



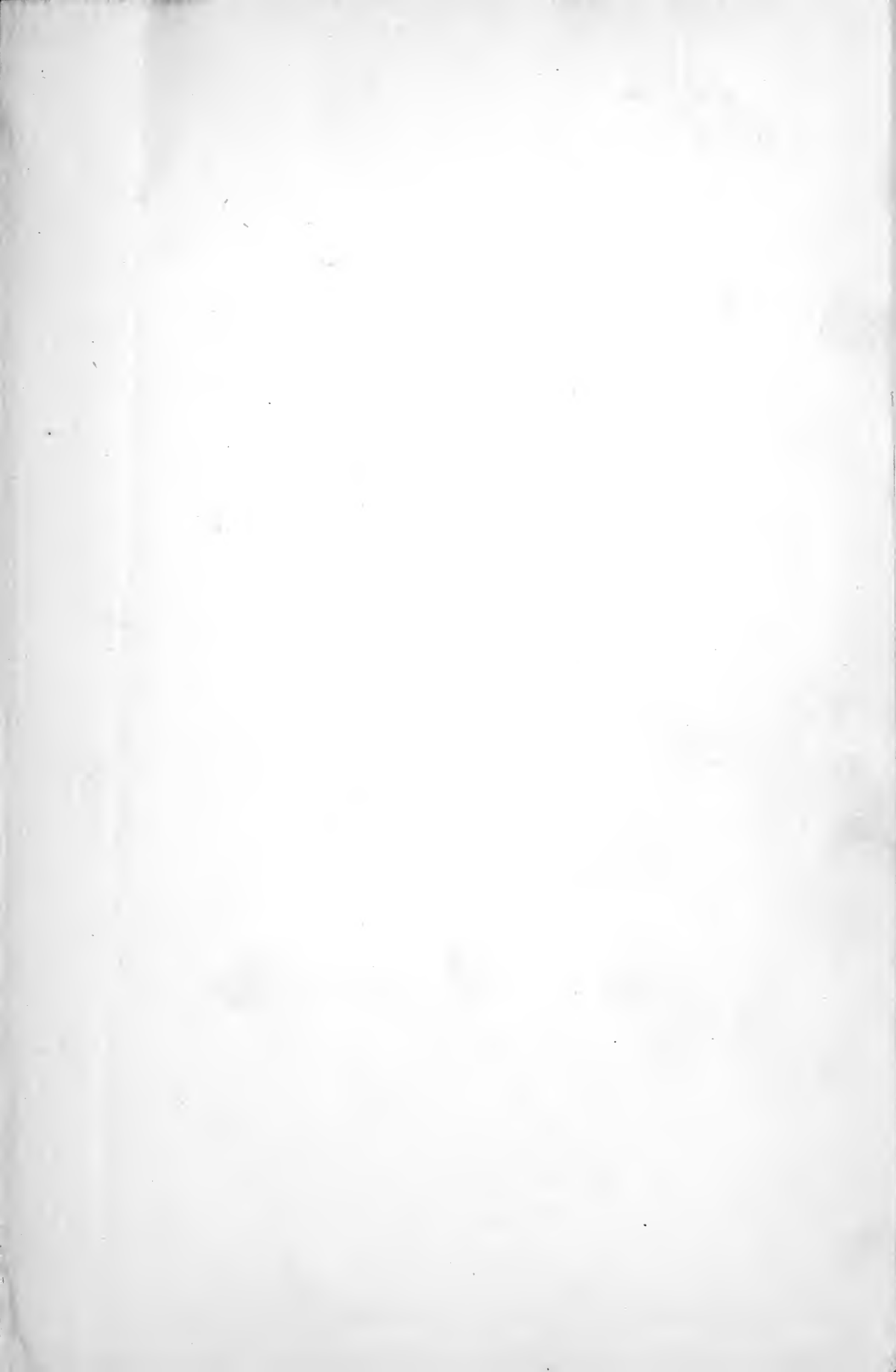


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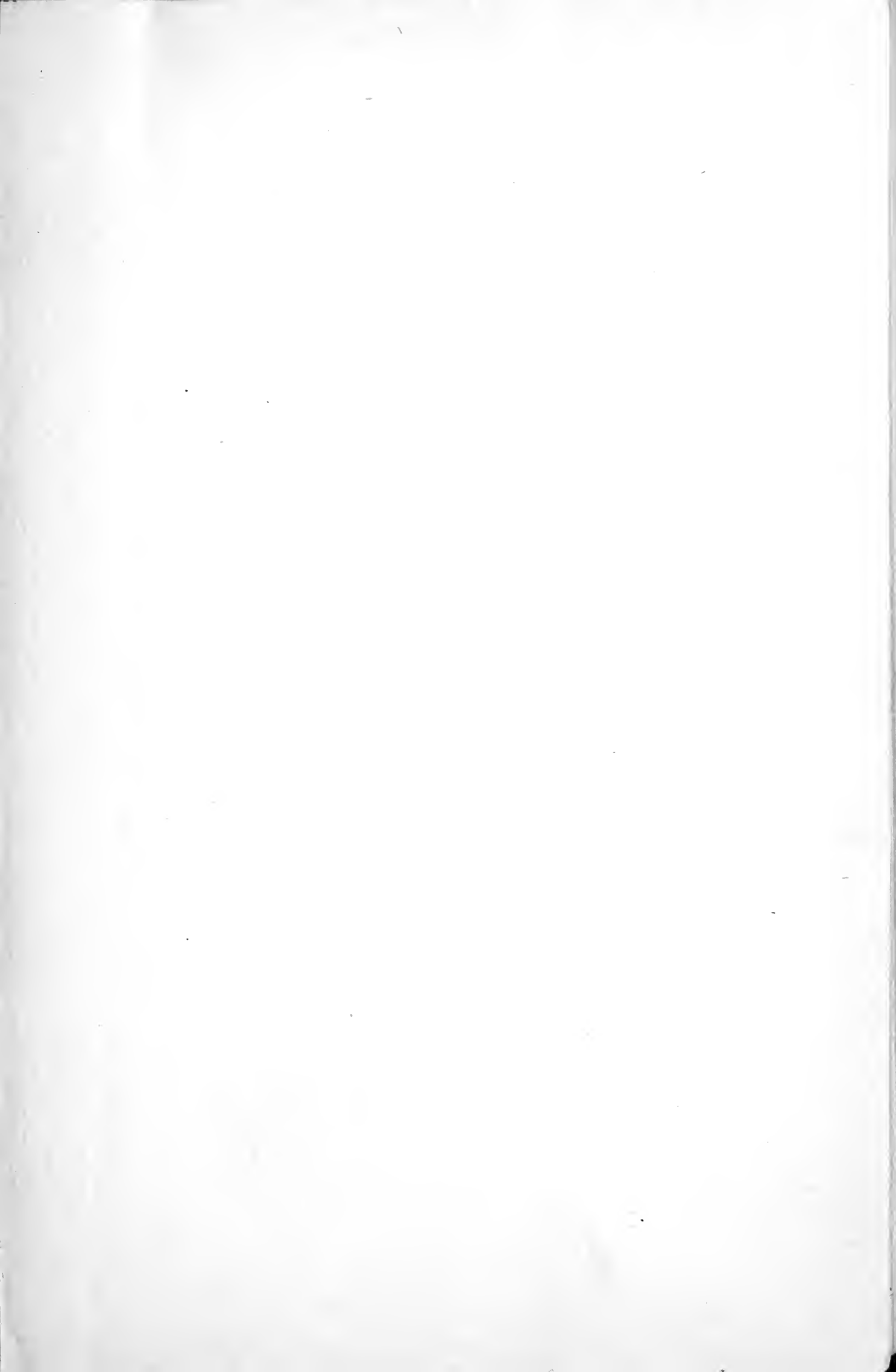
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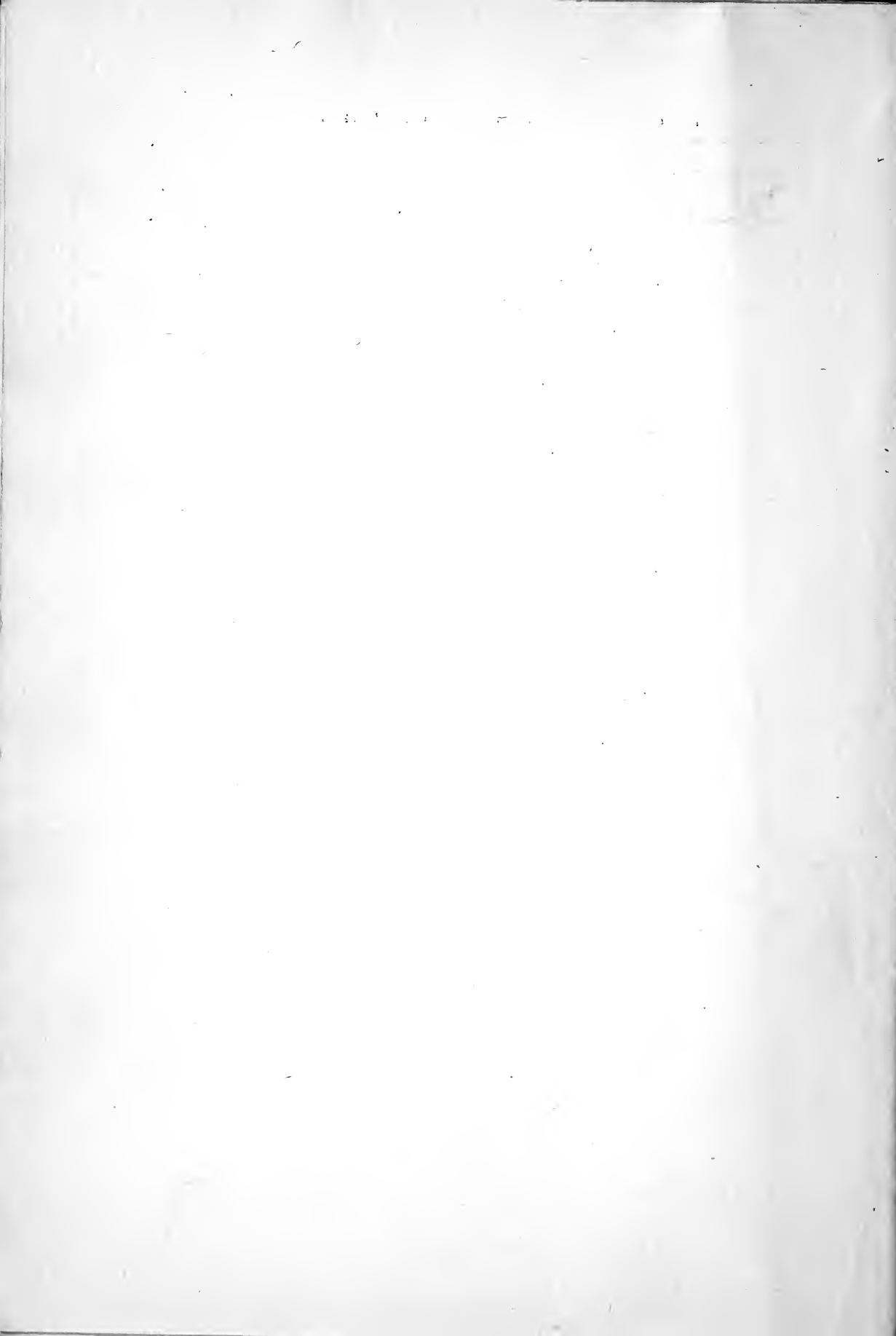
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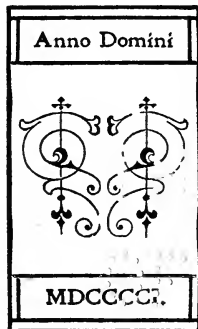


