

Perfect Through Suffering.

God never would send you the darkness
If he felt you could bear the light;
But you would not cling to his guiding
hand.

If the way were always bright,
And you would not care to walk by faith
Could you always walk by sight.

True he has many an anguish
For your sorrowful heart to bear.
And many a cruel thorn-crown
For your tired head to wear;
He knows how few would reach heaven at
all
If pain did not guide them there.

So he sends you the blinding darkness,
And the furnace of sevenfold heat;
The only way, believe me,
To keep you close to his feet,
For 'tis always so easy to wander
When our lives are glad and sweet.

Then nuzzle your hand in your Father's
And sing, if you can, as you go;
Your song may cheer some one behind
you.

Whose courage is sinking low;
And, well, if your lips do quiver,
God will love you better so.

What Did He Do?

What do you go about doing? "He," says the Bible, "went about doing good." What an epitaph those words would make for a man! I remember reading over a pompous epitaph in Westminster Abbey. The poor crumbling dust that lay beneath had been Duke of this, Marquis of that, Earl of the other. He had been so many times Lord Lieutenant of his county; he had been sent ambassador to this court and that court. He had been His Majesty's this, that, and the other; he was brave, he was pious, he was generous; he was, in fact, the model of all the virtues, and it took a big slab of marble to tell all he had been.

Now contrast with all that the simple words of Scripture about Christ, "He went about doing good." Do you think you could have anything finer than that put on your tombstone? Not put there to be as "lying as an epitaph," but put there because it was true, and no one in the world dare say, "Chisel it off, it is false." We could not put that epitaph over all. We sometimes come home from a funeral, and we say of the dead, "He went about making money, and a lot of it he made. He made it, and he kept it, and he left it to his family. He did not waste any of it on his spiritual and asylums, and such foolery. He always said, 'The county may take care of the poor and sick. Let them behave themselves and work; I did it.' He went about snug and highly respectable, and never broke any of the commandments except the two important ones, Love God, and 'Love your neighbor.'" I meet people every day who ought to have those very words, cut by the very first artist of the day, graven on the very expensive tombstones their heirs will put up to them.

Then we sometimes have to say of a woman who is gone, "She went about showing clothes, and she did her duty in that respect. She showed the most expensive ones she could find, and she varied them as often as she could. She worked hard at it, and gave her time and her life to it." It would be very appropriate to put up over such a lady one of those dressmaker's lay figures. Or we have to say of another, "She went about making mischief. She repeated in one house what she heard in another. She exaggerated every little expression. She amplified every little detail. Anything ugly about any one else was a sweet morsel to roll under her tongue. She went about sowing the seeds of discord and scandal and detraction." Then we say of another, "She went about doing—nothing."

The late Bishop of Manchester, being about to preach a sermon to young women, wrote a note to a fashionable girl, asking her to be good enough to write him exactly how she ordinarily spent the day. This was her answer: "My dear Lord Bishop: We breakfast at ten. I always try to be up and ready for that. Then I arrange the flowers in the vases, and feed the birds, and write some notes for my mother or myself. Then it is time to get ready for lunch. After lunch I drive or make visits, and get home for afternoon tea. Then it is time to dress for dinner, and after we go to the opera or a party.

I come home at one in the morning tired that I can scarcely hold up my head." Is not that a record? Is not that a splendid thing to have your recording angel each day jotting down as the outcome of your life? Imagine such persons coming to the judgment seat, and conscience bringing this all up,—this emptiness, this idleness, this laborious idleness, this busy vacancy, this trifling with such an awful thing as life, given only one second at a time!

Contrast with all these the words, "He went about doing good." To be

able to say that of a man or woman is so sweet, not only to the priest who consigns them to the grave, and to the family who feel the consolation of that thought, but even to the chance acquaintance who sees the funeral train passing. He went about the place where he lived just like sunshine starting into some cold, wretched room, making the coldness seem less cold, and the wretchedness a little more bearable. His heart beat responsive to a tale of woe. He loved to offer the helping hand, to speak the cheering word, to show himself a brother. She was ever to be found where help was needed, and no appeal to her for woman's aid or woman's priceless tenderness was ever in vain. Remember, too, you can take an epitaph like that with you when you die, and you know well that there is nothing else you can take that is worth taking. You cannot take a single dollar. You cannot even take your expensive coffin and your will. It will do no good for your guardian angel to say, "This person was very rich, and went in the best society, and was highly respected." Such talk would sound in that clear air like hollow laughter, but every gas will fly open at the cry, "He went about doing good."—Living Church.

