

Mine Own Work.

I made the cross myself whose weight
Was later laid on me;
This thought is torture as I toil
Up life's steep Calvary.

To think mine own hands drove the nails!
I sang a merry song,
And chose the heaviest wood I had
To build it firm and strong.

If I had guessed if I had dreamed
Its weight was made for me,
I should have made a lighter cross
To bear up Calvary.

—Anne Reeve Aldrich.

The Marks of the Lord Jesus.

No one who is at all familiar with the story of Paul's hardships, sacrifices, and sufferings endured for the sake of his divine Lord, will accuse him of boasting or of self-glorification when he declares in his Epistle to the Galatians, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." His devotion to the cause of Jesus, whose disciples he had bitterly persecuted, was complete, intense, and aggressive, and one of its natural results was that the former persecutor should be numbered among the persecuted. But persecution was only one of many things. This left its mark upon him; but if it was indelible, so were the marks made by the afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watchings, fastings, evil reports, dishonors, chastenings, sorrows, shipwrecks, journeyings, perils, and wearinesses, of which he writes—a dreary but glorious category—and to which he appends this note of exultation: "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake."

"For Christ's sake"—this is the holy principle that governs the lives of the true disciples of Jesus. It was so among those whom He called to be His close comrades and apostles. It has been so through the intervening centuries. It is to-day among the multiplied thousands who, having accepted His marvelous salvation, have become new creatures in Him.

Could we know the self-sacrifices, self-denials, and sufferings made for Christ's sake and borne for others with sweet patience by those who love Him we should behold many a humble follower glorified into sainthood, and beholding, we should understand the peculiar significance of Paul's expression, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus," for then every line in the care-wrinkled face and every hair whitened by sorrow would be recognized as a "mark of the Lord Jesus."

This thought is beautifully wrought out in a book recently published, in which a wise and sympathetic class leader, with a keen spiritual insight, says to a friend whose whole life had been devoted to caring for her sick mother and her deformed brother, and who, because the natural ambitions of her life had been thwarted, was sometimes inclined to complain at the hardness of her lot:

"It seems now, my lass, as if the Lord was dealing a bit hard with you; but never you fret yourself; He'll explain it all and make it all up to you in his own good time."

"I only hope he may, Mr. Bateson." "My lass, do you remember how St. Paul said, 'From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus?' Now it seems to me that all the gray hairs and the wrinkles and the roughness that come to us when we are working for others and doing our duty, are nothing more or less than the marks of the Lord Jesus."

"That's a comfortin' view of the matter, I don't deny."

"There are lots o' men in this world, lass, and still more women, who grow old before their time working for other people; and I take it that when folks talk o' their wrinkles the Lord says, 'My Name shall be in their foreheads'; and when folks talk of their gray hairs He says, 'They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.' And why do we mark the things that belong to us? Why, so as we can know 'em again and can claim 'em as our own afore the whole world. And that's just why the Lord marks us: so as all the world shall know we are His, and so as no man shall ever pluck us out of His hand."

In his homely way the sympathetic and spiritually minded class leader has unfolded a profound and comforting truth, the full scope and meaning of which will be made known "in His own good time" to those who bear uncomplainingly the burdens He imposes.

O child of God, wearied of the burden, fainting in the struggle, impatient of the unceasing sacrifice, keep heart! In your own strength you can do nothing, but "for Christ's sake," for Him who endured and sacrificed so much for you, you can do anything He asks. The world knows nothing of what you are enduring for others,

nor of your shattered hopes and ambitions, nor of the anxieties that tear at your heart, nor of your midnight vigils, nor of your frequent petitions for divine help when your nature is on the point of rebelling against being held any longer as a prisoner of duty—the world does not know, and it is well that it does not. But God knows, and He who is always mindful of His own has all these, and many other things concerning your heroism and devotion, in remembrance. Keep heart. In a few days or years it will all be over, and the high and holy day of your life's coronation will come; and with it will come to you also a satisfaction supernal and a reward rich and eternal, for

"Rest comes at length, though life be long and dreary;
The day must dawn, and darkness night be past;
All journeys end in welcome to the weary.
And heaven, the heart's true home, will come at last."