# SIDE WINDOWS; OR, LIGHTS ON SCRIPTURE TRUTHS.

BY

MATTIE M. BOTELER,

Author of "The Conversion of Brian O'Dillon" and "Shut In."



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To the Members of "The Lay Evangelists' Club,"

*With whom I have had the rare privilege of  
being associated in Christian service,*

**This Book is Cordially Inscribed.**



## TOPICAL INDEX.

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AMUSEMENTS: 62, 105, 108, 119, 138, 139, 161, 205.

BIBLE: 20, 80, 86, 115, 140, 159, 192, 217.

CARE FOR OTHERS: 25, 27, 34, 37, 49, 53, 67, 76, 102, 104, 109  
112, 119, 121, 132, 153, 158, 186, 211.

CHRIST: 17, 19, 21, 28, 29, 30, 44, 47, 169, 189, 212.

CHURCH: 42, 149, 156, 164, 194.

EXAMPLE: 90, 96, 111, 119, 124, 163, 214.

FAITH: 32, 91, 112, 140, 142, 144, 148.

FAULTFINDING: 84, 99, 113, 173, 194.

FEAR OF EVIL: 60, 61, 65, 88, 108, 177.

FOLLOWING CHRIST: 21, 87, 95, 102, 161.

FUTURE LIFE: 45, 50, 142, 150.

GIVING: 49, 97, 145, 202.

HOME: 90, 121, 154.

HYPOCRITES: 90, 119, 126, 206.

JOYFULNESS: 60, 71, 112, 135, 192, 212.

LIBERTY: 73, 119, 139.

LITTLE THINGS: 58, 65, 77, 110, 154.

LOVE OF GOD: 17, 19, 39, 41, 117, 169, 176, 177, 180, 181, 189, 218.

MISSIONS: 71, 97, 104, 122, 127, 158, 196, 200, 204.

OBEDIENCE: 32, 34, 40, 70, 131, 154, 159, 176, 194.

OPPORTUNITY: 24, 31, 107, 134, 144, 208.

PRAYER: 26, 46, 57, 92, 97.

PROMISES: 46, 60, 68, 83, 109, 112, 131, 135, 140, 218.

PUNISHMENT: 35, 43.

- PURPOSE: 85, 95, 103, 106, 116, 147, 152, 160, 172, 208.  
REFORMATION: 46, 86, 94, 125.  
REJECTING CHRIST: 41, 74, 106, 191.  
RESPONSIBILITY: 53, 64, 70, 72, 82, 89, 96, 115, 119, 128, 133, 134,  
149, 151, 171, 185, 201, 203, 210.  
REVIVALS: 25, 55, 76, 77, 162, 164.  
REWARDS: 48, 58, 138, 168, 179.  
RICHES: 24, 31, 33, 50, 74, 83, 93, 150, 164, 197, 213, 215.  
SELF-DENIAL: 22, 39, 61, 81, 114, 133, 181, 188, 215.  
SERVICE: 62, 66, 80, 85, 98, 114, 116, 119, 132, 141, 152, 158, 160,  
168, 185.  
SIN: 22, 31, 36, 58, 85, 131, 199.  
SINNERS: 41, 54, 134, 153, 160, 162, 198.  
SPIRIT (The): 44, 68, 87, 223.  
SYMPATHY: 77, 88, 108, 117, 137, 157, 187.  
TEMPERANCE: 75, 130, 184.  
TRIAL: 60, 68, 69, 122, 148, 181.  
WORLDLINESS: 72, 143, 156, 188.  
YOUNG PEOPLE: 72, 119, 163, 174, 193.



## CONTENTS.

	Page.
Abundant Life.....	181
According to Our Own Doing.....	35
Afterward .....	58
Already Unlocked.....	131
As for Yourself.....	64
Babylon and Jerusalem.....	163
Be Definite .....	147
Be Frank .....	103
Believe in Them.....	117
"Belonging to the Church".....	149
Be Sincere .....	126
Best Evidence (The).....	209
Best Preaching (The).....	124
Better Answer (A).....	26
Bright Side (The).....	157
Business Christian (A).....	152
By His Authority.....	46
Calling the Righteous or Sinners.....	134
Can You Take It with You?.....	50
Childish Things .....	194
Church in Business (The).....	42
Cold Comfort.....	90
Comforter (The) .....	68
Contentious Peacemakers.....	66
Contradictory Testimony.....	221
Converts Expected .....	153
Copying Christ.....	28
Cost of a Good Reputation (The).....	111
Costliness of Sympathy (The).....	188
Costly Mistake (A).....	115
Cost of It (The).....	62
Cost of Neglect (The).....	193
Cowardly Courtesy.....	184
Danger of Revival Meetings (The).....	76
Dangers Unseen.....	63
Dealing Justly with God.....	210
Diamonds and Corn.....	215

	Page.
Doctors and Revivals.....	162
Double Reward (A).....	186
Drifting into It.....	83
Easy Yoke (An).....	114
End of the Journey (The).....	43
Evading Taxation .....	89
Exact Obedience .....	32
"Except Ye Turn".....	222
Faith and Obedience.....	193
Fearless or Foolhardy?.....	60
Fellowship with Christ.....	44
First Person—Plural .....	137
Garment of Service (The).....	221
Getting Advice and Taking It.....	106
Getting Unyoked .....	161
Give Him the Best.....	119
Go Look in the Glass.....	94
Go or Send.....	57
Great Question (The).....	160
Grieving the Spirit.....	87
Have a Purpose.....	172
He Commended His Love.....	19
Help Others—and Yourself.....	146
He Needs You.....	169
Herein Is He Glorified.....	52
He Shall Have Them in Derision.....	174
He's Waiting for You.....	41
He Understands.....	212
Home Evangelism.....	121
How Christ Draws.....	29
How God Allows Us to Sin.....	85
How Satan Gets Possession.....	58
How the Saloon Bothered Him.....	130
How They Brought a Revival.....	164
How They Find Fault.....	84
How to Tell the Difference.....	98
How We Get Lost.....	54
"If I Were a Christian".....	173
If Thou Hadst Known.....	24
If Thy Hand Offend Thee.....	22
If We Confess Our Sins.....	36
If You Hadn't Tried.....	138
Impertinent Question (An).....	67
"In the Beginning God".....	176