Not Appreciated.

Worthy men are not always appreciated. Human nature is generally afflicted with undue self-esteem. Most men think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. This weakness is the cause of much pain. Such persons are sure that the value which their neighbors place on them is too low. They consider themselves eminently qualified to fill positions which are too high and too large for them, and when they are not chosen they are greatly afflicted.

Making all proper allowance, however, for the errors of undue self-esteem, the fact remains that many good people are not appreciated. They perform many thankless tasks. They bear heavy burdens and make costly sacrifices for the good of the community, the church, or the country, and never receive any return except severe and unjust criticism. Their worth, their services, their sacrifices are not appreciated. This is a sore trial.

Human nature cannot endure such slights and neglect without pain. Men of real merit are often assigned an inferior place, while others of far less merit, or no merit at all, are promoted over them. This often happens in the army, and causes many jealousies and heartburnings. It also happens in the church. Things are not equal in this world. In our denomination pastors are appointed to their stations by the Bishop, after consultation with the presiding elders. Not unfrequently the laymen express their preference and urge their choice with much vigor. These expressions of preference are encouraged and invited by the Bishops, that they may have all the light possible. But after all, it sometimes happens that a preacher with shining talents and superior qualifications is appointed to a small charge, where his gifts have a limited range and his family a meager support, while another minister, in every way inferior, falls into a large charge where the conditions require a stronger man.

It is natural for the preacher who is sent to the small church under these circumstances to feel afflicted because the Bishop does not exercise better judgment and the laymen do not seem to appreciate true worth. This error is not general. Some ministers are in the right place. It would be difficult to find a better disposition for them. But others are not well placed. Things are not equal even among ministers. Many hold positions which they have not earned and for which they have no adequate qualifications.

If anyone should be disposed to complain that he has never been appreciated, let him consider his fatter. Think of His merits, His capability, His worth. What position was there in the world in His day which He could not have filled much better than it was filled? What a ruler He would have made in the place of Pilate or Herod or Caesar! Had He been placed at the head of the Sanhedrin, what an influence He would have exerted upon the counsels of that august body! But who appreciated Him? He was passed by unnoticed. His wonderful gifts attracted the attention of those in authority, but failed to awaken their admiration and recommend Him for a high station. They only excited envy and jealousy. He was neglected, slighted, despised. There was no room for Him anywhere. He was crowded out of the world which He had made and which He came to redeem. Why should we think it strange that we are not appreciated? The disciple is not above his Master. Jesus made this thought very impressive. He said to His

disciples, "Remember that I said unto you, The disciple is not above his Master." He had said it more than once, for there was danger that they should forget it. It has often been forgotten that the disciple is not to expect better treatment than his Master received.

A minister once complained to a friend that his people treated him badly. They did not appreciate his talents and his services. They were anxious to be rid of him. "What have they done to you?" asked his friend. "O, they have done everything they can to make me uncomfortable and unhappy," was the reply. "They have not taken you out and crucified you, have they?" "O no, it has not come to that." "Well, then," said his friend, "so long as they do not crucify you, you are better treated than your Master was. It is enough for the servant to be as his Master. Go back to your people; forgive them, love them, serve them to the best of your ability." He took the advice and conquered, as his Master did, by love. The best return to make for neglect, for slights, for lack of appreciation, is more love.—Meth. Ch. Adv.

Personal Work in Revivals.

Personal work is the genius of the gospel. Christ began his work by calling individuals and inspiring them to call others personally.

Congregations are all right, and preaching to multitudes is important; but after all, effectual work in soul-winning is attained to by specific, personal solicitation.

