

Courage.

If the day's brief pain and passing care
Have seemed too much and too hard to
bear;
If under its trivial press and smart
Thou hast failed in temper and lost in
heart;
If the undiscouraged, journeying sun,
As it sinks to its rest with its travail done,
Leaves thee all spent with trouble and
sorrow—
How shalt thou face the harder to-morrow?

If the things familiar daunt thee so,
How shalt thou deal with an unknown woe?
If conquered by every passing dole,
How build the sinews of thy soul?
To stand and shiver on the brink
Of each recurrent task, and shrink,
Will never harden thee to abide
The waves of the turbulent Jordan tide.

Never a river but brims and fills
By the aid of the numberless slender rills;
Never a strength but has grown and fed
With the force of a weakness conquered;
Never a day but is ruled and shaped
By the power of a yesterday seeped;
And never a human soul that grew
By a single resolve to its stature true.

Winter makes ready for the spring
By months of struggle and suffering,
And the victory won from the mortal strife
Strengthens the fiber and pulse of life.
How if the earth, in its chill despair,
Felt that the fight were too hard to bear?
Where were the bloom and the vintage,
then?

Where were the harvest for hungering
men?
So, if the now seems cruel and hard,
Endure it with thoughts of the afterward;
And be sure that each task that is clearly
set
Is to brace thee for other tasks harder yet.
Train the stout muscles of thy will
In the daily grapple with daily ill,
Till, strong to wrestle and firm to abide,
Thou shalt smile at the turbulent Jordan tide.

—Susan C. Ollidge.

Why are Not More Souls Converted Under Our Ministry?

REV. J. D. COUNTESS, D. D.

This is a very serious as well as an exceedingly interesting and important question; a question that has frequently been asked by some of the most thoughtful, anxious and conscientious workers in the Master's service. Why are not more souls converted under my ministry? How often has this question come to the writer. Some times it has come in the quiet hours of the night and probed his heart to its lowest depths. At other times it has forced itself upon him during the busy hours of the day, stopping him in his work, demanding an answer. It is to him, therefore, a very personal and delicate question, one that needs to be handled with the greatest care. But then it should be handled, for if the lack of conversions be due to anything in the life or character of the minister, or to the way or spirit in which he delivers the divine message, it should be known in order that the stone which stops the blessing may be removed.

After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Belief is necessary to conversion. He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Thus far everything is clear. The individual who hears the truth must believe it or the truth will have no saving effect on his soul. For this there is no possible escape. Without a personal faith in Christ we perish. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. So important is faith on the part of the hearer. He must believe in order to be saved, and thus escape from the wrath of God which is already upon him. The gospel was preached unto us, as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

This important statement shows conclusively that the lack of conversions may be, and sometimes is, due not to the preacher nor to the message he brings, but to the hearer. Possibly the same thing may be true to-day. Possibly the primary cause of the great dearth of conversions in so many of our churches is to be accounted for simply by the lack of faith on the part of the hearer. Christ could do no mighty works in his own country, because of their unbelief. If unbelief on the part of the hearers thus rendered ineffectual the ministry of Christ, what may it not do to our ministry? In such a case the minister is rather to be pitied than to be blamed. It is hard to labor among those who are so dead in trespasses and sins that they have no capacity, and consequently no desire for the truth as it is in Christ.

Can these bones live? O Lord God, thou knowest. Here is our inspiration, our hope. God knows, and it is He who has ordained that men should be saved by the foolishness of preaching. Man's voice, God's truth; man's speech, the Holy Spirit's inspiration; a human

organ, a superhuman power. We are old, on good authority, that the greatest need of the Church to-day is not more money or more intelligence or even more heart, but more earnest, persevering, importunate prayer. The ability to pray well, so it is affirmed, is a greater and far more effectual gift than the ability to preach well. We fail in our prayer life largely because we fail in our spirit-life. Where there is much prayer there is much of the Spirit, and where there is much of the Spirit there souls are converted. I the lack of conversions under our ministry due to the lack of persevering, importunate prayer? Is the root of the difficulty so deep? Does it thus go to the very vitals of our own spiritual life? This is a serious question. Under its proings, no prayer could possibly be more appropriate than that excellent prayer of David, when out of the bitterness of his soul he cried. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