*Contents.*

	Page.
Into All the World.....	122
Inviting Temptation.....	199
Irreproachable Idols.....	143
It Requireth Haste.....	37
It Will Hold You Fast.....	188
Jacob.....	91
“Jest Dangerous”.....	69
Keeping Up the Lights.....	151
Keep the Way Open.....	92
Knowing His Voice.....	189
Lamps or Lights?.....	223
Life’s Little Pieces.....	110
Little Dangers .....	65
Living Gratitude.....	224
Looking for Trouble.....	187
Lord’s Day or Ours (The).....	183
Lot Went with Him.....	96
Love’s Offering .....	202
Machines or Men?.....	131
Make Them Hungry.....	112
Master Has Said It (The).....	140
Memory that Saved (A).....	90
Methods and Men.....	80
Missionary Submission.....	200
Misunderstanding God .....	177
Modern Prodigal (The).....	175
Moth Can Not Corrupt.....	150
Move Something .....	85
Narrow Way (The).....	39
Necessary Choice (A).....	190
Neglected Duty (A).....	180
Neglected Opportunity (A).....	128
Neither Saved nor Lost.....	41
“No Interruption to Business”.....	95
Not Fastened in the Right Place.....	170
One Kind of Questioner.....	99
Only a Block.....	100
Our Advocate.....	200
Palaces or Pig-pens?.....	171
Parable of the Oil-mill (The).....	185
Parade or Service.....	218
Paying Too Much for Some Good Things.....	78
Peril of Souls (The).....	204

	Page.
Power of the Individual (The).....	77
Prejudiced Criticism.....	80
Preserving the Landmarks.....	217
Prevention and Cure.....	174
Price of Prayer (The).....	51
Price of Success (The).....	164
Pulpit on Fire (A).....	156
Putting Them to Silence.....	214
Question of Investment (A).....	93
Question of Ownership (A).....	213
Realizing on the Promises.....	83
Real Surrender (The).....	61
Refusing the Prize.....	74
Rejecting Deliverance.....	101
Rejoice in the Lord.....	135
Repeating the Promises.....	109
Rescue on the Brain.....	55
Responsibility and Opportunity.....	82
Responsibility for the Lost.....	53
Sacrificed for Us.....	220
Safety of Fear (The).....	88
Saved to Serve.....	116
Saving or Showing Off.....	132
Saving the Good Ones.....	27
Secret of Contentment (The).....	212
Seeing Stars.....	60
Seek First! .....	63
Serious Result (A).....	119
Some Other Way.....	159
So Shall Thy Strength Be.....	148
Speaking for Christ.....	30
Spiritual Vagrancy .....	204
Stepping Over Things.....	154
Still Waters (The).....	192
Such as You Have.....	49
Tarnished Name (A).....	102
Terms of Admission (The).....	40
That Ye May Obtain.....	48
There's a Man in There!.....	104
They Know Not What They Do.....	107
They Shall See God.....	144
They that Are Sick.....	198
Thirsting for the World.....	47
Thy Will, Not Mine.....	81

## Contents.

13

	Page.
Time Is Short (The).....	144
To Let.....	177
Triflers.....	191
Trust and Obedience.....	127
Turning It into Money.....	197
Twin Frauds .....	141
Two Ways of Looking at It.....	72
Uncertain Riches .....	33
Uncle Sam as a Priest.....	75
Unfailing Test (An).....	105
Ungracious Thanksgiving.....	136
Unimportant Commands .....	34
Unprofitable Servants .....	160
Unspotted from the World.....	205
Unwarranted Faith.....	112
Useless Knowledge.....	86
Using Your Liberty.....	73
Voice (The).....	79
Wages of Sin (The).....	31
Walking with Christ.....	21
Walk with Me.....	102
Wasting and Spending.....	133
Wear Your Colors.....	134
Weighted Prayers.....	97
We Then that Are Strong.....	139
What Does Your Face Say?.....	71
What Heaven Will Be.....	142
What Is Your Business?.....	106
What Shall This Man Do?.....	70
What the Temple Is for.....	66
What They Really Want.....	219
What We Deserve.....	168
What Your Idleness Will Cost.....	158
When an Excuse Does Not Excuse.....	178
When He Comes.....	45
When the Bible Is Unreasonable.....	20
When They Enlisted.....	87
Where the Hypocrite Belongs.....	206
Who Is Hurt?.....	138
Wholesale Reformation .....	56
Whom Riches Make Happy.....	145
Whose Fault Is It?.....	25
Why He Felt Secure.....	218
Why He Isn't Hurt.....	108

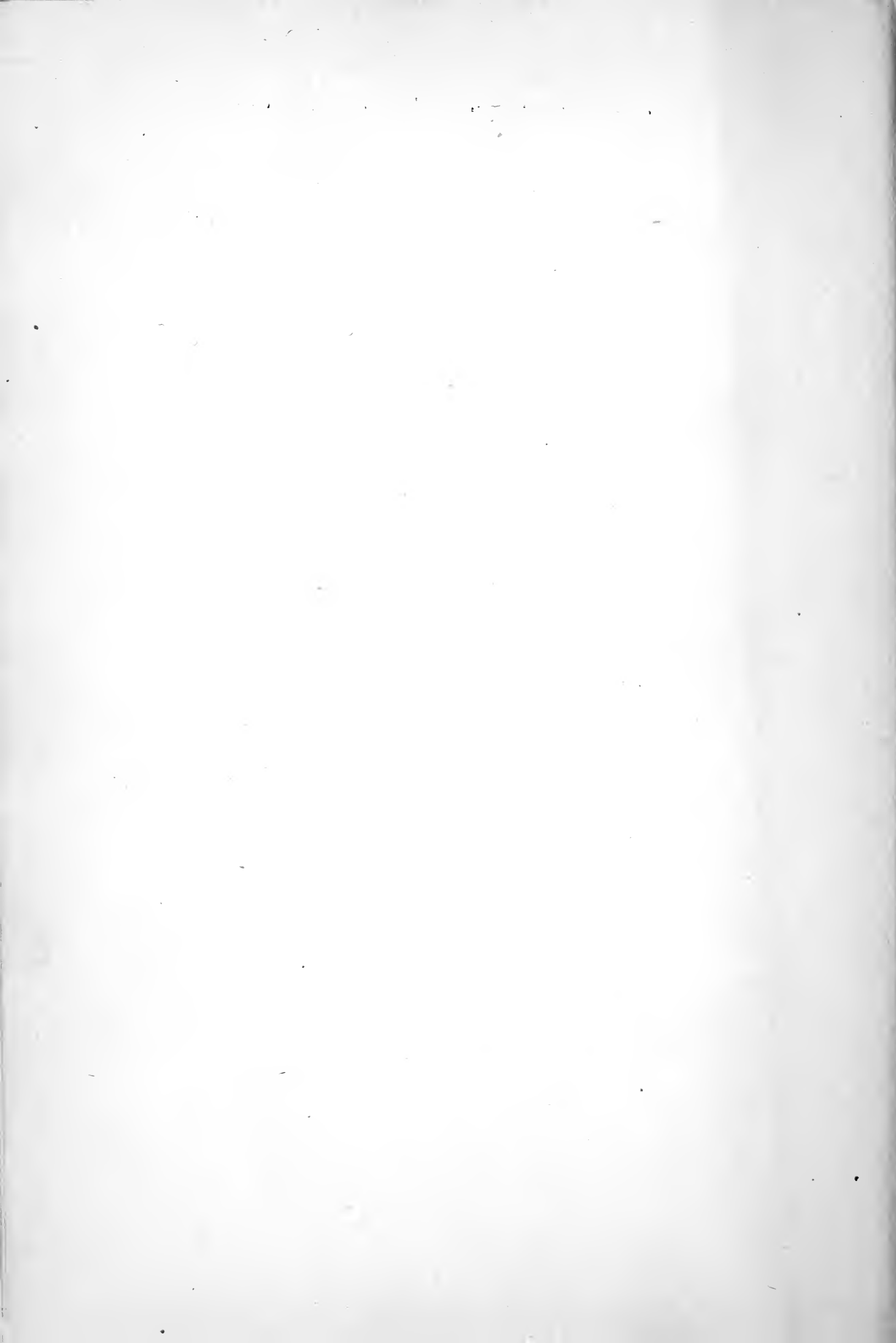
	Page.
Why the Christian Is Not Afraid.....	207
Why You Are Yourself.....	203
Will God Rob Man?.....	201
Wisdom of God (The).....	216
With Common Sense.....	125
Without Pain.....	108
Word Made Flesh (The).....	17
Work of His Hands (The).....	211
Work We Leave Behind (The).....	182
Worthy of the Cost.....	196
Your Anchor.....	122
Your Best Friend.....	127
Your Name.....	72
Yourself and Others.....	113
Your Supreme Opportunity.....	208

## PREFACE.

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In so far as one may lay claim to originality for any product of the mind, the author does so for the appended illustrations. Many of them have appeared in her work on the LOOKOUT and CHRISTIAN STANDARD. Others were born of the needs of the hour on the platform and in the Bible-class room. They are sent out with the hope that they may help Christian workers, in many fields, to make more luminous the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

M. M. B.





# SIDE WINDOWS;

OR,

## LIGHTS ON SCRIPTURE TRUTHS.

---

### THE WORD MADE FLESH.

(JOHN I. 14.)

