

What Is That In Thine Hand?

Exodus 4:2.

"Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love."
My hands were filled with many things
That I did precious hold,
As any treasure of a king's—
Silver, or gems, or gold.
The Master came and touched my hands
(The tears were in his own),
And at his feet my treasures sweet
Fell shattered one by one.
"I must have empty hands," said He,
"Wherewith to work My works through thee."

My hands were stained with marks of toil,
Defiled with dust of earth;
And I my work did oftentimes soil,
And render little worth.
The Master came and touched my hands,
And crimson were His own;
But when, amazed, on mine I gazed,
Lo! every stain was gone.
"I must have cleansed hands," said He,
"Wherewith to work My works through thee."

My hands were growing feverish,
And cumbered with much care;
Trembling with haste and eagerness,
Nor fo'ed off in prayer.
The Master came and touched my hands,
With healing in His own,
And calm and still to do his will
They grew—the fever gone.
"I must have quiet hands," said He,
"Wherewith to work My works through thee."

My hands were strong in fancied strength,
But not in power divine,
And bold to take up tasks at length
That were not His, but mine.
The Master came and touched my hands,
And might were in His own;
But mine since then have powerless been,
Save His are laid thereon.
"And it is only thus," said He,
"That I can work My works through thee."
—E. G. Cherry.

The Head Without the Heart.

Complete separation of the head and the heart, the intellect and the emotions, in religion, is impossible. No human being exists without emotion, without ideas.

But there are Christians whose religion is almost wholly intellectual. Such a one is clear in his perceptions, expert in splitting hairs of doctrine, and rarely errs in judgment upon a point of morals. If sincere, he is conscientious, prone to scrutinize his own conduct and that of others, and to have an opinion on the right or wrong of particular acts.

With him the claims of duty predominate;—God, His law, justice, truth, virtue, order, stability are the subjects upon which he thinks most and speaks frequently. He is well acquainted with the Bible, ready at all times to appeal to it for proof. According to his ability he aims to have a complete religious system. Whether it agrees fully with that of the Church to which he belongs or not, his ideas agree with each other as closely as he can make them; if others see contradictions that he does not recognize, it is because their perceptions are more acute than his. He has much to say concerning doctrines or principles, and maintains that clear views are vital to a religious character.

He may for many be strongly denominational. Some, where religion is chiefly of the head, have such clear views of the sources of error and of the inability of most minds to free themselves from its meshes, that they attach little importance to opinion or dogma, and there are others who defend their views with such vehemence as to become fanatical and to doubt the piety of all who differ from them. But usually, in this age of courtesy among the sects, those who have the religion of the intellect are mildly, though firmly, denominational. They know what they hold and why, and though willing that others shall have the freedom of thought that they claim, are not themselves liable to be loosed from their own moorings.

Thus far the religion of the head seems admirable; but if this be all, it does not conform to the ideal which the Master holds before His disciples. Such a Christian is, at best, only a servant; he knows nothing of sonship! He believes that he ought to serve God, and that it is essential to his happiness, and he tries to do so; but as his passions and appetites are as strong as ever, and are not affected by the clearness of his judgment, he sustains a constant struggle between duty and inclination. He is generally discontented with his experience, and on examining himself is conscious of uneasiness and spiritual darkness which he does not fully understand.

Possibly with the aid of an equable temperament, good education, favoring circumstances, religious intercourse, self-denial, church work, he may be able to maintain consistency of conduct and have some genuine peace.

He is, however, cold, unemotional, and is not greatly moved by the promises, or by contemplation of the love, sufferings, and death of Christ, or the joys of heaven; nor has he a keen relish for the means of grace

unless they are very orderly or intellectual. He is not pleased with excitement or ebullitions of fervency, but prefers calmness, and enjoys only that singing which is in the measures appropriate to the Sabbath congregations. It is his wish that those only should take part who can do so to "edification." Probably he discounts the participation of women in the prayer meetings as being too liable to "give way to their feelings."

