

## Not as I Will.

Blindfolded and alone I stand,  
With unknown thresholds on each hand;  
The darkness deepens as I grope.  
Afraid to fear; afraid to hope;  
Yet this one thing I learn to know  
Each day more surely as I go,  
That doors are opened, ways are made,  
Barriers are lifted or are laid  
By some great law unseen and still  
Unfathomable purpose to fulfil,  
"Not as I will."

Blindfolded and alone I wait;  
Loss seems to bitter, gain to late;  
Too heavy burdens in the load,  
And too few helpers on the road;  
And yet I am weak and grief is strong,  
And years and days so long, so long!  
Yet this one thing I learn to know  
Each day more surely as I go,  
That I am glad the good and ill  
By changeless law are ordered still,  
"Not as I will."

"Not as I will," the sound grows sweet  
Each time the words my lips repeat.  
"Not as I will," the darkness feels  
More safe than light when this thought steals

Like whispered voice to calm and bless  
All unrest and all loneliness.  
"Not as I will," because the One  
Who loved us first and best has gone  
Before us on the road, and still  
For us must all His love fulfil—  
"Not as we will."

## "Members one of Another."

BY MRS. A. H. BRONSON.

"The family who have bought and moved into the 'Stonehenge' are Baptists, my dear," said Pastor Simmons to his wife, a delicate-looking little lady, just now lying down for a brief rest, while he held the sick baby.

"Indeed!" answered Mrs. Simmons, "perhaps,—shall you call on them, George?"

"I don't know, I am sure, what I shall do, we need help so badly I feel as if I ought to make every effort to secure it; and yet, you know, Bessie, how I detest running too soon after people, or asking them to come and hear me preach!"

"If they were poor, you would not hesitate, I suppose," said his wife gently. "Don't we make too much distinction between the rich and the poor in these things? They are all equally Christ's if his at all, and perhaps the rich need special attention even more than the poor. I remember one good pastor, who was severely blamed for neglecting his wealthiest family."

"A mistake not often made I fancy," said Mr. Simmons smiling, as he arose and placed the now sleeping child in its cradle.

"There, dear, you can just touch the rocker with your foot. I do hope he will let you rest a little while, I wish you were going with me. I'm sure I don't know who will be at meeting to do anything or play the organ, everybody seems to be gone or going. I'll be back as soon as possible and take baby again. Good bye," and once more Bessie was left to her lonely vigils.

"How tired and discouraged he does seem, was her first thought, and then as she moved the cradle back and forth, a great longing took possession of her soul to help and comfort him.

Oh, if this new family would but join with this struggling church, started only a year before in the suburbs of the city, "it might give new life to everything."

"But very likely they are attached to some church already, or would not think of settling down and identifying themselves with the class of people who make up ours, such dear, good people as they are too, and such possibilities of growth if only we can hold on a while! Well," and here the tears which had been on the verge of falling all day, just took advantage of her weakness and fears, her utter exhaustion of mind and body, and came pouring down her cheeks in a wild torrent, "well the Lord knows, that is certain, but does he care? He must help us or we must give up."

And baby must wake up and cry, not the strong energetic cry of the early months of his brief life, which used to amuse his young parents rather than alarm them, but the weak, plaintive wail which told weakness near unto death, unless restoring influences came soon.

So she lifted herself up and took him in her arms, and tried to soothe him, but without success. Once more she got on to her feet and walked the floor and tried to sing as he loved to hear her, but her voice broke and failed utterly, and for a few moments both cried together, the mother as weak and unreasoning as the child. But soon came the old comforting words, ever new, "Lo I am with you always," and again Bessie lifted up her heart to receive the gracious influences of the unseen, but felt presence, and peace filled her heart.

When her husband came in some time after, he found them both asleep, the baby lying on her lap.

"Dear," he said, as he took the

little one and laid it in the cradle again, "I have good news for you. They were all at meeting, the new family, and all, six of them, brought letters to join our church.

"Six?" was all Mrs. Simmons could say.

"Yes, six. It is a case of household baptism; Mr. and Mrs. Mason, Mr. Mason's mother, a most lovely old lady, a son and two daughters. The young man, he is just graduated from college, played the organ, and the two young girls have such sweet voices. So we did not lack for music."

"How strange that they should join us so soon," said Mr. S.

"It did not appear so to them, evidently," said Mr. Simmons, tenderly patting the baby's wasted arm. "Mr. Mason said one thing which decided him to buy this place was the knowledge that there was a young church here needing help."

