

How common it is to see even good people letting go and giving up a ministry because it is becoming increasingly difficult. "It must not go down on my hands." "I can't afford to have people think I was a failure." And how slow many good people of real ability are to accept responsibility in the work of the Kingdom. They are willing to help someone else a little, but they refuse to carry the burden. "I'm going to stand from under, and if the thing falls, it will not fall on me."

As we meditate upon such a situation, we ask ourselves the question, What is the motive back of such a position? Is my reputation for success of more importance to me than my devotion to the interests of the Kingdom? Is my love of ease stronger than my love to Christ? Our minds turn back to that terrible picture in the Gospel where Jesus says to a multitude—"Inasmuch as ye did it not—ye did it not to me." Our hearts tremble under the weight of that condemnation for the sins of omission. Christ does not accuse those people of any of the gross sins. He does not mention murder nor robbery, nor drunkenness, nor Sabbath breaking, but He holds them accountable for "standing from under," for evading responsibility, for saving themselves at the expense of their service. They might have "ministered unto one of the least of these" but they did it not.—Heart and Life.

EVIL COMPANY.

Parents give far too little attention these days, to the kind of company their boys and girls keep. Bad company is defiling to anyone, especially the young. Young ladies should use care in selecting those they would associate with. The young man with bad habits should always be avoided by the pure minded girl. Cigarette smokers are no fit company for any pure girl. No Christian can keep close fellowship with any person who is unsaved.

"Sophronius, a wise teacher, would not allow his children to associate only with the pure and upright.

"One day his daughter, the gentle Eulalia, remonstrated with him because of a prohibition that she considered too severe.

"The father took a dead coal from the grate and handed it to her. 'It will not burn you, child; take it.'

"Eulalia did so, and her hand was soiled; and, as it chanced her white dress was also blackened.

"'We cannot be too careful in handling coals,' said Eulalia in vexation.

"'Yes, truly,' said the father. 'You see, my child, that coals, even when they do not burn, blacken; so it is with the company of the wicked.'"

It takes a little courage and a little self-control

And some determination if you want to reach a goal,

It takes a deal of striving and a firm and stern-set chin,

No matter what the battle, if you really out to win.

—Selected.

Jesus' statement to Nicodemus, when He said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," is generally interpreted to mean that the man who is not born again shall not be able to see the King in His future glory and splendor—shall not be saved. It certainly does mean that, but it also means something in relation to this present life.

When Jesus was here and was heralding the fact that the kingdom of God was at hand, the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. Jesus answered, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. . . The kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (A. V. Margin.) The Kingdom which Jesus had set up was a spiritual, invisible kingdom in the hearts of His people, and although it was in the very midst of the Pharisees, they could not see it. They were spiritually blind.

The kingdom of God is yet a spiritual, invisible one in the hearts of His people. Many people there are who are spiritually blind and do not seem to realize that any such kingdom exists. How sad, for a place in His visible kingdom, when He comes in power and great glory, will be determined by our relation to His present, spiritual kingdom. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Oh, that men's eyes may be touched by God, so as to enable them to see spiritual things.—Gospel Banner.

THEN THE FIRE FELL.

By the Late G. W. MacDonald—Editorial in the Highway, Dec. 31st, 1894.

I Kings 18:38.

Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

When Elijah had repaired the altar, laid the wood thereon, and cut the bullock in pieces and laid him on the altar and put the wood in order, dug the trenches and filled them with water. When all was in order, as God demanded of the prophet, when human effort could do no more, Elijah rested his care in the hands of the God of Abraham, and in answer to his prayer. Then the fire fell. God always answers when man reaches the end of his doings. When the disciples had waited and prayed and prayed and waited, until the hopes and anticipations of their old life had all died, and they were willing to receive the kingdom (or gospel dispensation) as God directed, when all differences and old prejudices had gone out, they having reached the end of self, when the day of Pentecost was fully come, then the Holy Ghost came like a mighty, rushing wind, then the fire fell. So will it be with every believing, obedient soul. When they have done all they can and their consecration is complete, when the old life has gone out and they have reached the end of self, when the soul in its utter helplessness lifts itself in prayer to God, saying, I can do no more; Lord, save me, cleanse me at any cost, then the fire falls in every case. God knows when our work is done, when our all is on the altar, and he will notify us of

the fact. Beloved reader, it is the fire you need; depend upon it there is something wrong in your consecration or your faith if the fire does not fall. Dig deep; don't be afraid of the death of self; press on until you get the fire, you cannot stand without it; self will rise again with all his old carnal desires and triumph over all your efforts if the fire of God does not consume him. Go down when you have done all; you will believe as readily as you now breathe. When you have reached the end, then the fire will fall.

BE THOU FAITHFUL.

We have fallen upon the times that try men's souls. In many quarters hearts are failing because of fear. Perilous days have come. The whole world seems wrapped in the flaming sheet of war. The ordinary securities of life have become uncertain. The very air we breathe is pregnant with foreboding. In such days it is sweet comfort to hear the Divine whisper—"Be not afraid, these things must needs be, but be thou faithful, even if it means martyrdom, and I will give you a crown of life." Faithful obedience and implicit confidence in God is all that He requires. He will not forget one of His littlest lambs. He will be mindful of His own. He will prove Himself our shelter, our refuge, our support, our all—as the shadow of the rock in a weary land.

But to be faithful will cost something in these days. To stand aggressively and positively for the New Testament standard will mean very real separation from the world. There are multitudes in this generation who will not endure sound doctrine. It will mean very real sacrifice. The fat salaries will go to the teachers who will tickle itching ears. Preferment will be given to those who cry peace, peace, when there is no peace. But let us be faithful. Let us cherish our fervent love to Christ, let us stand by His Word, though the world hate us. Let us make full proof of our ministry by patiently pouring out our lives "as a drink offering" to dying souls. The reward is certain. He will give us a crown of life.—Heart and Life.

FRIENDSHIP PECULIAR TO MEN.

Though the lower animals have feeling, they have no fellow-feeling. Have I not seen the horse enjoy his feed of corn, when his yoke fellow lay dying in the neighboring stall, and never turned an eye of pity on the sufferer? They have strong passions, but no sympathy—no capacity for friendship. It is said the wounded deer sheds tears; but it belongs to man only to weep, and by sympathy divide another's sorrow and double another's joys. When thunder, following the dazzling flash has burst among our hills, when the horn of the Switzer has rung in his glorious valleys, when the boatman has shouted from the bosom of the rock-girt loch, wonderful were the echoes I have heard them make; but there is no echo so fine or wonderful as that which, in the sympathy of human hearts repeats the cry of another's sorrow, and makes me feel his pain almost as if it were my own.—Guthrie.