His religious reading is doctrinal or critical. The psalms please him for their poetry rather than their devotion; St. Paul he admires for his arguments rather than his affectionate earnestness and tender solicitude. He judges the sermon by the same standard,—by intellectual characteristics alone; its arguments must be cogent and coherent, its illustrations transparent and appropriate, its language chaste—neither barren nor diffuse—and its delivery dignified and self-possessed. If it meets these requisites, to him it seems a "good" sermon; in proportion as it fails in them, regardless of whatever it may be to others, to him it is dull or rhapsodical.

This is a case of one-sided development. Such a Christian is like one who subordinates the physical entirely to the mental, who takes no exercise, eats little and hurriedly, and deprives himself of society and sleep that he may apply himself to his favorite studies. Man has a heart as well as a head, and the first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" as well as "with all thy mind." Such a Christian knows little or nothing of the joy of the Lord, of the love that casts out fear, of the "lively hope" of "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" and when sorrow befalls him he will wonder that his consolations are few and small. —Chris. Advocate.

The Terrors of the Law.

Our honest conviction is that there is far too little of this "old-fashioned" kind of preaching nowadays, and that to this fact is to be attributed largely the fearful increase in crime.

It is well known that there has been a very marked letting down on this point within the last four decades. Preachers do not speak "the terrors of the law" as they did forty, fifty years ago. While Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. In like manner forty years ago, while the faithful preacher warned the people of the terrors of an awful and everlasting hell, men and women trembled, wept, and called on God for mercy.

But it is not so now. One of the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States takes the ministers of the gospel of day to task for their neglect of duty in regard to this matter as follows: "You ministers are making a fatal mistake in not holding forth before men, as prominently as the previous generation did, the retributive justice of God. You are fallen into a sentimental style of rhapsodizing over the love of God, and you are not appealing to that fear of future punishment which your Lord and Master made such a prominent element in His preaching. And we are seeing the effects of it in the wide-spread demoralization of private virtue, and corruption of the public conscience throughout the land."

Brethren, ministers of the gospel have any of you been negligent of your duty in regard to this all-important matter? If so, we beg of you to turn over a new leaf. You are on the eve of the revival season. See to it that you preach the whole gospel, laying special emphasis on the terrors of the law. Do not overlook the texts found in Psalm 7:11, 9:17, and 50:21-22; Prov. 29:1; Matt. 25:27-31 and 46; Luke 16:19-31; Gal. 6:7; Rev. 20:12-15, and 21:8.

There are many other passages in addition to these which plainly declare the great doctrine of retributive justice, and which can be used by the faithful pastor in driving the terrors of the law home to the hearts of the people. Then, too, let him plainly declare to the members of the church that their unregenerated neighbors, friends, and children, unless converted and saved through faith in the Lord Jesus, are all absolutely certain, in a few years, to be with the rich man in hell, crying in piteous accents, "I am tormented in this flame;" and that the smoke of their torment will ascend up forever and ever, and all this because they did not forsake the ways of sin, turn to God, and seek salvation in the day of their merciful visitation. These awful truths, and these only, will bring conviction to the hearts of hardened sinners; and these will do it only when faithfully driven home to their hearts and consciences by the preacher whose soul is on fire of the Holy Spirit, and who speaks with the faithfulness and love of our divine Lord. —Rel. Telescope.

Faith Relating to Temporal Affairs.

Suppose one who has all his life earned his bread by toil gets on toward sixty, and presently will pass it. Now Satan begins to trouble him, and says, "You are getting old now; soon there will be nothing remaining for you but the union or the workhouse."

How wretched and miserable a child of God is made by this fiery dart! But by using the shield of faith he will be able to quench it, "If my Father has cared for me when young, surely he will continue to care for me when old and sick, now as in the past. Or, as He says in the word, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake.'" How quickly this temptation will be quenched! I have seen many of God's dear children who were thus troubled.