Early in the seventies, a wealthy Eastern capitalist invested a large sum of money in the mining districts of South America.

While the mines were known to be rich and productive, they had thus far brought little profit to their owner. Many of the men employed in the mines were fugitives from the law and were from every nation under the sun. As a class they were treacherous and bloodthirsty, and riots and mutinies were frequent. One manager after another had attempted to superintend the work, but with the same dire results.

Mr. Barrows, the new owner of the mines, believed that there was a cause for all this, and straightway set about trying to find out what it was. He enquired into the conditions under which the men lived, and was appalled at the result. The work, which kept the men under the ground the greater part of the time, was, at best, wearing, and was attended with great

danger. In order to keep them at it, the overseers had resorted to the most severe means. They were driven in gangs like so many animals, and no attention was paid to their comfort. If one lagged behind, the lash was applied; if he grew stubborn, there was the pit and twenty-four hours' starvation to bring him to his senses. Here, it seemed to Mr. Barrows, was the root of the whole trouble.

"Men are not apt to behave like brutes unless they are treated like brutes," he said. He gave orders for a new system of dealing with the men. Instead of punishments for slackness, there were to be rewards for faithfulness. The new overseer, who went out, carried with him a message from the owner, expressing his friendly interest in them, and the promise that just as rapidly as possible he would improve their condition.

Do you imagine that all this worked an immediate change? Well, it did not. The new agent was looked upon with suspicion, and the message he brought as a decoy, by which they were to be led into a still more bitter slavery. A worse riot than any that had preceded it broke out, and the agent wired the owner that he had started back and that there was not money enough in the United States to induce him to stay. By this time Mr. Barrows was more interested in the men than he was in the mines. He said, "I will go

myself." So for three long years he went in and out with them, while he planned for their betterment. He slept where they slept, he ate what they ate. He encouraged them, and they saw what was in his heart. They no longer needed a word to tell them of his love and interest. He had spoken to them by his life. Love had been translated into a living man. The word had been made flesh, and had dwelt among them.

---

### HE COMMENDED HIS LOVE.

In a Southern city a poor colored man went into one of the worst districts and tried to preach to his people. Men wondered at his temerity in venturing into a quarter where even the officers of the law had been roughly handled. The people hooted at the old man and threatened to kill him. They cursed at his professions of love, and decared that he had come in the hope that he might get money out of them.

"No, brothers," he protested sadly, "the good Lord knows I has n't come here for money. I's come here because I loves you and wants to save your perishin' souls."

A terrible plague swept over the city. In almost every house in the colored quarter at least one poor body lay burning with fever. Those who were able to do so fled, leaving the dead and the dying together.

In and out of the plague-stricken hovels the old preacher went, ministering to the needs of the sufferers. When the pestilence had about spent itself the old man fell a victim to its withering touch. As his people gathered around him and looked into his still, lifeless face, they needed no voice to commend his love to them. He himself had done this in that while they yet hated him he had died for them.

---

#### WHEN THE BIBLE IS UNREASONABLE.

My friend was sorely distressed about something he had found in the Bible. "Ah! no one can live up to that," he said, pointing to the disturbing verse.

"Have you looked up the connections?" I questioned, for I strongly suspected my friend of having scant acquaintance with his Bible.

"No," was the cold reply; "if the Bible is reliable, it ought to mean just what it says here. If there is something somewhere else that contradicts it, so much the worse."

Suppose we should carry this idea into all the affairs of life? We would run against more than one stubborn impossibility. Truth needs always the light of truth. Let me give you an illustration: Shortly after I came to Cincinnati to work for the Standard Publishing Company, I saw on the wall of one of the

rooms this notice: "Employes of the Company Must Wash Inkstands on the First Floor." Now, I was an employe of the company, but if I obeyed this order how was I to perform the editorial work I had come here to do? Do you suppose a difficulty of this kind suggested itself to me? Not for a moment, nor would it have suggested one to any sane person. While I certainly believed that the order meant what it said, I read it in the light of common sense, and in the light of information I had previously received. Those who find unreasonable things in the Bible are usually those that read it without applying the rules that would govern reason and judgment everywhere else.

---

### WALKING WITH CHRIST.

While men have doubtless been saved when they were very near the end of the journey of life, what can compensate for the loss of years that might have been spent here in the companionship and service of Christ? Several years ago two young men spent their vacation at a little resort far up in the mountains. There was stopping at the hotel a quiet old man who several times asked the young men to accompany him in his walks. Finally one of them, George Bennet, consented to go. The other declared that he had come to the mountains to have a good time and not to wander about with

an old sobersides. George came back enthusiastic over the trip he had taken. Even this did not influence his friend, so George went again and again without him. The day before their departure, however, he accepted the old man's invitation. They had gone but a short distance when he discovered that the plain-looking man was none other than a celebrated naturalist whom he had long desired to meet. That day he saw the world with a new vision. As the walk came to an end, the look of enjoyment faded out of the young man's face. "Oh! to think what I have missed," he exclaimed. "I shall never cease to regret that I walked all these days by myself, when I might have been walking with you."

My brother, that is one argument in favor of your immediate acceptance of Jesus Christ. Many a man who has put off coming till the best of life has been spent, is saying with deep regret, "To think that I might have been walking with Him all these years!"

---

### IF THY HAND OFFEND THEE.

(MATT. V. 30.)

"I see you have had the misfortune to lose one of your hands," some one said to a fine-looking man the other day. The gentleman smiled, and hesitated a moment before he answered:

“Yes, or the good fortune. While a man can’t exactly rejoice that he must go through life with only one hand, he must acknowledge that it is better than not going through life at all. The loss of that hand saved my life. It was this way,” he went on. “Some years ago I bought a large manufacturing plant, and while I knew nothing about machinery, it had a great fascination for me. In spite of the warnings of the men, I was always poking about into places that I had been told were dangerous. One day (I never knew just how it happened) my hand was caught in the machinery, and in an instant I felt myself drawn into the very jaws of the machine that would have crushed my body into pulp. The foreman saw my danger. He knew that by the time the machinery could be stopped it would be too late. Without the least hesitation he seized a great cleaver and, with an unerring blow, severed my hand from my arm. It was heroic treatment, and for awhile it looked as though I should die from the effects of it. You see that I did not.”

Could there be found a better illustration of the meaning of the words of Christ, when he said: “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands to be cast into everlasting fire”? In spite of every warning, men are continually being

caught in the whirl of sin and folly, to find at last that their only hope lies in cutting off that which is a very part of them. Many such go limping through the world, thankful for their deliverance and yet a sorrowful reminder of the awful cost of sin.

---

### IF THOU HADST KNOWN.

(JOHN IV. 10.)

In his intercourse with men, Jesus more than once virtually said that if they had really known who he was their course of action would have been widely different.

It was so of the whole Jewish nation. They had long waited and sighed for the coming of their Prince, but when he came they knew him not. A young man was taken prisoner and was to be shot at sunrise. As he lay upon the ground that night between his sleeping guards, his heart was full of bitter thoughts. Oh, for a single sight of the dear ones at home! What would he not give to be free once more? Suddenly he saw a solitary figure steal out from behind a clump of bushes. The man saw that he was awake and began to make signs as though trying to communicate with him. He crept nearer and nearer. The soldier thought he could see a grin of derision on the man's face. Evidently one of his enemies had heard of his plight



and had come here to taunt him. He was mad with rage. It was enough to have to die like a dog, but this cruel mocking was more than he could endure. With a shriek of anger he sprang up. In a moment his guards had awakened and the entire camp was in an uproar. In the midst of the excitement the stranger had fled, and the condemned man never knew that the one he repulsed was a friend who had come to deliver him from the hands of his enemies.

There are many men who will find out when it is too late that they allowed themselves to be blinded to their day of opportunity. If they had known that the trial they rebelled at was but a message of mercy! If they had known that the invitation they treated lightly was the last chance for escape! "If thou knewest who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

---

### WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

Now and then some one complains because Bro. "Ferventzeal's converts" don't hold out. Well, that is a bad thing—for the converts at least. But are we certain that we have put the blame in the right place? One day a young wife complained to her husband that his tailor did poor work. When she was asked for

an explanation she said: "Why, there is that coat he made for you. I have sewed that one button on five times, and now it is off again." The button was like the evangelist's "converts." After months of indifferent attention, or perhaps of no attention at all, they are off again. And we are ready to declare that our brother is a very poor workman.

