. The house overlooked a noble river; the grounds about it were extensive, and highly cultivated; and it was large, well-built, well-arranged and provided with every convenience. Full of the most pleasant anticipations, the happy man called upon his agent, to whom the advertisement referred, and found, to his amazement, that he had been reading a description of his own home, which had been placed upon the market by his orders. He was almost indignant, as if some one had sought to take advantage of him. But a better mood followed; and, when he compared the glowing statements of the advertisement with the property they described, he could not but admit that they were strictly true. The home for which he had searched he already possessed. He had forgotten its real advantages in his discontent; but now, as he saw them set down in print, and surveyed them as they presented themselves before him, he wondered at his folly, and determined to keep his home for himself.

This parable has its application to many Baptist Sunday school teachers, who wander abroad through the fields of Sunday school literature in search of helps, without finding what they want. They try all the publications

of all the denominations, and end their search as little satisfied as when they began it. Let them look at home. Here are commentaries at once learned and popular, giving the ripe results of the soundest scholarship in forms adapted to the wants of the teacher. Here are more elementary lesson notes, instructive alike to the teacher and the taught. Here are papers which present the best methods of teaching in all grades of the Sunday school—from the infant class to the Bible class. Here are papers which bring religious instruction to the scholars in the most attractive dress. Here are hymns and tunes far superior to those of the ordinary Sunday school singing book. I might remind the Baptist teacher that he ought to use such helps as do not deny the great truths for which his denomination stands; but this argument, cogent as it is, need not be employed. The Sunday school literature furnished by our Publication Society is sufficiently recommended by its other merits. The teacher may easily find worse; he cannot find better.—*Watchman.*

All Things New.

Crossing the Connecticut River yesterday on a railroad bridge, I noticed a curious engineering feat. An old, wooden bridge is being slowly replaced by a new, iron one. Piece by piece, the former things are passing away, and gradually all things are becoming new. The traffic continues all the while. You enter the bridge on the eastern shore over the newly constructed portion, and slowly reach the centre to find the workmen busy substituting for the worn out materials, more or less decayed, the substantial and enduring. The iron beam takes the place of the cracked and bleaching timber of olden time; the metal rivet, nut and screw the place of the oaken peg, and the lighter, stronger rod and truss are substituted for the more bulky yet weaker frame-work of half a century ago.

This seemed to me an instructive picture of the expulsive and constructive processes of our physical and moral life. In our bodies this work of change, replacement and substitution is going on ceaselessly. We throw off the old and incorporate the new. There can be no stand still. But in the growth of character, pre-eminently there is a higher renewal. In the body the work is automatic. In the evolution of a noble character we co-operate with God. "He that sitteth on the throne saith, Behold, I make all things new." Our Creator and King is our Redeemer and Sanctifier, but while he works in us we are also to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

The choice of Him is conversion. The creation of a new life is sanctification. What is the change involved? A change of masters, of associates, of employments and enjoyments. This involves a change of will, purpose, and plan; of affection and heart, of life and service. All things are new. A character thus recreated, with all weak and decaying elements eliminated, as the body throws out its waste or the bridge its old materials, a life that has Christ for its light and power, will be life mover abundantly, fluent, rich, strong and enduring. It will be begun here, on the shores of time, but touch the continent of glory beyond the stream of death, linking time and eternity. All things else will be swept away, but this endures, for it is God's workmanship as well as ours.

The travel, I said, has continued during these months in which the work of substitution and reformation has been going on. So God is at work with willing souls all through life's busy years. By His word and spirit and providence; by human and angelic ministry; by loss and gain in joy and grief He helps us build. Life is worth living only so far as we enjoy His divine alliance, and find all things working together for His glory and our good. Happy is he who welcomes this work of constant renewal, and co-operates with God in leaving the things that are behind, changing from glory to glory till the last scar, stain, wrinkle or blemish is removed, and we stand a perfected work without fault in the presence of the King.—*Church Union.*

Gadding About.

We don't mean that kind of gadding about from house to house for the purpose of retailing gossip, which is so detrimental to the peace of a neighborhood, though that cannot be condemned in terms too severe. But we mean the gadding about of church members among other churches, and everywhere else where curiosity can be satisfied, instead of being in attendance upon the services of their own church. The pastor prepares a special sermon to meet special needs of his people. When he comes to deliver it, many of those who most

needed it are absent. Where? Why, at one of the other churches in town there was a concert, and some went there. At another a stranger preached and some went to see what he looked like; others to see if he understood elocution; others went to see who were there. There were still others who had gone to "return calls." Does that sound strangely in church parlance? "Returning church calls!" Yes, dear friends, there is such a custom, and one which does much to deplete congregations, hinder the pastor and prevent success. This is the way it is done. Sally Jones and Mollie Smith and five or ten others, belonging to three or four different congregations—not to churches—come together some Sunday night, agree to call on Minnie Wright, Nellie Sharp, Jessie Long and Nina Short, all members of the High Steeple Baptist Church, and accompany said young ladies to their church. But this visit is only lent. It must be paid back, and so you see it will take three or four Sunday nights to "return the calls," and these young members suffer in consequence, while the church suffers and is brought into disrepute.