"I wanted," he said, "that my family should have the advantage of the Christian culture which comes alone from the opportunity for work in Christ's church, and the chance to give help in ways most needed."

"And Bessie," went on the weary pastor, in a happy, excited tone, "Mrs. Mason inquired for you, and asked leave to come in to-morrow and see the sick baby, and she said perhaps a short drive would be good for both. I think, dear, our hardest times are over."

If the two could have heard the conversation at dinner the next day, between Mr. Mason and his wife, they would have felt still surer of it.

"Our cottage must be opened at once, John, said the lady. "That baby must be got down to the shore without delay, and the poor young mother looks ready to drop. Our pastor, too, must have a vacation. Can't you send a supply for next Sabbath?"

"We will all take hold and help and let them have a rest,—The Standard.

## Be Cheerful.

And do what you can to make others so. There is no virtue in a cloudy face and a gloomy spirit. The Lord has no special use for either in His kingdom. The spirit of good cheer is the spirit of Christian enterprise. It would be in the line of progress if the whole church could be struck with a great revival of the spirit of hopeful courage. A half blind man can easily tell when it is dark. We may exhort any one not to look on the dark side of everything. If you do you will always have a big dark side to gaze at.

Christ did his work for us in quite a different spirit from that in which we are apt to attempt a good deal of our work for Him. The Good Shepherd rejoiced under the burden of the wayward sheep. The Record says: "In the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." He was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; His was a joyful service, and He intended that his followers should keep in the same path of good cheer. The perils of the way were plainly indicated, but he did not want them to become discouraged on account of these. There was one great reason why they should joyfully face all foes—"in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." When Paul writes to the Philippians he declares that in spite of his present chains; in spite of the ill will and opposition of foes, that God's work moves, so he rejoices and will rejoice. Through all the darkness he will take the hopeful view. When the chief captain came to rescue him for his life's sake from the great council, the same night the Lord stood by him and said "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so shalt thou bear witness also at Rome." The clouds hang low, and there is danger of a faithful disciple fainting, so the Lord comes to bid him take heart. In order to suffer and do all that lies before him he must be of good cheer. Let our pastors and workers of every name catch the spirit of the Master's delight in his work; let the whole church heed the apostle's exhortation, to joy in the Lord, and Zion shall be blessed as the result.

Failure comes oftener through becoming discouraged than through lack of ability to perform. The pastor who lacks hope and tells his people that he has grown weary in well doing thereby puts a sick horse into the traces. When conversions are few and the church life is not very buoyant, it will not help to oil the machinery, nor put much steam into the boiler, for pious souls to go in a half complaining spirit and tell the pastor that matters look pretty dark just now, and indeed there seems no very bright prospect for the future. Don't do it, friend, you are only adding extra weight to the old chariot that perhaps carries too many dead heads already. Be reminded

him, that the promises of God are sure to be faithful, and try to give him fresh courage by giving an extra pile yourself. After long delays and considerable suffering the Apostle to the Gentiles is nearing the end of his journey to Rome. But what conflicting emotions away his soul as he approaches the city. He is not coming as he expected, a free messenger of the gospel, but in chains. What will be his fate? What his work or suffering? How will those to whom he had written in apparently brighter days, receive him? What suspense, while hope and fear struggle for the mastery! But some of the Roman Christians have heard of his coming, and they are off down to the market of Appius and the Three Taverns to give him a Christian greeting and welcome. It is enough. Fear takes wings, for here are faithful souls who hold him as brother, "whom when Paul saw he thanked God and took courage." A number of boys are returning home at the close of a school session. At a certain cross-road a small boy and a large boy have a rough and tumble; naturally enough the small boy is thrown and nothing is said. But in the second attempt the big boy is down, and at once from a score of noisy throats go terrific yells. Repeatedly the big boy is thrown, till at last quite crestfallen he drags himself up and in a tone of voice that puts the cause of defeat just where it belongs says: "Well, you cheered him but you didn't cheer me." There's the difficulty. Some laborer has thrust his sickle into a golden harvest, and everybody shouts and he works on in the flood-tide of hopeful courage. Another laborer with as brave heart and a strong hand is thrust into a barren field. He does faithful gleaning but nobody cheers. Often enough he hears that the harvest is not very great. If this happens to catch the eye of such a pastor or laborer, brother, our message is to you. Be of good cheer, take courage; the promises of God are all yes. Our message is to the good people of such a pastor. Don't stand off with folded arms while he tugs away in silence. If you can't do anything else, shout. There's grace in it. The way to attain success even in the Lord's work is to put yourself and everybody else in the spirit of success.