---

#### A BETTER ANSWER.

A young man went away from home to embark in a modest enterprise. His capital was small, but it represented the earnings of many years. He had won the esteem of his employer, and, as he was about to leave, the merchant said to him, "Don, if you ever get into a tight place, let me know of it. I will be glad to help you." For awhile the young man prospered; then came a misfortune. This was followed by others in such rapid succession that he began to see before him bankruptcy and ruin. He thought of his old employer, and at last resolved to write to him and ask for help. He had not the courage to sue for the whole amount, but hoped the small sum he asked for would enable him to somehow retrieve his fortunes. He waited eagerly for an answer, but no answer came. He knew that the merchant was at home, and that he was not a man who ever procrastinated about what he

intended to do. Don's heart grew sick. To-morrow his creditors would seize upon his goods. There seemed to be no way of escape. As he sat wrapped in his gloomy thoughts, the door opened and his old employer stood before him.

"My boy," he said, "I received your letter, and while you said you wanted money, I made up my mind that you needed me. I have been to see your creditors, and they understand that my entire fortune is back of you."

His friend had kept his promise, but he had answered in a way that the petitioner had not dared to hope. Brother, if your Lord has given you exceeding great and precious promises, do not allow yourself to fear that he will not fulfill them. God does n't always give his loved ones what they ask, but he never fails to supply their needs.

---

### SAVING THE GOOD ONES.

A boy asked his father if he might go to the cellar and get some apples to eat. "Yes," replied the parent, "but be sure you take the bad ones."

"But, suppose there ain't any bad ones?"

"Well, then, wait till there are. I can't afford to have you eating sound apples when they are worth a dollar a bushel."

The old man's idea of economy was, after all, not an uncommon one. We have a notion that we must let a good many things spoil before we begin to try to save them. It costs too much to hold meetings or open reading-rooms to hold the young people of the church, who were never bad anyway. We must wait until some of them are specked and scarred with sin. Nothing less than saving reprobates will satisfy us.

---

### COPYING CHRIST.

At work one day in the studio, trying to copy the face of a child, I became sadly perplexed. Instead of growing in beauty, the picture seemed only to become less and less like what I had hoped to make it. By and by I became conscious that the teacher was standing by my chair. Turning about, I said to him, "Is this right?" inclining my head toward the picture. I shall never forget the sternness of his look as he answered:

"Why do you ask me? Where is your study?"

Alas! I had long ago forgotten the picture I wanted to reproduce. It was at that moment lying face downward upon the floor. Even then I could not help making a spiritual application. How many of us who profess to be trying to copy the Christ grow perplexed and troubled over what we have wrought,

while the real model has been lost sight of. The Word which would reveal him to us is neglected, while we appeal to those who can never direct us otherwise than imperfectly.

---

## HOW CHRIST DRAWS.

(JOHN XII. 32.)

A gentleman who was being urged to accept Christ, said to the preacher, "There are some things in the Bible that seem to me to be highly contradictory. Christ must have overestimated himself. Once he declared that he would draw all men unto him, and yet he has n't done it. I know you will remind me that he has n't yet been lifted up before all men, but even that does not alter the case. Men go to church and listen to you; they even read the Bible, and then go away and live worldly lives. They devote themselves to money-making and sensuality, and are not drawn to your Christ—at least, not more than one of them in a hundred is."

"Do you believe that there is such a thing as gravitation?" the preacher asked.

"Certainly I do."

"Well, what is it?"

"I believe philosophers define it as being an invisible force by which all matter is drawn to the center of the earth."

The preacher stepped to the window. "Come here," he said. "Do you see those gilt balls?" pointing to the pawnbroker's sign across the street.

"Yes."

"How about the power of gravitation now? You say that it draws all matter to the center of the earth, and yet those balls have been hanging there for three years."

"Oh, well!" said the young man, his face flushing, "they are fastened to that iron rod."

"Yes," replied the preacher, "and it is so with the men of whom you speak. One is bound fast by the lusts of the flesh; another is anchored by his ambitions, and still another finds his business an iron rod that holds him fast."

Christ draws men wherever he is lifted up to their view, but they can resist him if they will.

---

### SPEAKING FOR CHRIST.

"No, I never have anything to say on religious subjects, and do n't feel called upon to speak in prayer-meeting," said a young girl. "I believe in testifying by your life instead of your lips."

A little while afterward a friend of the young woman was arrested upon the charge of theft. The evidence was circumstantial, and a good deal turned

upon the success of the accused in establishing a good reputation. Among those who were called to testify as to his integrity was the young woman in question. She might have said that she preferred to testify for him by her life, but she did nothing of the kind. She went courageously upon the witness-stand and spoke in his favor. She was glad of the opportunity to help set her friend right in the eyes of the others.

Valuable as is the service of hands and feet, there are times when lip service is not to be despised.

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### THE WAGES OF SIN.

In one of our large factory towns a plant was erected for the manufacture of artificial flowers. The work was pleasant, and the wages paid to the girls were far better than they had been able to earn elsewhere. The establishment was looked upon as a god-send, and the proprietor as a benefactor to the neighborhood.

Very soon, however, the health of one of the brightest and most capable girls began to fail. She went listless and weary to her work, and when it was done was barely able to drag herself home. One day she was not able to leave her bed, and a week later the undertaker's wagon stood at the door. She had been the support of a feeble mother and several small

children. Another and another one of the girls went home from the factory white and fainting, to go to work no more. Finally an investigation was made, and it was found that the girls had been all the while inhaling the most deadly poisons, which were used in the coloring of the flowers. While they had been liberally paid in money, a part of the real wages was—death. Does this not make plain the words of Paul, “The wages of sin is death”? Sin may pay you liberally in mirth or money, but that isn’t all. There is a part of the pay that can be deferred for a time, but it is sure to come. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die!”

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### EXACT OBEDIENCE.

A gentleman once discharged a capable servant because, as he said, the man obeyed and more too.

“He was continually doing things he had not been told to do,” he complained. A friend who heard of the matter went immediately and engaged the discharged man, remarking that it would be refreshing to have an employe who would go beyond his orders. All went well for a time, when one day the man was ordered to take some boxes from one side of the ware-room and put them in the furnace-room under the factory. The man carried out the order, and, seeing



that there were boxes on the other side of the room, he removed them also. Some of the latter contained explosives, and as a result the factory was wrecked. If we own that God knows more about us than we do ourselves, we must be content to let him set the limits. Men who have attempted to improve upon the commandments of God have invariably found that the sequel was disaster.

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### UNCERTAIN RICHES.

Don't spend the day of life accumulating that which you can not take with you across the dark river that divides time from eternity. Three travelers who had journeyed far in search of gold and precious stones heard of a cave whose floor was strewn with sands of pure gold, and whose walls were studded with gems. When they had almost reached the place, they found that between them and the place of treasure there rolled a black and turbulent stream. They resolved to brave even this, though the only boat they could procure was frail. They found the cave all that they had dreamed it could be. Two of the men busied themselves in picking up the smallest and rarest jewels, for these alone, they said, could they carry back with them. The third began to break off great pieces from the sides of the cave and was soon staggering under the

weight of his load. The others remonstrated with him, but in vain. By and by they prepared to return. The man with the heavy load tried in vain to get into the boat. It became plain at last that if he would save himself, he must cast overboard all of his treasures.

Beware of spending your day of opportunity gathering that which you can not take beyond the river of death.

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### UNIMPORTANT COMMANDS.

When we talk of commands that are not important we virtually speak of the unwisdom of those who sent them forth. The importance of any edict or message lies not so much in what it contains as in who sent it. A messenger boy brings you an envelope; you open it and find written upon a scrap of paper an order to go to a certain place at a certain time. The importance of that message to you will depend upon the name attached to it. If the signature is that of an irresponsible or an unimportant person, you will toss the paper into the waste-basket. If, on the other hand, the name is that of your employer, or it is signed by some other person who has the right to give you orders, the aspect of the case is changed. So in your religion, if there are unimportant things, be sure they

are not those of divine ordering. You may not see how obedience to this or that command can have to do with your salvation, but that is not the important point. Who gave the command? The signature will test its importance.

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### ACCORDING TO OUR OWN DOING.

“I do n’t believe that God would create a soul and bring it down to everlasting hell in the end,” some one volunteers. No, my friend, he never did. Look at that man who has just died from dissipation or exposure. Does it seem strange to you that God would create a physical body and then wreck it like that? “But God did n’t do it,” you say. “The man defied the laws by which he might have preserved his life.” So it is with the man who chooses the destiny of the wicked.

Last night a man leaped from the great bridge that spans the Ohio River, and was drowned. One of his friends heard of his purpose and plead with him to stay at home; another caught him and tried to hold him as he mounted the pier. A policeman even plunged into the water and gave his life trying to keep the man from drowning. The man’s will baffled all of them. Let me tell you that the sinner who goes down to everlasting death does so in spite of all that

God and man could do to keep him from it. He has rejected the pleadings and warnings of his friends, and even pushed aside the outstretched hand of the Christ who died to save him. "He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death."