The writer knows by a sad, yet joyful, experience that when God searches a human heart he makes most thorough work of it. Let no one, however, hesitate on this account to offer David's prayer. What we want is thorough work. If the lack of conversions under my ministry is due to something in my heart; then O Lord out with it. Remove the obstacle, whatever it may be, that souls may be saved. Better far probe the wound and probe it deep than to die by inches with gangrene. Better far let God search our hearts to-day than to have him wait till the light of the great Judgment Day is flashed in upon our souls, only to reveal our sins and our lies when it is too late to make amends. We do not affirm that the lack of conversions under our ministry is due to lack of prayer on the part of the ministry. We make no such charge. It may be, or it may not be. We hope it is not so, and yet something is wrong. Souls are not saved.

O Lord, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written. I say the truth in Christ; I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. "O Lord, give me Scotland or I die." It is a long time since the writer has heard any prayers like these. Why not? Why should not the Christian ministry of to-day be just as earnest and importunate in prayer as was either Moses, or Paul or John Knox? Luther is said to have prayed three hours a day, and that it was to this more than to anything else that he attributed his success. Contrast this with what actually took place a few months ago in one of our great benevolent institutions which has only one religious service during the week, which service is held on Sabbath afternoon. The service was conducted by a city pastor who preached a long sermon, but strange to say he did not have a word of prayer from beginning to end, save the benediction. This may have been a rare case. We certainly hope it was, but is it not somewhat alarming that there should be even one such case, and that in an institution filled with seven or eight hundred poor, homeless and helpless men and women.

When Christ came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, he told his disciples this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. Is not the same true to-day? Are there not in all our churches individuals whom we have failed to benefit, simply because we have failed in our prayers and fasting? We leave this question to be settled at the closet door of every Christian minister.

Go, preach the preaching that I bid thee. Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Notice the expressions, "the preaching I bid thee," "all the words of this life," "the Gospel." Never did an ambassador or envoy to a foreign court receive more definite orders than these. There can be no possible mistake about what Christ would have us preach. He has made it very plain and positive. He commands us to preach the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel. Are we doing this? Are we preaching the whole Gospel as we ought to preach it under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost? We leave this question, with a few others, for future meditation.

No matter how much we get, we only get to love, unless we also get Christ.

Are We Blind Also?

"Are we blind also?" said the religious teachers of the day to Jesus, a d one can imagine the amused smile with which they would say it. The absurdity of the charge made by this ignorant Galilean peasant was so evident that it was impossible to be angry with him. Their smile was reflected in the faces they saw about them, for was it not well known that these were the most enlightened men in all Israel? "Do you mean to tell me that I must be saved just as my coachman has been saved?" said the titled lady to the preacher at the close of the service. The thing seemed too absurd for belief. There must be some distinction made. The good Lord would never require such as she to roll her comparatively clean robes by brushing up against the ignorant and debased in passing into His kingdom. She remembers that some one said, "there is no difference;" but that was long ago, when there was not much difference anyway. At any rate, it was not Jesus Christ who said this.

Not long ago the minister of a fashionable uptown church suddenly awoke to the fact that he had been called to preach the Gospel. In his ordination vow he had promised to do this. He had not kept his vow, and his people had been fed upon husks. The next Sabbath he entered the pulpit determined to deliver the message God has given him in answer to his prayer. At the close of the service a self elected deputation waited on him, ere he had risen from his knees in the vestry, to know if he intended to continue this mode of addressing them, as if they were no better than the despised of the slums?

It is the same old cry, "Are we blind also?" The cultured and respectable sinner must surely receive other treatment than that accorded to an ignorant and debased man whom the respectable man has just helped out of the gutter!