One instance I remember distinctly, though it occurred many years ago. It was that of an aged widow, a child of God, who had lived very consistently. She had worked hard with her hands in youth, and now in her old age she began to say, "I shall have to go to the workhouse." She had some money which she had saved of her past earnings, and she said, "When this is gone I can earn no more, and I shall have to go to the union." I sought to comfort her; I reminded her how God had cared for her in the past, and how He had promised never to leave her nor forsake her; and that as surely as she was a child of God, so surely would He care for her, and that even some of His own children would be led to assist her.

But still the temptation continued, and what was the end of it? Her joy was marred completely for years; she was in deep trouble simply by this one thought. Yet see how it came to pass at last. One by one the sovereigns were used, and at length it came to the last sovereign; one shilling of it was spent when the Lord took her to Himself, and there was for her no such thing as the workhouse.

But see how she was losing her spiritual joy, and how her life and how her communion with God were marred by this one fiery dart; whereas, if the shield of faith had been used, the devil would have been confounded and her last days would have been in peace. Therefore let us use this shield of faith, with the revelation God has been pleased to make of Himself, and we shall soon see the fiery darts of the devil quenched, and have joy. —George Muller.

Love In Law.

"Law is the religion of the Old Testament; Love is the religion of the New." That is a popular idea, among Christians, as to the Bible and its teachings. The idea is proclaimed in this form of statement in pulpit and in press so frequently, if not so generally, that very many accept it as not to be questioned or qualified. Yet it might, with equal fairness and propriety, be asserted that "Love is the religion of the Old Testament, and Law is the religion of the New." Both statements are true in a sense; neither statement is complete by itself, or as ordinarily understood. In God's government, and in God's revelation of Himself, love is in all His law, and all His law is in love. Whoever fails to recognize this truth fails to understand the Bible as a revelation of God, in both the Old Testament and the New.

If, indeed, it could be shown that the New Testament is not consistent with the Old, and that it presents God as of a different spirit from that in which He is revealed in the earlier disclosures of Himself to man, it would be necessary to accept one of these Testaments as true, and to reject the other as not true. If it could be shown that Jesus Christ was not a manifestation of God as God from the beginning, then either God or Jesus Christ would have to be accepted as the object of worship and of confidence, as the other could not be; for "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace," or of unity. If the claims of Christianity be urged as those of a new religion, with no place in the world's history prior to twenty centuries ago, they bear no comparison with the claims of Christianity as the flower and fruit of Judaism, rooted in the love of God to man, as shown in law and promise and guard and guidance in all the centuries told of, from Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to Judas Maccabeus, and again from John the Baptist to John the Baptist.

That love is only, or primarily, or mainly, of the New Testament, in contrast with the Old, is a comparatively modern error, widespread though it be today. It did not come from a careful study of the teachings, nor from an apprehension of the spirit, of the Old Testament. It was not taught by Jesus or His apostles. It is not a declaration of the New Testament. —The Sunday School Times.

"In His Life-Time."

In his lifetime! How full of suggestion are these words! It was Sir Isaac Newton who said, "They who give nothing till they die never give at all." There is much truth in this. The one who keeps his fortune as long as he can use it, and then leaves it by bequest to some worthy cause, does not give in his lifetime, and he never has the joy while living of seeing the good his money can accomplish.

The late Charles Pratt, the founder of Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, N. Y., once said: "The greatest humbug in the world is that money can make a man happy. I never had any satisfaction with mine till I began to do good with it."

When he began to give away what he had, then he began to be enriched by it. He then began to realize the force of the principle that "The Christian's property, like his trade or calling, is his commission to serve his fellow-men for Jesus' sake; it is his ministry of the gospel." The one who uses his wealth for the good of others thereby honors the law of the Christian life and puts himself into such an attitude respecting all his possessions that giving becomes a positive delight.