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### IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS.

(I. JOHN I. 9.)

Jesus plainly stated that he came to save sinners. The man who refuses to be called a sinner puts himself beyond the possibility of salvation.

A wealthy gentleman was traveling in California in search of health; while spending a few days in an inland town, he learned that in this village there resided a man who owed him a large sum of money. The young man had come here after an unsuccessful career in the East, and was beginning to prosper in a small way.

"The young man seems to have been trying to help himself," said the rich man, "and I am going to destroy the note I hold against him." The note, however, was miles away among his papers, and he realized that he might not live to return. Not knowing the exact amount of the note, he sent his private secretary to the young man, to make enquiry concerning it, and to offer to give the debtor a receipt against it; thus protecting

him from proceedings that might in future be entered against him, should the capitalist die before he reached home. To the surprise of the secretary, the young business man put on an indignant manner and denied the debt.

“When I owe your master it will be time enough for you to be talking to me about forgiveness,” he said.

The debt remained unforgiven and the heirs of the rich man insisted upon the collection of the note. This was done, to the ruin of the man who remained unforgiven because he was not willing to own that there was anything to forgive.

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### IT REQUIRETH HASTE.

A new family had moved into the neighborhood. They were people of some means and had been accustomed to a society where great stress was laid upon good form. The mother, Mrs. Lands, took great interest in the people about her, since they expected to make the neighborhood their home. Through a mutual friend, she knew something of the family who occupied the imposing house next to theirs, and was somewhat disappointed that the lady of the house had not called upon her. One day she noticed that the doctor's buggy stood before her neighbor's door. She noticed the

same thing the next day and the next. By and by he began to come twice a day, and up stairs and down the lights were kept burning all night.

"They are in trouble, and I am going over to see if I can be of any service," she said.

"But, mamma," objected her daughter, "Mrs. Gage has never called or even sent a card. I am sure I should like to have you do something for them, but I think you had better wait till you get at least a recognition from them."

"It is the King's business, and it requireth haste," the mother answered, as she prepared to go out. At the door of her neighbor's house she was met by Mrs. Gage herself.

"An angel must have sent you," she said, grasping the lady's hand. "My husband is at death's door, and while we are doing all that we can for him, he is in great distress of mind. He used to be a Christian, but for a long while he has been so taken up with business, and I with society, that we have forgotten God. He wants some one to pray with him, but I did not know who to send for."

Mrs. Lands went at once to the bedside of the sick man, and for an hour sought, with prayerful earnestness, to turn his eyes to the Christ he had so long neglected. When at last he passed into the beyond, it was with a prayer of penitence on his lips.

“I think I know what Jesus meant when he told his messengers to salute no one by the way,” she said afterward. “It was not that he despised even their elaborate salutations, but that there was just then no time for them. He would say the same thing of what we call good form, when we allow it to keep us from carrying out his work.”

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### THE NARROW WAY.

(MATT. VII. 14.)

A party of tourists were scaling a lofty peak. The path along which the guide led them was very narrow, and in some places a wall had been builded to keep the travelers from stepping aside. A young woman of the party complained loudly of the narrowness and inconvenience of the way. “Let us take the path over yonder,” she said, pointing to a winding road a little distance away. “It is broader than this one; then, it is shady and I can see such beautiful flowers on either side.” The guide only shook his head, but when they had reached the summit he called the young woman to him and bade her look back over the way they had come. Both roads were plainly visible. She saw that the one she had longed to take lay along a dangerous precipice, where a misstep would have meant death. The very flowers she had admired covered treacherous

places. With tears in her eyes, she turned and thanked the guide for having kept her in the narrow path. So I believe it will be with you, if you let the All-wise Guide mark out your path for you. There may be times when the broad road seems inviting, but eternity will reveal the fact that the narrow way was just narrow enough to keep you from the things that would have been your ruin.

We'll look along the path we came  
And sing Hosanna to His name,  
Who led us in safety home.

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### THE TERMS OF ADMISSION.

“I really can't see why I need to be baptized,” said a young man who had been for a long time hesitating over the question of confessing Christ.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” quoted the preacher.

“Yes, I know,” returned the objector, triumphantly, “but it does n't say that you can't be saved without it.”

“I think you said you were not going to the symphony concert to-night,” said the preacher, irrelevantly picking up a hand-bill that lay on the table. “May I ask why you are not going? You are certainly fond of music.”

“I can't afford to go,” returned the young man, wonderingly. “The admission is two dollars.”



“Oh, yes, I know it says, ‘Admission two dollars,’ on the bills. But I notice one thing, it does n’t say you can’t get in without the two dollars,” was the significant reply.

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### HE’S WAITING FOR YOU.

A little girl had been away all day with the family of a neighbor; they were belated in their return, and, instead of reaching home before dark, as they expected, it was almost midnight when they arrived at the house.

“I will get out first and rouse your father,” one of the gentlemen said to the little girl.

“Rouse him!” said the child; “my father won’t have to be roused. He’s waiting for me.”

Men out of Christ, do you imagine that it is only through continued beseeching that you can gain the ear of God? Let me tell you, your Father does n’t have to be roused. He’s waiting for you.

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### NEITHER SAVED NOR LOST.

If there is one thing above another that the average man out of Christ does not like, it is to be told that he is lost. He is not willing to stand out for Christ when the call is made, but he certainly does not want to be counted among those who are against him.

It was beginning to rain, and the mother called to her little son to come into the house. The child paid no attention to the command.

"Are n't you coming in?" said his aunt from the doorway.

"No."

"Then you are going to disobey mamma?"

"No, I am not," returned the boy, with an injured air. "I'm not going to do anything. I'm going to stay right here where I am."

So with the man who hears God's call and refuses to come. He is n't obeying, but then he is n't disobeying. He is n't going to do anything. He is just going to stay where he is.

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### THE CHURCH IN BUSINESS.

A church-member was remonstrated with by the preacher for the way in which he made his living. While it was not what is generally called gambling, even the man himself did not deny that it was that. "There is nothing unfair about it," said the man; "men know the risks when they go into it."

"Then you would n't object to the other members of the church making their money in the same way?"

"No, except that the business would be apt to be overcrowded."

“Suppose we raise a fund and go into it as a church?” The man hesitated.

“That would be different,” he said. “I think a church ought to be religious, and has no business meddling with such things.”

“Then neither have you,” the minister replied. “The church is simply the men and women who belong to it.”

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### THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

Here is a man who tells me that he believes in the Bible and, therefore, in future reward and punishment. He would like to go to heaven when he dies. Indeed, he has friends whom he hopes one day to meet there. Still, he is going in the opposite direction, because he likes the road better. Let me show him how inconsistent he is. He informs me that he has been offered a position in San Francisco. It is just the place he has been looking for, and he has friends he wishes to join there. Indeed, it is the only possible opening for him. By and by I see him taking the train for Washington. “Why,” I say, “what does this mean? This train will not take you to San Francisco. I thought you wanted to go there?”

“Oh, I do!” he returns earnestly, “but I like the Baltimore & Ohio Road better than the Pacific.”

You would doubt that man's sanity. "What is he going to do when he gets to the end of his journey?" you ask. What indeed? It is a question for you to ask yourself. *What are you going to do?*

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### FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

A young man who was highly ambitious, and who believed that he had made an important mechanical discovery, found himself in such sore straits that he was forced to accept the position of a common laborer about a large factory. He hoped to get together sufficient means to enable him to perfect the invention that would give him fame and fortune. His work, however, was so exhausting that he could scarcely keep awake, much less study after his daily tasks were finished. Once or twice the wish had come to him that he might have the opportunity of laying the matter before the owner of the mill, but there was small hope that he would ever be able to gain an audience with the great man.

One day he was notified that he would be expected to go to work in another part of the factory. "The work is a good deal harder than what you are doing now," his informant told him, "but the boss saw you the other day and picked you out as the only man in the room fitted for it." For a moment the young man's

heart grew faint within him. Harder work than he was doing now! How could he do it? His strength was now being used to the limit. Still there seemed to be nothing else to be done, so the following morning he went with the superintendent to his new place. As he entered the room, he saw a noble-looking man inspecting one of the machines.

“Yes, that’s the boss,” the superintendent whispered, answering his questioning look; *“he always comes and works beside the man that takes this job.”* The young man could scarcely realize the good fortune. Here was the opportunity he had not dared to hope for, and he had come so near turning away from it. How many have learned a like lesson! They have gone tremblingly to some heavy task, saying, “I am not able,” to find in it a new and close fellowship with him whose life was that of a servant. The Master always comes and toils beside the servant who takes up some heavy task for his sake.

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### WHEN HE COMES.

A gentleman visiting a certain school gave out that he would give a prize to the pupil whose desk he found in the best order when he returned. “But when will you return?” some of them asked.