Just now this important truth should be carefully noted. Of course, it is important that the pastor preach well in his revival efforts. His sermons should be warm, moving, convincing, inspiring; they should be direct from his heart straight to the hearts of the people. But, in addition to this, his success will depend chiefly upon his going into the homes of the unsaved and personally pleading with them to be reconciled to God.

That there be good singing too, is very essential, but if the members of the choir, or those who lead the singing, will, in addition to their doing that important work in the evening meetings, find time during the day to go out among the people, call upon the unsaved, and personally urge them to come to the meeting and make a start for heaven, it will go far more toward reaching and saving the people than their singing can do, important as that is. So much precious time and force are squandered in the revival seasons by being absorbed in the forms, finishings, and music of the meetings that ought to be expended in doing real, warm-hearted, direct personal work with the unsaved.

Then, too, the general membership of the church ought to be enlisted in this personal work among the unsaved. The pastor cannot do it all,—cannot do the one-fifth of it,—and happy is that pastor who not only recognizes this fact, but has the faculty for arousing his membership to a realization of the importance of this work, and can enlist them heartily in taking hold of it. How many instances are recorded of even little children, by speaking only a few words, being instrumental in the conversion of fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and school-mates. There is a melting, moving, persuasive power in a personal appeal that no only softens the heart of the one appealed to, but is mighty in helping him to break away from his sins and sinful associations and to come to Christ.

Not only our own Church, but all the churches realize their need of a revival, and lament the lack of it. How can the unrevival spirit be overcome? How can the coldness and lifelessness with which the church is cursed be transformed into warmth of spiritual light and life? By the ministers and members, individually, going to work personally for the salvation of others. Let each one single out some unconverted man or woman for whose salvation he resolves to pray and labor night and day until that soul is converted and has become a member of the church, and in a few weeks all Christendom would be aflame with a sweeping revival. It is because of our indifference respecting the lost condition of our neighbors and friends that God is cursing our churches with coldness and formality, and our own souls with lifelessness and spiritual death.

But the question arises, Why do not all members of the churches heartily engage in this personal work? The answer is, because they do not believe deep down in their hearts that their unconverted neighbors and friends are in imminent danger of everlasting damnation—that if they were to die this night they would be banished from God and the glory of his presence, and be doomed to the horrors of an awful hell forever. If they believe this as Christ taught it, and as Paul

and the other apostles believed and preached it, could they rest short of working personally and heartily and persistently for their immediate conversion and salvation?—The Telescope.

Self-Examination.

Self-examination is a duty. It is important that we know our standing in the sight of God. We need to know if we are making the moral and spiritual progress that we ought to make. Are we making the best of our opportunities? We also need to know our faults and mistakes so that, as far as possible, we may rectify them and in future avoid them.

It seems to be the tendency of people, however, to examine others rather than themselves. Especially are they inclined to notice and comment on the faults of others. The Corinthians gave themselves up to criticizing Paul while they themselves were losing sight of the principles of the true religion. So Paul exhorts them (2 Cor. 13:5) according to Conybeare and Howson's paraphrase: "examine not me, but yourselves, whether you are truly in the faith; put yourselves to the proof [concerning Christ's presence with you which ye seek in me]. Know ye not of your own selves, that Jesus Christ dwelleth in you? unless, perchance, when thus proved you fail to abide the test?" In endeavoring to find fault with others, people become blind to their own faults. They even make the faults of others an excuse for their own shortcomings. They forget that the sins of others can not possibly make themselves right.

The need of self-examination is obvious. People sometimes lose their religious life gradually and do not realize it. They omit one duty and then another, till the vitality and power is taken out of their religion. Perchance they excuse themselves in stepping out of the way just a little and before they know it they are a long distance from the straight road that leads to the celestial city. Errors in doctrine are likely to be adopted unless one frequently compares his views with the Word of God.

