

The Voice of The Guide.

Walking through an unknown region,
Tangled thickets, briar and thorn
Weaving barriers, dark and legion;
Shadows on the face of morn.
Noontide hid in brooding tempests,
Nightfall coming cold and gray;
Lord, we thank thee for the promise,
Star-like in thy word to-day!

Give us listening ears to hear it;
Give us faith to follow on,
Though the clouds, untrifled, cover
All the glory of the sun.
"Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee?"
Do we, waiting as we pray,
Sweet from heaven discern its cadence?
Tread with courage, "This the way?"

Lord, so many thoughts beset us;
Lord so many whispers press
On the silence of the spirit,
Pilgrims in the wilderness.
Only as thy voice command us,
Only as our hearts obey,
Are we safe, and sure of reaching
Home at ending of the way.

Lord, when we are worn and weary,
Lord when faith is weak and faint,
Give us then, we pray, to hear thee;
Hush the meaning of complaint.
Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee!
Star-like beams the world to-day!
And we listen and we journey,
God himself our strength and stay.
—Margaret E. Sangster.

Do You Mean It?

A young man sat in the prayer-meeting, joining heartily in a song of praise. He had just concluded a short address. He had spoken of his joy and peace in the Christian life. Deeply moved as he recounted the goodness and mercy of the Lord to him, he had closed his address with the words: "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm lxxxiv. 10). The song they sang after the address was, "All my doubts I give to Jesus," and as the last verse of the hymn, "All I am I give to Jesus," was sung, there came into his heart the question, "Do you mean it?" At first there came into his mind the prompt reply, "Of course I do." But the question kept pressing upon his heart, and before the verse and chorus were finished, his voice was silent, and there came a painful questioning. Did he, indeed, fully mean what he had been singing? Would he give all to Jesus? Was he truthful in the testimony he had given? Would he rather be a door-keeper in the house of his God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness? Would he be willing to be a sexton? The hymn was finished, and a committee of the church began to report. There had been removals from the place, and the church had been greatly weakened. The report was followed by a painful silence. Economy and retrenchment had been made in every direction. Enough had been promised to meet all these reduced expenses, except the salary of a sexton. Their former sexton had just moved away, and it would cost at the very least seventy-five dollars for the year, and that sum additional seemed out of their power. He listened to this report, and again there came to his heart the questions, "Did you mean it?" "Would you be willing to be the sexton?" The discussion was still in progress, when he arose and addressed the meeting. He briefly recounted the experience of the past hour, and said: "By the grace of God, I do mean all I said. I will be your sexton for this year. I am not able to give much money, for my salary is small; but let this service be a thank-offering to my Lord to care for his house. I offer you, without any pay, my service as sexton. It is true; I mean it: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." His offer was accepted, and he began the service. He found the task not always convenient or pleasant. It required many sacrifices on his part to meet and faithfully perform the constantly recurring duties, and the people were not either considerate or grateful. Still he continues faithful, and the service of love is far more efficient than the service for hire had ever been. A blessing has come into his life. Service for his God has brought into his heart almost constant thought of God, and there has come in a larger measure the peace of God. There has also come a special blessing; for there has come to abide in his heart, as a constant monitor, the question, "Do you mean it?" Sometimes he sings more softly the hymns. He is thinking of the words, of the thought and is sifting his heart life with the question, "Do I mean this?" His exhortation is sometimes less fiery, and his testimony more subdued, for at his side stands the monitor question, "Do you mean what you say?" But there has come into his life-work a new power, and his counsel and testimony reach the heart. It is the power of one who means what he says. Would it not profit the Church greatly if all her members could have a like experience? In song and testimony and ex-

hortation there were ever present, as the minister of God, the heart-searching question, "Do you mean it?"—V. A. L. in *Christian Press*.

Young or Old.

BY SENEX SMITH.

As I was going out of church, I met my neighbour Slowcom. He prides himself upon being always in a minority of one. I said to him: Wasn't that nice to see so many of the children confessing Christ?

Well, I don't know, he drawled out; I never did go much on baby religion. If there had been a dozen grown-up men and women, it would have amounted to something. But what can such children do in a church, anyhow?

I didn't make any answer. How could I argue the matter with such a thick-headed and cold-hearted fellow! So I passed on. But the very next day I met Slowcom on the road with a load of nursery stock. He is planting an orchard, and expects that it will make him rich. We stopped to talk—country fashion—and I said:

Why, how is this? You surely are not going to plant those little things expecting to make an orchard, are you?

Of course I am, he said. Don't you know that's the way to get a good orchard. The earlier trees are transplanted the better. Why that nurseryman wanted me to take a lot of three-year-old trees. They were stocky and had good roots. But I wouldn't touch them, though he offered them to me at half-price. He thought I was a fool. But I know a thing or two about orchards, and I would rather have the trees a year old at double the money.