“That I can not tell,” was the answer.

A little girl, who had been noted for her disorderly habits announced that she meant to win the prize.

"You!" her schoolmates jeered; "why, your desk is always out of order."

"Oh! but I mean to clean it the first of every week."

"But suppose he should come at the end of the week?" some one asked.

"Then I will clean it every morning."

"But he may come at the end of the day."

For a moment the little girl was silent. "I know what I'll do," she said decidedly; "I'll just keep it clean."

So it must be with the Lord's servants who would be ready to receive the prize at his coming. It may be at midnight, at cock-crowing, or in the morning. The exhortation is not, "Get ye ready," but, "Be ye ready."

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BY HIS AUTHORITY.

(JOHN XIV. 13.)

"If ye shall ask anything in my name [*by my authority*], I will do it." Let me give you an illustration that helped make those words plain to me. My father was a dry-goods merchant and I remember that he sometimes sold goods to men who did not pay for them in money. They were factory employes, and, instead of money, they brought orders from their

employers. "Whatever you ask for by my authority," the employer had said to his men, "you will get." If John Smith brought an order for ten dollars' worth of goods, and signed by his employer, he got them. It did n't, however, warrant the man in asking for twenty dollars' worth of goods. He had no authority for that; his employer had not told him that he could go to the store and get whatever he wanted, but whatever his signature authorized. Jesus never gave a warrant for indiscriminate asking. We have no authority for asking for everything that desire prompts. If we ask for these things, it must be in our own name, and not in the name of Him who never directed us to do it.

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### THIRSTING FOR THE WORLD.

"The man would never have gone back to his cups if he had had plenty of nourishing food," said a physician, concerning a reformed man who had lately conformed. "As long as he was eating and drinking of that which nourished his body, the old appetite did not assert itself."

I thought of the words of Jesus regarding the living water, "He that drinketh shall never thirst." It is he that has ceased to drink at this fountain who is in danger. The Christian who is continually drinking in supplies of grace from the Word and from the place

of prayer will not thirst after the world. Beware of neglecting the living water. It is the devil's opportunity for suggesting that the wine of the world is pleasant to the taste.

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#### THAT YE MAY OBTAIN.

A half-dozen boys were playing yesterday over in the lot. By and by one of them proposed a race. In a moment they were busy arranging details. There were to be prizes and honors to be given, not only to the winner, but to those who should finish the course in a certain length of time. With a great flourish the six started down the track. It would have been hard to tell which ones were likely to win. By and by they returned, all of them breathless and two of them triumphant. These two had brought back all the honors. "But what was the trouble with the others?" some one questioned. "Did n't they run?"

"Oh, yes," returned one of the small victors; "they run as hard as anybody, an' maybe a little harder while they was at it. The reason that they did n't get anything was that they did n't keep on. People has all their runnin' for nothin' if they do n't keep it up," he added sagely. The boy's philosophy will hold good in many places beside on the playground. There is a great deal of purposeless running in this



world, and the worst failure is that which makes previous effort count for naught. "So run that ye may obtain," Paul exhorts. I think he must have had in mind the Christian who was for awhile full of zeal and good works and then dropped out of the contest. The Christian who lives by fits and starts may succeed in spending a great deal of muscular strength, but it is all to no purpose. Beating the air is a profitable exercise beside it. We need not merely to try, but to keep on trying; not simply to run, but to hold out to the end.

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### SUCH AS YOU HAVE.

Two mechanics, going home one cold night, passed a lame man who had been on the street all day trying, with little success, to sell his poor wares. "Dear me!" said one of them, "how miserable that poor fellow looks. If I had plenty of money, I should like nothing better than to relieve such cases. The first thing I would do would be to get him a good pair of shoes and a comfortable crutch that would make walking less painful for him." In the meantime, his friend had stopped and was talking to the lame man.

"Pretty bad walking, neighbor," he said cheerily. "Take my arm and maybe you can get along better. I am going your way; that is, if you will tell me where

you live." He did not stop until he had seen the man safe in the little room and had succeeded in kindling a fire. He filled the cracks around the window with paper, and left the poor man by his steaming kettle, cheered and comforted. He did not say anything about his benevolent desires. He had no money, but he had given freely of what he had. He was like Peter, who said to the man who asked for alms, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I unto thee." Too many of us are disposed to be generous with such as we have not.

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### CAN YOU TAKE IT WITH YOU?

An artist spent many weary months modeling a wonderful group of figures. It was the embodiment of his loftiest dreams, and he spent his very life upon it. At last it was completed, and he made ready to transport it to the exhibition, where he hoped to win the prize that meant fame and fortune. At the last moment it was found that there was no way of getting his masterpiece out of the room in which it had been created. His work was a failure because it would not bear transportation. Instead of the triumphant hour of which he had dreamed, he must go to the place where the test was to be made, empty-handed. That is just what you are doing, my brother, if you are

spending your life in amassing money, or in the getting of fame, or any other worldly thing. It may look like a success to you now, but what of the time when the call comes for you to appear before the Judge of all the earth? It will be small satisfaction to you in that hour if you must go to meet God empty-handed, leaving behind you that which you have wrought.

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### THE PRICE OF PRAYER.

“I wish you would come down and lead our prayer-meeting to-night,” a young man said to a friend he met down-town. “We are particularly anxious to get up an interest, and you know you have a gift for stirring people.” The young man thus petitioned demurred for a moment. What his friend had said was true. He was a Christian, so far as a blameless life was concerned, and yet it had been impossible to enlist him in really unselfish effort. His gift for “stirring” people had been exercised chiefly in furthering what was to his personal advantage. His friend’s words appealed to his pride somewhat, so he agreed to go.

When he arrived at the place of meeting, he learned that the prayer-meeting was to be held for the purpose of enlisting workers in a certain mission that was just now in great need. He tried to speak of the needs of the case and to urge his hearers to help, but somehow

his eloquent tongue seemed to have deserted him. When he knelt down to pray, he found himself in a still more difficult situation. He was mocking God when he asked him to put it into the hearts of others to do the things he himself was unwilling to do. A conception of the needs of the case rushed over him, and, instead of asking that laborers be raised up, he finished in broken tones, "Lord, I am ready to go. Take me and use me."

It was not the first time that prayer for a sacrifice to lay upon the altar had led the man to offer himself. When men begin really to pray to God to send helpers, they may expect to hear their own names called. Jesus said unto his disciples, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." Then he called the twelve unto him and sent them forth, saying, "As ye go, preach."

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#### HEREIN IS HE GLORIFIED.

Two friends were talking of the family of a prominent man who had just died. "His oldest son was the source of great joy to him," one of them said. "He brought great distinction upon the family name."

"And what of the other two?"

"Oh! they were well enough. That is, they never did anything to disgrace their father. Still, they

never glorified his name. If it depended upon them, the name would perish with them.”

There are disciples of whom something like this might be said. They have never done anything to disgrace the name they wear, but they have certainly not added to its influence and power. Jesus said, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”

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### RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LOST.

If you have been persuading yourself that you can withhold your hand from the Lord's work and still remain guiltless, let me tell you that you are making an awful mistake.

Out there is a field of grain that seems to be literally crying out for the sickle. For days the owner of the field had been scouring the country in search of men to help him gather in the harvest. The grain had reached that stage at which a single day's delay will mean its loss. Now the reapers are trooping out to the fields. You do not mean to join them, although you are nominally one of them. “What a host there is!” you say. You really wish them success, but the day is warm and surely there are enough workers without you. Evening comes at last, and as the gleaners return from the field, you hear them say that much of the grain still remains

ungathered. That night there is a heavy rain and the outstanding grain is ruined. Who is to blame? You are. Not for all the loss, but for all the grain your hands might have garnered. Men, women, pledged to the service of God, can it be possible that you do not know that the force of workers now afield is pitifully insufficient? They know it, and even while they garner in what they can, their hearts are breaking over that which must be lost. Pretty soon the darkness will be coming down upon us all. There will be some souls which no hand has reached out to save. Who is responsible? You are. God pity you if you do not realize this till it is too late.

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### HOW WE GET LOST.

"How did you get lost, darling?" a mother asked of the little one who had been restored to her after hours of suspense.

"Why, it was this way," said the little girl. "I thought I could see more of the parade if papa did n't keep me so close to him, so I let go of his hand. I intended to take hold of it again in a minute, but some one came between us and then I could n't find him."

Does n't that sound like a leaf out of your history? You never thought of getting away from Christ, but there came an hour when you concluded that you could

see more of the world's pageant if you did not keep so close to him. You let go of his hand, and before you knew it something had come between you and him, so you wandered further and further away. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" No one, beloved, so long as we keep hold of his hand.

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### RESCUE ON THE BRAIN.

A gentleman tells the amusing story of a little dog that one day rescued a child from drowning. As a matter of course, he was praised and petted for his bravery. This so delighted his dogship that, from that time forth, says his master, he had rescue on his brain. He utterly forsook his duties as house-dog and devoted himself to the more exciting business of rescuing the perishing.