—Chris. Advocate.

Truth Won Through Struggle.

Many Christians desire a knowledge of the Word of God, but hope to secure it without effort. Some pray for light, and expect it to be poured into their minds by the Spirit as the light of the sun is poured down upon the earth. For various reasons they do not search the Scriptures. Some even complain that the task is difficult, that a knowledge of the Word involves much labor.

This is true, and we should rejoice that it is true. The only truth we really possess has been won through struggle. The truth which science reveals is not acquired without effort. Can anyone become a musician without diligent, close, persevering application? Who has not seen a young person perplexed, tormented, discouraged over the study of music? Who has not heard one plead for permission to abandon a task so difficult?

If parents should permit their children to give up study because it is difficult and wearisome, not one would ever master music, mathematics, or languages. The same youth who now complains that the study of music is difficult and irksome may become a splendid musician, and, having once tasted the sweetness of the science, he will be charmed with it and nothing could induce him to give it up. Why do parents not require their children to persevere in the study of the Bible? Why do not those who are older persevere in the study of this great book? If they should do so it would be found more delightful as well as more profitable than any other study. Once get a taste of the sweetness of the truth, and difficulty will be transformed into victory.

Some complain that they cannot understand the Bible. This is not strange when we consider how little time and thought they devote to it. Much of the Bible is so plain that a child can understand it without effort, and much of it is so profound as to tax the powers of the strongest minds to their utmost limit. If men studied mathematics as they study the Bible they would not understand it. When one studies geometry he begins at the beginning, proceeds from step to step, reviewing what he learned yesterday, and holding fast each proposition, because each is dependent on what has gone before. Let him take equal pains to understand the Word of God, and difficulties will be overcome and the light of heaven will fill his mind. The Word of God is as clear as the sunlight to those who penetrate its mysteries by earnest struggle.

The aid of the Holy Spirit must not be ignored. Many learned and pious men have written commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, and we do well to avail ourselves of the aid their research and scholarship may afford. But the best commentator on the Bible is the Holy Ghost. We cannot understand His method of teaching, but we know that He can enter into the mind and give light. Only let us not depend on Him unintelligently. He uses the Word of God to enlighten men. If the Word is not in the mind, how can He give light? What has He to work on? Read the Bible, search the Scriptures, commit passages to memory, and then the Spirit will have material to work on. He will not, we may say He cannot, bring to our remembrance truths which have not been taken into the mind by reading or hearing. The only truth we really possess is the truth we have found through struggle.

HAD LA GRIPPE.—Mr. A. Nicker-son, Farmer, Dutton, writes: "Last winter I had La Grippe and it left me with a severe pain in the small of my back and hip that used to catch me whenever I tried to climb a fence. This lasted for about two months when I bought a bottle of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil and used it both internally and externally, morning and evening, for three days, at the expiration of which time I was completely cured."

Eloquence.

Do not try to be eloquent, to try to save the perishing. Waste no time nor words, use no "great swelling words of vanity;" you will not save yourself nor them that hear you if you do.