How strange, I said, that the Lord's orchard—the church—where he grows plants of righteousness and gathers fruit unto eternal life, should be so different from yours. You want young trees, but you think the Lord wants old ones. If you had the same idea about your own orchard that you have about the Lord's, you would go down into the valley and get wagon-loads of all the moss-covered trees that you could find. You would dig them up, cutting off three-quarters of their roots; you would bring them home all eaten by worms, and covered with scale-bugs, and then say to your neighbours who have planted scions: See how much wiser I am. See what big trees I've got already. What do those little things amount to anyway? I tell you, Slowcom, getting people into the church when they are old is a grand thing for them, but it ain't worth very much to the church. You can't get all the roots as you do in the case of the little child. You can't prune and train them as well, and make them as shapely. And, then, they have worldly habits that stick to them like scale-bugs, that it is hard for them to get rid of. I think that the Lord is just as wise in regard to his orchard as you are in regard to yours, and that he likes young trees the best.

Slowcom looked very thoughtful for a minute or two and then said, I guess you've got me this time, and drove on.

Unreasonable Petitions.

A great many people seem to think that if they pray for what they want, the Lord is bound to grant their petitions. They do not always allow Him the liberty of judgment which they would not think of denying to any human friend, and his failure or delay to respond as they wish, annoys them. But a great many petitions do not merit the expected answer. Often no answer at all is deserved. Many of our prayers are as unreasonable as the demand of a little child to be allowed a razor or a dynamite cartridge for a plaything. Still others pay no heed to the divine understanding of the fitness of things, and plead for the immediate accomplishment of what requires a long time to bring it to pass; as when we pray for a change of character in a friend, and are distressed because no immediate transformation is witnessed. Many a petition is unreasonable because offered in a wrong spirit. Such would have been those in the test case proposed a few years ago by a famous scientist, in which—if we recall the scheme—the number of cures in a hospital where the patients were to be prayed for, was to be compared with that of cures in another hospital for whose inmates no prayer was to be offered. Petitions offered merely with a purpose to test God mechanically and in a temper of rivalry, cannot be expected to be heard, and the proposition very properly was refused. An unreasonable petition to God has no more reason to expect a favorable answer than when made to fellow-man, except, possibly, in view of the fact that God's compassionate forbearance is unspeakably greater than that of any man. He who would receive the desired response to his petitions must take

care that they are reasonable and right, must draw near to God humbly and reverently, must defer cheerfully to the divine wisdom, and must appreciate the great privilege of holding converse with the Almighty at all, apart from possible benefits to be gained.—*The Congregationalist*.

A TIME FOR ALL THINGS.—Time is as important as fitness. The right thing may become wrong unless it is in the right time. Look well to the time of doing anything; there is a time for doing all things. If your wife is wearied and worn out, be sure it is not the right time to tell her that the dinner is not hot, for that the bread is sour. Comfort her—cheer her up.

If you are annoyed or vexed at people, just remember it is not the right time to speak. Close your mouth—Shut your teeth together firmly, and it will save you many a useless and unavailing regret, and many a bitter enemy.

If you feel a little cross—and who among us does not at some time or other?—do not select that season for reproving your noisy household flock. One word spoken in passion will make a scar that a summer of smiles can hardly heal over.

If you are a wife never tease your husband when he comes home, weary, from his day's business. It is not the right time. Do not ask him for expensive outlays when he has been talking about hard times. It is, most assuredly, the wrong time.

If he has entered upon an undertaking against your advice, do not seize on the moment of its failure to say I told you so! In fact, it is never the right time for those four monosyllables.

O, if people only knew enough to discriminate between the right time and the wrong, there would be less domestic unhappiness, less sorrow and less estrangement of heart. The greatest calamities that overshadow our lives have sometimes their germ in matters as apparently slight as this. If you would only pause, reader, before the stinging taunt, or the biting sneer, or the unkind scoff passes your lips—pause just long enough to ask yourself, Is it not the right time for me to speak? you would shut the door against many a heartache.

The world hinges on little things, and there are many more trivial than the right time and the wrong.

The Love of God.