"They helped everyone his neighbor, and everyone said to his brother, be of good courage; so the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smoothed with the hammer him that smiteth the anvil, saying of the soldering. It is good; and he fastened it with nails that it should not be moved." Canada Baptist.

## A Soft Answer.

The human heart is a wondrous mixture of diverse elements. Blind instinct and blinder appetite clamor for satisfaction; the fires of passion flame up at a breath and, by usurping wrath and pride, Reason is driven from her throne. But a soft answer, like oil on the troubled waters, assuages the tumult and restores to Reason her scepter.

Under many a calm exterior what sufferings are concealed. What rooted sorrows dwell in the recesses of the soul, sorrows shared by no one. Few are the hearts that have not some secret sorrow; it may spring from a congenial, taint, an inherited tendency, a sense of forfeited self-respect, a neglected opportunity, an irreparable loss. To all such hearts how grateful, how healing, are soft answers, gentle words, kindly ministrations! We often call those cross who are only sad; and it may be their sadness comes because there are none to speak words of peace and love, of hope and cheer. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." To many a hiring words of kindness are more precious than the wages he earns, necessary as are these to keep body and soul together. The kindly words keep the soul itself from disintegration and despair.

There are times when words of noble indignation and rebuke are called for; there may be times when scorn and contempt are deserved; but when erring men and women sit in judgment on their fellows, let those who will need mercy forget not to show mercy. "There is forgiveness with Thee that thou mayest be feared."

Those who have drunk deepest of the cup of sorrow, who have had the largest experience of life, who have observed most widely and studied most deeply the mysteries of human nature and human life, are most patient, most pitiful, most long-suffering and forbearing. They hesitate to pronounce judgment, they are most ready to pardon the erring, to give hope to the penitent, to trust that "somehow God will be the final end of all." Their knowledge and experience produce in them a constant disposition to be lenient, patient, gentle, hopeful, and to give a soft answer to every suffering fellow creature.

He who was tempted in all points as we are, who trod the wine-press alone, gives wisdom to all who ask it, receives all who come, and turns none empty away. He has ever a soft answer of peace for every needy inquiring soul, and He waits to be gracious to even the impenitent and those that oppose themselves. He is an exemplar.

## Three Misconceptions.

There are three misconceptions which tend to keep Christians back from taking their true place as individual workers in Christ's service:

1. That the great end to be gained in religion is to be personally saved. Now it is not denied that this is an end; but when looked on as the main end to be kept in view, it cannot be deemed a noble one. Being taken up with self, it can scarcely be called Christian. He who truly knows Christ, and has committed himself into His keeping, loses fear for his own safety. His thoughts are toward his Lord, not self; and his anxiety is to be faithful in doing his Lord's will.

2. No less common and injurious is the supposition that active effort in spreading the knowledge of Christ is the work of ministers and missionaries, and that what private Christians are to think of is to be instructed and edified. Here again there is a great deal of truth. The work of ministers is to preach Jesus Christ, and church members should count on being edified. But public preaching is only one means of spreading the Gospel. There is private speaking as well, and sometimes it is the more effective of the two. Then instruction and edification are not provided merely that the members may be pleased and get good, but that they may do good. What Christ gives to His people He designs to be an aid in enabling them to be a means of blessing to others.

3. But, perhaps, the most prevalent misconception is the idea that in order to truly serve Christ we must find some great thing to do. Great things are certainly not excluded from Christ's service. But they are accepted by him not because they are great, but because they are done to Him. Their value consists in their being thought of and taken up and done as for Him. Herein is one great condition and test of service—that it be consciously and willingly done to Him. Where this exists there will be no questioning as to greatness or littleness, highness or lowness; enough that it be done to Him!—Christian Observer.

## Don't Meddle with God's Plans.

Many men wreck their lives by determinedly carrying out their own plans without reference to the plans of God. In an army, every part, every brigade and regiment, must wait the commander's orders. If any battalion moves independently, though ever so heroically, it not only confuses the whole plan of battle, but brings disaster to itself as well, in the end. So each individual must always wait for God's commands to move. Keep your eye on the pillar of cloud and fire that leads. Rest when the pillar rests, move when it moves. Never lag behind, but be sure you never run ahead. You can make the clock strike before the hour by putting your hands to it, but it will strike wrong. You can hurry the unfolding of God's providence, but you will only mar the divine plan unless you wait for Him.