This fact is well illustrated by an incident which occurred in California some years since. A scientist, with his guide, was encamped in a deep, narrow canon. The guide was in camp one day, and the scientist, who was outside collecting specimens, looking up the canon, saw what to him was a strange whitish appearance of the clouds, far up the canon where the mountains and sky seemed to meet, and called to his guide, a man familiar with the country, to explain its significance. The guide gave one glance to the point indicated, and made not a long, learned speech. He did not say, "This strange, and to you unsophisticated classical disciple of Diogenes, marvelous phenomenon which attracts your visual senses is only the warm, hurried vapors, which being carried from the broad expanse of the Pacific by a strong northeasterly arial current of air, and coming suddenly in contact with the cold state of the atmosphere of those high altitudes is suddenly condensed, and precipitating the moisture, it is made visible to the eye, and attracts your attention at this moment, and will soon cause quite a deluge in the locality where we are sojourning; and for comfort and safety it is advisable for us to remove our temporary abode to some more elevated portions of this country." He did not say this. It might have sounded well under some circumstances, but not then. There was danger, which he saw was imminent. There was not time to waste in words. He said all that was needed, and just what was needed. He said, "Cloud-Burst!! Climb!!!" They climbed the steep, precipitous side of the canon just in time to save themselves from the sweeping flood of waters which in a few minutes filled the canon, and in which they would have perished but for the terse, timely warning given. Here was the right kind of eloquence. Men are exposed to danger and death. Shall we waste words and let them perish? "Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city," was a warning from God's messengers long ago. Its import could not be misunderstood. Says the apostle Paul, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

"Not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." 1 Cor. 2:4. So let men preach to-day, as did Paul, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Col. 1:28, 29.—Phil. Standard.

The Man Behind the Message.

Character is bound to show itself, and it will be well for all teachers to look carefully after that subtle quality of soul, which is bound to pervade their actions and influence their very conversation. The lifting of a skirt has shown an unfriendly spirit, and spoiled the visit of a deaconess, and calling the port side of a ship star-board was such a piece of gross ignorance that the sailor who heard it refused to listen to the preaching of the man who said it. On the other hand, a little insignificant act of sacrifice, a smile, or a frankness of address, has been the means of opening a heart and winning a way for the Word of life. Men are sensitive creatures, and even those apparently hardened are readily influenced by the spirit and manner of the person who addresses them.

In the current number of the Ladies' Home Journal, Rev. Cyrus Townsend Brady tells how he won a swearing engineer to church.

"The engine broke down one day on the 'Frisco road,' he says. 'It was a freight train, and I was the only passenger, consequently I went out and mingled with the train crew, pulling and heaving and hauling with the rest. I knew something about the principles of mechanics, and was familiar with the machine as well, being quite capable of running the engine myself, and was, therefore, able to advise them to some purpose. The work was carried on under a vigorous and uninterrupted flow of profanity, profusely and picturesquely weird in the highest degree. It was not so shocking as it might be under other circumstances, for I knew the man meant nothing by it, that it was only a matter of habit with them, as it is with ninety people out of a hundred who are guilty of the same bad practice. Finally I suggested an interruption in the swearing, as I was a preacher. The head brakeman dropped his crowbar with a look of abject astonishment. Everybody else let go at the same time, and the engine settled down again."

They looked at me in consternation, which was very amusing. 'You're a what?' said the conductor. 'A preacher,' I replied. 'Well, I'll be—' but he never finished the sentence, save with a long whistle of astonishment. He regarded me thoughtfully for a moment, and finally said, 'Well, say, you work like a man, anyway. Ketch hold again.' 'All right,' I answered, smiling at his frankness 'but no more swearing on this trip!' No, was the laconic reply, and the promise was kept. At the close of our manoeuvres, when we all stood panting, but successful, the engineer remarked, 'Say, it's the first time I ever saw a preacher that knowed a reversing lever from a box-car before. Come up and ride with me the rest of the way.' Aside from his profanity I found him a pleasant and interesting companion, and whenever I made the town at the end of his run he never failed to come to church."

Fathers and Sons.

