

PLOUGH WORK OR GIVING THAT MEANT SACRIFICE

Our minister is always talking about sacrifice. I am getting tired of it. He expects us to give, give, give all the time. He seems to think the church is the greatest institution in the world."

"Perhaps he is right. But I agree with you that we can't always be giving to the church. There are other things that we must think of. I am afraid our minister is visionary rather than practical."

The first speaker was a wealthy business man and the second was a successful lawyer. Both men had very large incomes; they lived not only in comfort but in luxury, and denied themselves nothing that they felt it desirable to have. They were church members and gave "generously;" but neither of them really knew the meaning of the word "sacrifice."

A few months after this conversation the two men joined a party that was going round the world. Before they started, their "visionary" minister earnestly asked them to observe and remember any unusual and interesting things that they might see in the missionary countries through which the party was to travel. The men promised carelessly, perhaps—to do so.

In Korea, one day, they saw in a field by the side of the road a boy pulling a rude plough, while an old man held the plough handles, and directed it. The lawyer was amused, and took a snapshot of the scene.

"That's a curious picture! I suppose they are very poor," he said to the missionary who was interpreter and guide to the party.

"Yes," was the quiet reply. "That is the family of Chi Noui. When the church was being built they were eager to give something to it, but they had no money, so they sold their only ox and gave the money to the church. This spring they are pulling the plough themselves."

The lawyer and the business man by his side were silent for some moments. Then the business man said, "That must have been a real sacrifice."

"They did not call it that," said the missionary. "They thought it was fortunate that they had an ox to sell."

The lawyer and the business man had not much to say. But when they reached home the lawyer took that picture to his minister and told him the story.

"I want to double my pledge to the church," he said. "And give me some plough work to do, please. I have never known what sacrifice for the church meant. A converted heathen taught me. I am ashamed to say I have never yet given anything to my church that cost me anything."

How much does the average modern church member ever sacrifice for his religion? How many that call themselves Christians ever sold the ox and then harnessed themselves to the plough?—Selected.

HAPPY IS THE MAN

"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

Here is an unchangeable principle, viz.: there is an inward monitor in every man, from which he cannot escape, that makes him happy, or unhappy. The after effect of an action determines the quality of it.

The process of temptation is as follows.

An evil suggestion is presented to the mind. We look at it for a moment, then reason steps up and weighs it pro and con. Finally it is handed over to the will (which is the executive of man) and sometimes, sad to say, reason is ruled out and guilt is incurred. If, on the other hand the will accepts what reason dictates, then a reward is given.

Though we are fallen, thank God there remains something we call conscience, which approves, or disapproves of every deed. Men resort to all kinds of methods, yea, commit suicide to get relief from an accusing conscience. They may argue and violently defend their position, yet when they get alone, that monotonous voice within is ready to upbraid them.

Now, is it not blessed to be able to sit down and calmly review the past, feeling assured that all is clear?

1. Happy is the man who can look back to that little property deal and feel that God wholly approved of it.

2. Happy is the man who can take a reproof so well, that the one who gives it will in return be reproved.

3. Happy is the man who, when he is set aside, or left unnoticed, can keep sweet and not say a word.

4. Happy is the man who, though he may know his position is right, can keep quiet and not allow himself to be drawn into a needless argument, for he also knows that a loud talker could not be convinced in a thousand years.

5. Happy is the man who has always left every home as pure as he found it.

6. Happy is the man who does not need to give freely now, in order to ease his conscience for failing to do his full share in the past.

8. Happy is the man who has the courage to follow his early convictions in plainness of dress and other lines of separation from the world.

9. Happy is the man who knows how and when to witness for Christ before scoffers and relatives.

10. Happy is the man who has such self-mastery that he does not over-eat, or look the second time at forbidden things.

11. Happy is the man whose wife need not watch until he is in good humor before asking for a little spending money.

12. Happy is the man who has such a conscientious wife that he feels perfectly safe in handing her the purse.

Yea, happy is the man who stands acquitted before God, devils and men and none can truthfully say: "You profess more than you practice and some things have never had the full endorsement of high heaven."

Thank God, through the merits of Christ, we can stand straight up and look two ways—first, back to the cradle, then turn and look toward the judgment and see a white streak in both directions—as clear and clean as though we had never offended.

Man, why not possess this blessed consciousness?—E. E. S.

A missionary writes from among the Papuans in New Guinea that it is not uncommon for a native to come to the missionary's door and say, "I heard that you practice Christianity in your home. I would like to stay with you a few days and witness it." Suppose that happened at your door?—Selected.

TWO GREAT PASTORS

We think of Phillips Brooks as a great preacher, but those fortunate enough to be in his church knew him also as a great pastor. He said one time, "I wish that I could devote every hour of the day to calling on my people. I know of no happier or more helpful work a pastor can do, and I call as much as I can. How is it possible for one to preach to his people if he does not know them, their doubts, sorrows and ambitions?"

Dr. J. H. Howett, like Paul, possessed rare powers of sympathy, for which he paid a high price, literally wearing himself out in the ministry. He once said, "At first I could not conduct a funeral without tears. I could not read the Burial service without my speech being choked; but now I have had so many funerals, have seen so many people in sorrow, I have seen so much suffering, that I can read the Burial service without tears. Well, perhaps this is part of the gracious providence of God that the burden should be eased, but I don't want the ease if it be at the cost of losing the compassion with my fellow men. I would rather have the tears, I would prefer the choking speech, I would prefer that my not-too-strong body should be tired out, drained out twice or thrice a week, if I might keep my compassion with my fellow men.—Sel.

SOME THINGS I HAVE NOTICED

People who attend our meetings and get under conviction but refuse to yield often run off with some popular evangelist and become professors without the joy.

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Those who seem to be soundly converted but fail to get sanctified, eventually get angry when it is preached, leave the church and wander from one sect to another.

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The best living people and those who have the best influence are not generally the ones who make the biggest fuss.

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On the railroad sometimes a good engine runs light. They make a different noise from that which they make when loaded. They dare not run too fast for it would be dangerous. Some times preachers run light. They make a noise but get nowhere. I would rather be the small north star than the biggest meteor that ever flew across the sky. Shining the brass, ringing the bell or blowing the whistle never moved a train. Better get under the burden.—W. E. McQuiggin.

TOBACCO AND CANCER OF MOUTH

"Facts You Should Know About Cancer," as discussed by Dr. Clyde A. Haysmer in Life and Health, include a statement on the apparent relationship between that dreaded disease and nicotine. Dr. Haysmer says:

"Cancer of the mouth constitutes approximately two per cent of all cancer. This condition is rarely found in a person who is not a user of tobacco. It can therefore be safely stated that the large majority of the 10,000 victims of cancer of the mouth in the United States could have avoided this serious condition by abstaining from tobacco."—Union Signal.

Patience and time do more than strength and passion.—La Fontaine.