You can tear the rose-bud open before the time it would naturally open, but you destroy the beauty of the rose. So we spoil many a gift or blessing which God is preparing for us by our own eager haste. He would weave all our lives into patterns of loveliness. He has a perfect plan for each. It is only when we refuse to work according to His plan that we mar the web. Stop meddling with the threads of your life as they come from the Lord's hands. Every time you interfere you make a flaw. Keep your hands off, and let God weave as he pleases.—Parish Visitor.

You needn't pack up any worries. You can get them anywhere as you go along.

It is very easy to see the failings of others but not to see our own. So let us pray with good old David: "Search me O God and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Every attempt to make others happy, every sin left behind, every temptation trampled under foot, every step forward in the cause of what is good, is a step nearer to heaven.—Dean Stanley.

Kind words produce their own image in men's souls, and a beautiful image it is. They soothe and quiet and comfort the hearer. They shame him out of his sour, morose, unkind feelings. We have not yet begun to use kind words in such abundance as they ought to be used.—Pascal.

## Affected Piety.

Some people can not, or any rate do not, talk about religious subjects except with the use of a special phraseology and a peculiar tone of voice, neither of which they ever adopt under other circumstances. We know some who never walk up the aisle to their pews in a church except with body bent, head dropped between the shoulders and slightly bowed, and a tetering, tip-toeing sort of gait, as if a natural, upright carriage were an unnatural thing. These peculiarities usually, if not always, are due to a reverent spirit, but are the illustrations of a mistake as to what is essential to the exhibition of such a spirit. In most instances they do harm to others, and sometimes they react mischievously upon those in whom they appear.

Nothing is more important as an element of influential personal piety than naturalness. When one who has become a professor of religion is perceived by his acquaintances to be stiff and formal in speech, they distrust him a little. Words or phrases in regard to religious subjects which are not natural to him, and which evidently do not express any real feeling or actual experience of his own, inevitably have a parrot-like, singsong effect, which repels, because it suggests a doubt of their sincerity. Whatever causes us to seem artificial robs us of power over others. Even if it represent an actual and proper frame of mind, and is affected only in appearance, it does no good; indeed, it does positive harm.

Naturalness, therefore, straightforward simplicity, must be preserved as much as possible. The danger of losing this lies largely in the fact that young Christians often suppose that they are expected to speak and act like those who are much older, and their elders often treat them as if this were desirable. But it is not. Boys and girls, young men and women, on entering the service of Jesus Christ, are to remain young people, and should not be encouraged to put on the manners of greater age. The chief thing for them to aim at is to be consecrated young people, to think and talk with the same unaffected naturalness as ever, but with a holy purpose and spirit which may sweeten and ennoble their whole conduct and influence. They should not even think much about being natural, for studied naturalness is almost impossible. We ought to think little about ourselves, and much about the Lord Jesus Christ. When our attention is fixed on him, we are the simple, natural and useful disciples that we ought to be.—Congregationalist.

## Missionary Conscience.

What must be done? The thing to be done is to create a missionary conscience. The fact that the phrase is coming into use is a hopeful sign. Yes; the Church must have a missionary conscience. And how, tell us, is this to be created? The answer in brief is: First, the fact that it is Christ's will that the gospel shall be preached to all men, and through the agency of those already saved, must be distinctly, forcibly, and frequently declared; second, the scriptural reasons for the work must be carefully set forth; third, popular objections to missions must be overthrown.

A thin, weak sermon on missions once a year will not do the work. If missionary enterprise and labor are as important as some claim, the claim must be made good. Much prayer, much thought, much Bible study, will be demanded in order to do this. But is there not a cause?

It may be some one would like a syllabus of lines of treatment. This cannot be given in a column; if it could, it would be far less useful than the sermons which each can prepare for himself, to the Word of God and prayer; but, if any one has important and well defined views, which, having thoroughly considered, he thinks should be put before the Church, the paper is open; let him write to edification.

Be assured. The church as a whole has little heart in the work of missions; the interest grows, but does not yet glow, increasing warmth is felt, but we are far from a white heat. Effort should be directed to the creation of a missionary conscience.—Selected.

THINK OF THESE THINGS.—Persevere against discouragement. Keep your temper. Employ leisure in study, and always have some work on hand. Be punctual and methodical in business, and never procrastinate. Never be in a hurry. Preserve self-possession and do not be talked out of conviction. Rise early, and be an economist of time. Maintain dignity without the appearance of pride; manner is something with everybody, and everything with some. Be guarded in discourse, attentive, and slow to speak. Never acquiesce in immoral or pernicious opinions. Be not forward to assign reason to those who have no right to ask. Think nothing in conduct unimportant or indifferent. Practice strict temperance, and in your transactions remember the final account.

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