A young man, whom one might be proud to own as a son, wrote us recently: "I enjoy father's preaching and exhortation—they don't get tiresome." We have pondered the beautiful relations between the father of that young man and his sons, and also the broad difference between that family and many other families where the sons can scarcely be induced to so much as hear their father pray, much less hear him preach. We were once seeking to enforce some gracious truth as an antidote for unbelief, and appealed to a young man's filial feeling for proof of the proper attitude of his soul toward God, and with a terrible flash in his eyes, and with a bitterness of spirit most painful to hear, he dashed all our efforts to the ground by saying: "If God is anything like my father, I want nothing to do with him." There is much said—not as much as there should be—about the inability of our churches to hold the children and the young people, but it is daily becoming more apparent that the root of the difficulty is in the home. When we hear a man's neighbors say that he is sharp in making a bargain we are not surprised to find that his sons do not attend the same Church he does. When we know that he is harsh and sometimes cruel to his wife, we are not surprised that his sons do not take much interest in family worship. When we hear him relate some event in which he makes himself the hero, and we know that he has acted a very indifferent part, we are not surprised that his sons get tired of his religious harangues.—Wesleyan Methodist.

He Goeth Before.

"He goeth before you."—Matt. 28. 7. "He goeth before us?" Is it infancy He went before us there, in being Himself the Babe of Bethlehem! Is it youth? He "goeth before us" in the nurturing home of Nazareth, sanctifying early toil and filial obedience! Is it hours of weariness and faintness and poverty? He "goeth before us" an exhausted traveler to the well of Jacob, "weary with His journey!" Is it temptation we have to struggle with? He "goeth before us" to the wilderness of Judea, and to the awful depths of the olive groves of Gethsemane, to grapple with the hour and power of darkness! Is it loss of friends? He "goeth before us" to the grave of Bethany to weep there! Is it death (the last enemy) we dread? He "goeth before us" wrapped in the ceremonies of the tomb, descending into the region of Hades, uncrowning the king of terrors, trampling his diadem in the dust! Is it entrance into heaven? He "goeth before us" there. Having overcome the sharpness of death, He has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. He shows us the path of life leading into His own blessed presence, where there is fullness of joy, and to His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.—Dr. J. R. Macduff.

Starting A Revival.

An exchange tells a story about a little girl who went into a neighboring town, where there was a revival. She attended the meeting, and heard the story of the cross, and gave herself to Jesus.

When she returned home she went to an old man who was a Christian, and said to him: "Can't we have a prayer-meeting?" "We?" said he; "I don't know of another Christian in the district."

"Well," she said, "you are a Christian and I am a Christian; can't we have a prayer-meeting?" "Well," said he, "we can say 'we' then."

They did have a prayer-meeting. The next day two or three more came. God answered their prayers, and now between twenty and thirty have found the Saviour.

In this day of activity there is great danger, not of doing too much, but of

praying too little for so much work. These two—work and prayer, action and contemplation—are twin sisters. Each pines without the other. We are ever tempted to cultivate one or the other disproportionately. Let us imitate him who sought the mountain-top as his refreshment after toil, but never left duties undone or sufferers unrelieved in pain. Lord, teach us to pray!—Selected.

Preferring One Another.

In most respects, if not in all, you will be sure to find some one surpassing you; so that, if you want to insure happiness for yourself, you must not envy.

If you can heartily enjoy the success of others, you will often have opportunities for enjoyment; but if you can take pleasure only in your own success, your pleasure will be small.

Envy is next door to murder; we would have him out of the way.

It is not preferring others to set them above yourself, expecting them to turn to elevate you.

Hero-worship makes heroes.

You will never be pushed up by the men you thrust below you, but pulled up by the men you lift above you.—Daily Companion.

It is said that at the siege of Sebastopol a cannon ball, missing its aim, struck in the side of a neighboring mountain, and from the fissure made by it gushed a stream of crystal water. The instrument of death opened a life-sustaining fountain. So the missiles of our foes may open to us streams of blessing. It is through the fiery furnace and the lions' den that men come to victory, triumph and peace. Let us not fear to go forward. The Red Sea shall divide before us, but it shall close over the enemies of God; and he who has delivered his people in all ages past will not forget us in the dark and trying hour.

A Christian will find it cheaper to pardon than to resent. Forgiveness saves the expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits. It also puts the soul into a frame which makes the practice of other virtues easy.—Hannah More.

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