Then again, a young lady or young gentleman is keeping company with a lad or lass who "leans" toward somewhere else. Of course it would not be polite to have a principle to stand by; it would be too utterly rude to talk of fidelity to duty, and so they go wherever the "leaner" suggests, and their own congregation is still further drained. We have in mind while we write, a church in which this "gadding about" had become so common that on one occasion, when the Sunday-school State Missionary had staid over two days to preach to them, they voted to adjourn and go to a public hall to a secular concert, the main point of which proved to be to advertise the music books of a well known publishing house. "Gadding about" had struck in on that people. They had it badly.

Not long since, a church which had been without preaching for quite a while, had an appointment sent them by a Bro. who had a spare Sunday. When this brother went to fill his engagement, he found an audience about large enough to fill three farm wagons. When he inquired the cause, he was told the "Pilgrims" had a meeting a few miles away, and their "big man" was to be there, and most of the people had gone there, notwithstanding the brother who had gone to preach to them had been insisted upon for months to do so. The trouble was, this people had become addicted to the habit of "gadding about." We could instance many more such circumstances, but these are enough to make plain what we mean. In all seriousness this is a serious matter—both to the individuals engaged in it, and the churches to which they belong. It can be corrected if parents will awake to a sense of parental duty. Yes, parents, have a duty, even to grow up children, at least while they continue under the parental roof. It can be corrected by a proper interest in the welfare of younger members by those who are older and more experienced. An effort will pay. Try it, and see if the church will not revive, and God be glorified.—*Baptist Flag.*

"Press On."

This is a speech, brief, but full of inspiration, and opening the way to all victory. It solves the problem of all heroes; it is the rule by which to weigh rightly all wonderful successes and triumphal marches to fortune and genius. It should be the motto of all, old and young, high or low, fortunate and unfortunate, so called. "Press on!" Never despair, never be discouraged, however stormy the heavens, however dark the way; however great the difficulties and repeated the failures: "Press on!" If fortune has played false with thee to-day, do thou play true for thyself to-morrow. If an unfortunate bargain has deranged thy business, do not fold thy arms and give up all as lost, but stir thyself and work the more vigorously. Let the foolishness of yesterday make thee wise to-day. If another has been false to thee to-day, do not thou increase the evil by being false to thyself. Do not say the world has lost all its poetry and beauty; 'tis not so; and even if it be so, make thine own poetry and beauty by living a true, and above all, a religious life.

Not Belonging to the Flock.

One evening a gentleman went out with a shepherd to collect his sheep. After they had been gathered together, and were being driven off the moor, it was observed that some among them did not belong to the flock. The shepherd, however, paid no attention whatever to these wandering strangers, urged forward though they were, by

the barking dog, further and further from their rightful companions. At last, thinking he must have been mistaken in supposing they were not the shepherd's the gentleman pointed to one of them and said: "Are those your sheep?" The shepherd answered: "No."

Then he was asked: "But why do you not separate them from the flock?" The shepherd answered: "They will find out directly that they do not belong here, and they will go of themselves."

This reminds one of the words of John, where he said: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us."

Who Is The Greatest?

In reality there are no higher seats in Christ's Church, only as we ourselves make the choice of them. The two talents having gained "other two," merit the same commendation as the five which gained "other five." This equality of rank, let it be observed, comes only in one way, namely, by investing wisely the talents intrusted to our keeping. The men and women conspicuous in the visible church on account of their money or brilliant abilities, and not because of their faithfulness before God, do not occupy as high places as those who invest all they possess for Christ, and thus multiply themselves according to the laws of spiritual accumulation. The world may not accord to these high seats, but God does. On this ground we have reason to believe that there will be singular reversals of judgment when God winds up the affairs of His moral administration.

The Teacher's Weapon.

Dr Ashmore, speaking before a Bible Class, said: "You are here learning to use this, which is the sword of the Spirit. Take it and go forth in the strength of the Lord. I have found this weapon mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin in China. It can put to flight the army of the aliens in this land, only let there be no weak hand grasping the blade. They will tell you there are flaws and blemishes in the old Bible. But suppose they had told the old soldier who had fought his many battles under Napoleon that his sword was part pewter, and part tin. 'Never mind your pewter and tin,' he would exclaim, 'I have cleared my way through the enemy's ranks with that trusty blade, and I am not ashamed of it.' Have confidence in God's truth, and go forward under your Divine Captain, expecting victory."

Words To Christian Workers.

There are six things we need to do good work, and without them we fail. The first is faith. Of the twelve spies who went up into the mountains to view the land, ten found giants; but two went up and possessed themselves of it. Courage is a necessary qualification. Noah preached one hundred and twenty years without the sign of a revival, and yet he was not discouraged. Enthusiasm is another qualification. Men must get the stiffness out of the churches. Perseverance comes next. Keep on, and hold your grip. Love for the work and sympathy are the other two necessary things.—*D. L. Moody.*

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