But the process of self-examination may be so conducted as to lead to bad results. There is an unhealthy kind of self-examination. Introspection if not guarded, is liable to produce discouragement on the one hand or egotism on the other. Looking at one's physical ailments has a tendency to aggravate them. To brood over a disease is to nourish it. So to brood over one's faults is not to remedy them but increase spiritual disorder. To constantly turn one's spiritual eye on his failures and sins is to lose sight of the cross and of the Saviour. Or if one looks at himself and then at some of the more faulty of Christians he may come to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. If he measures his piety and good deeds by the life and acts of others he may get a too exalted opinion of himself. The gallery is in using the wrong measure. We would not measure our wheat in a broken measure. We would not determine the length of a piece of cloth by a torn measuring yard. So, not our fellows, but Christ is the measure by which our lives and works are to be gauged.

One danger in self-examination is in making the feelings the subject. An analysis of one's feelings is unreliable and does not determine the measure of one's religious life. Moods and emotions are not a true test of one's fidelity to Christ. Feelings are modified by temperament, environment, state of health, education, etc. Many a man wrongly thinks he is very pious because he has superabundant joyful emotions, while selfishness and uncleanness are sapping his life. The question is not, how we feel, but do we love Christ supremely? Is it our chief purpose in life to follow him? If we are true to him we may know that he lives within us. Then we think his thoughts, we have his affections, and our purposes harmonize with the divine plan. If we are Christ's then he lives in us. He governs, possesses, vitalizes, sanctifies us.—Free Baptist.

Additions to the Church.

There were additions to the Church in the days of the apostles. These additions were of frequent occurrence. "The Lord added unto the Church daily." Multitudes of men and women were brought in, the numbers running up into the thousands in a very short space of time.

More increase in number is not the chief end to be sought by the minister and the church. It is more important that souls should be added to the church, that they should be added to the church. It is possible that selfishness and worldly ambition may be mixed with the motives which induce Christians to seek for additions to the church. The desire to make a

fair show, to have a great name, to increase the revenues of the congregation may sometimes be found at the bottom of much earnest effort in this direction. Such church work is seldom permanently successful. Those who labor and pray with this spirit labor in vain and pray amiss. The selfish church, which does everything for its own local organization, and nothing for the outside world, will surely shrivel up and die. The minister and members may make spasmodic efforts to enlarge their borders, but their success will be meager. Their efforts may be frantic, but their defeat is certain. Not until Christians go out and seek the lost without selfish motives shall they witness additions to the church of the right kind.

But there will be additions to the church where earnest prayer and judicious effort are made in the name of Christ. If a minister should be condemned to preach week after week for years, and see no increase, he might well take it as an intimation that he should look out for another field. It would seem that the hand of the Lord is not with him. If a farmer should plow and sow and get no harvest, he would be discouraged. If this failure should be repeated year after year for a long period, he would certainly seek a new country.

One reason why additions to the church are not more numerous is that the laborers do not persevere. They are content to give the invitation once, and then leave it. But we are to go so far as to compel them to come in. The world knows the story of Jerry McAuley, the converted drunkard, thief, ex-convict, and vagabond, who was led to Christ by the persevering efforts of a city missionary in New York. Mr. Little found him in the pit of sin, lifted him up, treated him as a friend, induced him to sign the pledge. Six times after that McAuley fell into his old habits, but the missionary did not forsake him. He held on to the weak soul, exhorted his fellow-workers to assist him, and never gave him up until he could stand on his feet and walk forth a free and strong man. It was a tedious and, at times, a discouraging process, but the results were well worth the sacrifice. A royal man was taken from the miry clay and added to the kingdom of God. If Mr. Little had forsaken him when he fell once, twice, three times, we may well believe that his labor would have been in vain. "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Sorrow is not given to us alone that we may mourn. It is given to us, that, having felt, suffered, wept, we may be able to understand, love, bless.—Anna Robertson Brown.

How can we tell whether we are drifting backward? The boat may be backing so slowly and smoothly that no motion is felt; but if her steersman watches the banks, he sees himself gradually changing position. Where are our shore-marks? Are our prayers full and frequent and earnest? Do the hymns of praise lift up our hearts to God in joyful thanksgiving? Is God's Word of deep interest to us? Are we glad when they say, "Let us go unto the house of the Lord?" If these things are noted with us, it must be that we are drifting astern.—Wm. T. Ellis.

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