The serpent-bitten Israelites were all reduced to the same footing by the bite of the serpent. One had been a priest, another had been a bond-servant, but that distinction was past. The two lay side by side with the poison in their veins. For priest and bond-servant there was but one cure—to look to the bite of the serpent. After they were cured the one took back his priestly robe and the other took up his burden, but now they were equal in their need of help.

The respectable sinner is in need of salvation equally with the disreputable sinner. In the matter of receiving salvation all are alike. In the matter of after service the man of character is certainly in better condition to go to work than the man who has debased himself. But still he has looked to Jesus Christ, and has been energized by the life that comes with that look. He is one of a class of which the man far beneath him socially is another. It is to this fact that the men of our Lord's day, and the men of every day down to the present, were, and still are so blind.

About Debts.

We are not going to indulge in any dissertation on this subject. Our purpose is simply to give a few hints that may be of service to some of our readers, especially to the younger ones.

1. If you are out of debt, stay out. It may be necessary for those who are carrying on business to assume obligations beyond their immediate ability to pay. But even such persons should be very careful before doing so. Those who are working for a fixed wage or salary should endure almost any hardship rather than mortgage their future revenues. It is easy to persuade one's self that the expenses of to-morrow will be less than those of to-day, and the income greater; but as a matter of fact the case is often quite the reverse. Sufficient unto the day are the demands thereof. You will probably need next week or next year all that you can make by your most active efforts. Rather than incur burdens which may eventually crush all the life out of you, it will be wise for you to wear an old coat, to eat plain food, to restrain yourself in the purchase of all unneeded, sary articles, and even to practice the virtue of self-denial in the matters of hospitality and charity. You may honestly spend or give away what is your own; but to spend or give away what does not belong to you is to run the risk of injuring and defrauding some one else.

2. If you are in debt, get out as soon as possible. Set apart some share of all your earnings, even if it be a small share; to liquidate the claims which your neighbors hold against you. Debts grow like a rolling snow-ball. The only safe thing to do with them is to cut them down just as rapidly as possible. This remark holds good even in cases you are in nowise to blame for your existing situation, and still more so in case your own folly and thoughtlessness is the cause of your

being under the hackle. To give up the hope of being once more a free man, and to suffer your creditors to whistle for their money, is to show that you lack manhood.

3. If it should come to pass that you are utterly unable to meet the claims which are justly held against you, the proper policy is one of perfect frankness. You have nothing to make, but everything to lose, by trying to cover up or conceal the facts in the case. Deceit is never allowable. It is not necessary that you should declare your bankruptcy from the house-tops, but it is a duty of the highest rank that you should be open and sincere toward those with whom you have had or are having business dealings. To look at the matter from the lowest and most worldly standpoint, your rehabilitation depends largely upon your acting in strict accordance with the requirements of Christian ethics. The turn of the tide may come after a while, and it will be much more likely to come if you adopt the course which we have suggested than if you go on from year to year accumulating an ever-increasing load of financial responsibilities.—Nashville Advocate.

Everyday Religion.

"Some people excuse themselves for not being Christians by saying, 'Certainly I could be a Christian if I could get out of this position, if I could get out of this business, this particular situation in which I am engaged, where there are ungodly men round me,'" says Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, writing on "Environment" in the February Record of Christian Work. "If I only lived in your home, instead of mine, I could be a Christian. My environment is against me."

"If you cannot be a Christian where you are, you cannot be a Christian anywhere. God is no more in my home than in thine."

"It is so easy to be a Christian while we are in the sanctuary, and the very breath of eternity is upon us, and God is at hand. To-morrow, in the city, in the workshop, in the office, in the mart, it is very hard."

"God is no more in the sanctuary than he is in your shop, or your office, or the mart, and it is no more difficult to pray when ungodly men are thronging around you than it is to pray here."

"So long as you are longing for freedom from your present environment to be a Christian, you will never find the deliverance you seek."