The love of God is a delightful theme. Christians ought to dwell more upon it. But to have it burn in the heart; to be swayed by it; to have the whole being swept and inspired by it; and to have its radiating touch every point in the life, till it becomes strong with its strength and resplendent with its light—to have such an experience of it is to attain the highest happiness and the truest power. God's love is a nurse, full of untiring ministry; it is as a physician, bringing an antidote for every ill; it is as a shepherd, watching us with sleepless eye, and protecting us with strong arm. We call the world dull and prosy, and full of vexatious things, but it becomes as bright as a pathway in paradise, and as fair as an oasis bearing palm trees and white lilies when we walk through it under the light and inspiration of God's love. The thorns may prick the feet and the spirit may sigh for deliverance from fretting, jostling cares, yet the Christian who, like Paul, is constrained by this heavenly impulse, will shine white and clear as if illumined from the very presence of God himself. Evermore, too, he will rejoice. When will the world come to see and know how gloriously bright and rapturously sweet and wonderfully supporting and richly stimulating this love can be to a devout, pure, trusting heart! There is no true courage, or magnanimity, or high virtue, or spiritual strength without it. Paul had learning, rare will-power, enthusiasm, tact, but these accomplishments, alone, could not have kept him calm, or made his utterance strong in the presence of an Athenian or a Corinthian audience. The constraining love of Christ, inspiring and quickening his gifts, gave him his great power as a preacher.—*Inquirer*.

Talmage on Training Children.

Few men are at once so brilliant and practical as Dr. Talmage. Here is a characteristic and very suggestive paragraph on the training of children: "It is easy enough to spoil a child. No great art is demanded. Only three or four things are requisite to complete the work. Make all the nurses wait on him and fly at his bidding. Let him never learn to go for a drink, but always have it brought to him. At ten years of age have Bridget tie his shoe-strings. Let him strike auntie because she will not get him a sugar-plum. He will soon learn that the house is his realm, and he is to rule it. He will come up into

manhood one of those precious spirits that demand obeisance—and service, and with the theory that all the world is his oyster, which with knife he will proceed to open. If that does not spoil him, buy him a horse. We congratulate any man who can afford to own a horse: but if a boy own one, he will probably ride on to destruction. He will stop at the tavern for drinks. He will bet in the races. There will be room enough in the saddle for idleness and dissipation to ride, one of them in the front and the other behind. But if the child be sensible to all such efforts to spoil him, try the plan of never saying anything to encourage him. If he do wrong, thrash him soundly; if he do well, keep on reading the newspaper, pretending not to see him. But if you have a child invulnerable to all influences, and he cannot be spoiled by any means recommended, give him plenty of money without any questions as to what he does with it.

Wasted Politeness.

A funny little scene was witnessed on a train near the city of Chicago the other day. Two young ladies got on a rather crowded car. Just as they passed a polite young man arose and called to them: "Here is a seat, ladies."

But they walked on and paid no attention. So the gentleman spoke a little louder: "Ladies, you will find a seat back here."

Even then they did not turn, but kept on making their way slowly to the other end of the car. Then the man who was making such efforts to be polite, and had attracted the attention of every one in the car except the two to whom his remarks were addressed, grew red in the face, and made one more attempt, speaking at the top of his voice:

"Of course, ladies, you can stand if you prefer, but you can get a seat if you come back."

This appeal had no more effect than his other attempts, and at that moment he saw them accept a seat at that end of the car, and begin at once to converse with each other in the deaf and dumb alphabet! This explained their apparent indifference, and amid the ill-conceived amusement of the passengers the polite young man went into another car to cool off.

Turn Your Face To The Light.

It had been one of those days on which, everything goes contrary, and I had come home tired and discouraged. As I sank into a chair, I groaned, "Everything looks dark, dark!"

"Why don't you turn your face to the light, auntie, dear?" said my little niece, who was standing, unperceived, beside me.

"Turn your face to the light?" The words set me thinking. That was just what I had not been doing. I had persistently kept my face in the opposite direction, refusing to see the faintest glimmer of brightness. Artless little comforter! She did not know what healing she had brought. Years have gone by since then, but the simple words have never been forgotten.—*Anon.*

Life is the test of faith.—F. W. Robertson.

The best thing in the world is to be a Christian.

Be loving, and you will never want for love; be humble and you will never want for guiding.

It is not enough to keep the poor in mind; we must give them something to keep you in mind.

We should be careful how we create enemies, it being one of the hardest things in the Christian religion to behave ourselves as we ought toward them.

The most exalting moments of life are those when, after a conflict of strong passions with the sense of duty, we come off conquerors, and are conscious that we have risen in spiritual existence.—*Channing*.

It is not by regretting what is irreparable that true work is done, but by making the best of what we are. It is not by complaining that we have not the right tools, but by using the tools we have.—F. W. Robertson.

What God calls a man to do he will carry him through. I would undertake to govern half a dozen worlds if God called me to do it; but if he did not call me to do it, I would not undertake to govern half a dozen sheep.—*Payson*.

Reading the Bible is like going out of the darkness of a starless night into a brilliantly lighted room. At first it dazzles you, and you can distinguish nothing in the room. Though it is furnished and adorned with costly and varied magnificence. Presently it is somewhat light to your eyes; then it grows lighter and lighter until your vision is perfectly clear, and you gaze with enraptured astonishment on all the splendid magnificence in the midst of which you stand.—*R. Rock*.

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