George W. Childs, the Philadelphia philanthropist, left a valuable testimony in regard to giving in one's lifetime. He says: "I have felt that it is a great mistake to put off being generous until you are dead. In the first place, you lose the pleasure of witnessing the good you may do; and, again, no one can administer your gifts for you as well as you can do it yourself. It is a great pleasure to be brought into personal relations of that kind, and to make people feel that you are not a philanthropist in the abstract, but that you are interested in them personally, and care for their welfare. In that way you benefit them, not merely in the natural way, but you make them feel that men are really brothers, and that they were made to help one another."

Happy indeed are the men and women who do good with their money and property in their lifetime! The builders of hospitals and schools and the founders of asylums and libraries will live in the memories and affections of those who share the benefits of their benefactions in the years to come. They may see and rejoice in the results of their giving during their life-time, but they plan and build chiefly for the future. There is no greater pleasure in life than that which comes from doing good to others. And the time to thus do good is while we are living, and not after we are dead.

Who will now resolve to make the best possible use of his earthly goods during his lifetime? —Telescope.

The Prayer of Faith.

Are you praying for a friend? Pray on. God loves an unselfish prayer. God can reach out anywhere to save a soul. How easy it is for him! If one of my dear ones was over yonder, struggling in the water for life, and you were near and could reach out a hand, and I should call to you, "O, save him!" would you hesitate?

His promise is given to us: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." There is not an "if" there; not a "perhaps;" not, "It may be so." "It shall be opened to you." And as if He thought some of us might question His sincerity in making so vast a promise, He immediately repeats it on this wise: "For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

The prayer of faith rests upon God's wisdom. He knows precisely what I need, and for that reason I am emboldened to ask. I would not dare to ask if God were no wiser than myself. I would not dare to kneel down and ask Him for a temporal gift that might be to my moral and eternal ruin for all I know. But I can trust Him. My Father knows; knows what is best for me. There is supply under God's bounty forever, if we will. What limits the supply? Faith. God's resources are infinite. The oil flows on forever, but the vessels give out. O for faith—a faith that rests upon His unbounded power, goodness, and wisdom—a faith that believes His word: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." —D. J. Burrell, D. D.

Love.

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." —1 Peter iii. 15.

Love is modest; it rather inclines to bashfulness and silence than to talkative forwardness. "In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin;" "be," therefore, "slow to speak," nor "cast your pearls before" those who can not

distinguish them from pebbles. Nevertheless, when you are solemnly called upon to bear testimony to the truth, and to say what great things God has done for you, it would be cowardice, or false prudence, not to do it with humility. "Be," then, "always ready to give an answer to any man who" properly "asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness;" without fluttering anxiety, "and with fear," with a reverential awe of God upon your minds. The perfect are "burning and shining lights." God does not light the candle of perfect love to hide it in a corner, but to give light to all those who are within the reach of its brightness. If diamonds glitter, if stars shine, if flowers display their colors, and perfumes diffuse their fragrance, to the honor of the Father of lights and the Author of every good gift: if, without self-seeking, they disclose His glory to the utmost of their power, why should ye not "go and do likewise?" Gold answers its most valuable end when it is brought to light and made to circulate for charitable and pious uses. —John Fletcher.

It was the night that gave manna to the tribes of Israel. What the scriptures style "bread of heaven" and "angels' food" was brought to them out of the thick darkness. And so the manna of divine truth comes to us from the night of sorrow, and the believing, living soul feeds and feasts on convictions and sentiments which ripen for it amid the shades of affliction. —Christian Index.

It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it. We are told to let our light shine, and if it does, we won't need to tell anybody it does. The light will be its own witness. Lighthouses don't ring bells and fire cannon to call attention to their shining—they just shine. —D. L. Moody.

The following incident actually took place in a public school in Chester County, Pennsylvania, and indicates a natural aptness for English composition. Teacher: "I want each of you to make a sentence, using the word 'delight' in it." Small Boy (colored): "De wind come in de winder, an' blowed out de light."

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