The Bible.

Some writer gives the following analysis of the "Book of books," the Bible:

It is a Book of Laws, to show the right and wrong.

It is a Book of Wisdom that makes the foolish wise.

It is a Book of Truth, which detects all human errors.

It is a Book of Life, that shows how to avoid everlasting death.

It is the most authentic and entertaining history ever published.

It contains the most remote antiquities, the most remarkable events and wonderful occurrences.

It is a complete code of laws.

It is a perfect body of divinity.

It is an unequalled narrative.

It is a book of biography.

It is a book of travels.

It is a book of voyages.

It is the best covenant ever made; the best deed ever written.

It is the best will ever executed; the best testament ever signed.

It is a learned man's masterpiece.

It is the young man's best companion.

It is the schoolboy's best instructor.

It is the ignorant man's dictionary, and every man's directory.

It promises an eternal reward to the faithful and believing.

But that which crowns all the Author.

He is without partiality, and without hypocrisy; "With whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Begin To-day.

Is there nothing that Christ, as your friend, your Lord, your Saviour, wants you to do that you are leaving undone to-day? Do you doubt one instant, with His high and deep love for your soul, that He wants you to pray? And do you pray? Do you doubt one instant that it is His will that you should honor and help and bless all the men about you who are His brethren? And are you doing anything like that? Do you doubt one instant that His will is that you should make life serious and lofty? Do you doubt one instant that He wants you to be pure in deed and word and thought? And are you pure? Do you doubt one instant that His command is for you openly to own Him and declare that you are His servants before all the world? And have you done it? These are the questions which make

the whole matter clear. No, not in quiet lanes, nor in the bright temple courts, as once He spake, and not from blazing heavens, as men sometimes seem to expect—not so does Christ speak to us. And yet He speaks! I know what He—there in all His glory—He, here in my heart—wants me to do to-day, and I know that I am not mistaken in my knowledge. It is no guess of mine. It is His voice that tells me.—Philips Brooks.

Shining-Faced Pilgrims.

A young man who had listened without repentance to many sermons intended to convert sinners, once heard a sermon of Dr. Addison Alexander's on "A city which hath foundations," read aloud in a parlor full of Christians. In a short time he called on the pastor to ask what he must do to be saved, and said he had had no peace since hearing that sermon.

"What was there in that sermon to bring you to repentance?" asked the preacher.

"Ah," said the young man, "I looked around and saw a roomful of people on their way to heaven; their faces were shining with joy and hope, but I had no part in it, and I stopped and asked myself for the first time, 'Where, then, are you going?'"

Useless and Harmful Words.

The woman's page in "The New York Tribune" contains a striking quotation from George Eliot: "Half the sorrows of women would be averted if they could repress the speech they know to be useless—nay, the speech they have resolved not to utter."

It is as true of many men, especially such as in critical times from their opinion while speaking, and such as submit to interviews for publication. The reputation of George Eliot herself would have been far higher than it is, and perhaps her sorrows would have been less, if she had suppressed affirmative speech when the philosopher, whose wife was living, asked her to take that wife's place.

The Busy Minister.

Christian ministers who do their duty lead as busy lives as any class in the community. They work hard from Sunday morning to Saturday evening, if they attend with any measure of fidelity to the calls of pastoral visitation, philanthropic activity, committees on church and conference work, preparation for the pulpit, and the frequent demands for sermons. The better the minister the more unceasing is the strain on his time and energies. No workingman has such long, hard hours as the average preacher of our day. With realizations of this fact, misapprehensions as to lazy lives and easily earned salaries of ministers must pass away from the mind of every honest artisan, and compel him to admit that here at least, no just cause of reproach can be found.—Northern Advocate.

Some of the hungriest people in the world are those who have the most wealth.

Liver Complaint.

"For the past year I have suffered more or less with liver complaint, but by using three bottles of Burdock Blood Bitters I was completely cured." W. P. Wood, Revels Lake Station, B. C.

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