Neither man, beast nor fowl could from that time forward venture into the water without encountering the danger of being violently seized and dragged to the shore by the zealous beast. Who has not met the human counterpart? There is the man who, in the revival meeting, succeeds in the noble achievement of saving a soul from the floods of sin. It is natural and right that he should not be satisfied with once doing this, but there is such a thing as getting rescue on the brain to the extent that less attractive duties will be for-

gotten. When simply filling the place in the pew on Sunday mornings, or teaching a quiet little class in the Sunday-school, or attending the mid-week prayer-meetings, becomes too tame for his taste, he is not likely to be the man that God will use for emergencies.

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### WHOLESALE REFORMATION.

A woman who had tried in vain to scrape the paint from the kitchen floor, finally hit upon the plan of pouring oil upon the floor and setting fire to the oil. It is needless to add that she got rid of the paint—and, incidentally, the house along with it. This extravagant method of gaining a point has no lack of precedent.

A "schoolmaster," who knew that one of his pupils had broken a window, gave each one of them a sound whipping in order to make certain of the punishment of the guilty one.

These incidents seem ridiculous enough, and yet you and I are in danger of applying the same principle in far more serious matters. We neglect personal reproof and exhortation, and deliver ourselves to an hundred or five hundred people when we are aiming at one or two.

Perhaps the preacher is the greatest sinner in this particular, but a good many of us are certainly not in



the position to cast the first stone at him. How many times you have used your time in prayer-meeting to give some one a "good hit" regardless of the forty-nine other listeners who needed no hitting? It is an easier way than that of personal remonstrance, but certainly it is n't a better one. Christ showed us a more excellent way, though it takes more time and godly patience to follow it up: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone."

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#### GO OR SEND.

A young woman who, while poor herself, had many rich, influential friends and relatives, felt that she ought to devote her life to working among the neglected classes in one of our large cities. Her friends tried to turn her from her purpose. They ridiculed her, and told her that she simply wanted to do something sensational. A servant girl in the family where the young woman made her home, heard of it. She was ignorant and poor, but she was a Christian. One night, when her work was done, she went timidly to the young woman's door and tapped for admission. "I just wanted to tell you to go," she said simply; "I've always wanted to, but I can't. I hope you will go in my place." The would-be missionary had been just

on the point of giving up, but this message saved her. "Yes, I will go," she said, joyful tears running down her cheeks. "I will go in your stead, for God will know and I know that it was you who sent me."

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### HOW SATAN GETS POSSESSION.

There is a story of a man who rented a piece of ground, with the agreement that he was to have possession of it until his crop should have matured. He utilized the opportunity and made the ground virtually his own by sowing acorns. The lesson is an obvious one. Give the devil one hour in which to scatter his seed in your heart, and he may stay with you the rest of your lifetime to look after the crop.

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### AFTERWARD.

Do n't be deceived into thinking a thing is pleasure because it starts off well. Enquire of your friend at the end rather than at the beginning of his journey, if you would know whether it paid.

It was one Sunday afternoon in the early summer, and there were only a few people on the streets. A tally-ho rolled by. Its occupants were laughing and singing and waving their banners. They were on their way to one of the summer gardens outside the city,

where there would be feasting and drinking and dancing, that would last well into the night.

A dozen young people with hymn-books and Bibles passed down the street. They were neither laughing nor singing, though they certainly did not look unhappy. They were on their way to hold a gospel meeting in a neglected part of the city. According to the careless looker-on, the first party was going out for an afternoon's pleasure, the other to perform a disagreeable duty. It was time for the evening service in one of the down-town churches when the mission workers returned. After the gospel meeting they had separated. One had gone to see a sick man, another to look up Sunday-school scholars; others to talk with friends who seemed to be on the verge of the kingdom. Now, as they met, they were eagerly talking over their experiences. How their faces shone. Somehow it was not like the light that comes from ordinary pleasures. Like the seventy, they had returned with joy. Without planning for it, they had been having a "good time."

It was almost midnight when the other party came back. What a sorry-looking set they were! Their very belongings had a disgusted, disheveled look. Some of them were singing, but their songs were discordant and were mingled with curses and angry yells. As for their faces—well, you would n't have cared to look into them

a second time. No, they were not returning with joy. Men never do when they have been pursuing the pleasures of sin, and, after all, it is the afterward that counts.

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### FEARLESS OR FOOLHARDY?

A young woman, telling the story of an experience with a fractious horse, said, "Father was frightened, but I was n't alarmed in the least."

"That was because you had n't sense enough," an old horseman interposed, bluntly. While her fearlessness may not have been due to lack of sense, it was at least to be attributed to a failure to understand the danger to which she was exposed. Now and then a young Christian boasts that he has no fear of temptation. Instead of impressing us with his strength of character, he only succeeds in impressing us with his foolhardiness.

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### SEEING STARS.

I remember when I was a child of hearing a man, who had been digging a well, say that when he was in the bottom of the well, he looked up and saw the stars. I was shocked at the man's lack of veracity. "He could n't have been telling the truth," I said, "because there are no stars in the daytime." I lived to

learn that the stars were always there, but that it needed surrounding darkness to reveal them to our eyes. Did you ever think that it is thus with so many of the promises of God? The gay devotee to the world, with the sun of prosperity shining full upon him, hears the Christian speak of the exceeding joy that service and sacrifice have brought into his life, looks dubiously at the man, and then sets him down as a mysticist. "The idea of his finding pleasure in such things! Why, there is no pleasure there." It is the soul that descends into the depth where the world's light has not power to penetrate, to whom the stars of divine love and hope and consolation reveal their glory.

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### THE REAL SURRENDER.

A little girl, who was what we call "left-handed," was toiling over her copy-book, awkwardly striving to trace the word of the copy with her left hand. "Margaret," the teacher said, coming and bending over her, "do n't you know that you will never learn to write well in that way?" The child humbly assented. "And do n't you want to give up writing with your left hand?"

"No, ma'am, I do n't want to," the little one replied frankly. "You see, it is because I like best to do it this way that makes me want to; but, teacher," look-

ing up appealingly, "I wish some one would *make* me want to do it the right way."

Here is a pretty good illustration of the difficulty that surrounds many of us. We may desire to be wholly surrendered to the Lord, and yet, so long as an idol is an idol, no man can truthfully say that he wants to tear it from his heart. Consecration, for most of us, means not a mere lip surrender, and asking God to take what we are not willing to give up, but the willingness to put ourselves into the hands of the great Teacher, that we may be made willing.

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#### THE COST OF IT.

The question of what the stage gives you in the way of entertainment is not the only one, my friend. First let me ask, what did it cost? How many lives are every year sullied by the temptations behind the scenes, in order that the play-going public may be entertained?

A young woman, walking near a steep precipice, saw a lovely flower growing a little distance below her, and expressed a wish to possess it. Her companion volunteered to get it for her. He did so, but as he placed the flower in her outstretched hand, his foot slipped and he was hurled to an awful death on the rock below. The young woman carried the flower

home, but we can scarcely imagine that its beauty was now delightful to her. It may be, my young Christian, that the pleasure you find at the theater is sometimes in itself beautiful; what I want you to remember is that souls for whom Christ died were risked that you might have it.

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### SEEK FIRST!

A young woman spent last winter in a Western city. While she was there she formed an acquaintance with a lady who was stopping at the same house, and the acquaintance ripened into friendship. This fall the visitor came to the city where her friend lived. She remained in the city four months, and hunted up all the people she had ever known; but not until the day before her departure did she seek out her former friend. It is true that the others she had sought out were society people and people of wealth; this in itself explained her conduct. But you may be sure that her friend no longer believed in her professions of affection. All this was natural. No matter what she might say, the visitor had shown by her actions that she estimated the other very lightly. Here is a thought for us about early seeking God. We show that we put very little value upon him when we seek everything else first. Yet this is one of the most common sins.

A large proportion of the young men and women who stay away from Christ really intend to seek him some day. They have simply put some other thing first. "When I have accomplished this or that," is the excuse. God never asked for the second place in any life.

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### AS FOR YOURSELF.

A mother, going away for a few hours, told her daughter not to take any of the berries from the little bed in the garden, as she had promised them to a sick friend. On her return, she was surprised to find the vines stripped of their fruit, and the child's dress and hands covered with berry stains. "I know you told me not to touch them, mamma," the little girl began in self-justification, "but some children came into the yard and were about to take them all. I thought that if they were to be eaten, I might as well have a part of them. You see, I could n't have saved the berries by letting them alone." "But you might have saved your own clothes from being stained," the mother returned significantly, looking at the ruined dress.

The child's logic is strikingly akin to that with which the evil one beguiles a good many grown-up children. A minister, when remonstrated with for having performed a marriage ceremony between an ignorant, though innocent, young girl, and a vicious,



dissipated man, said, "If I had not done it, some one else would." He forgot the stain it put upon his own garments. A young man is offered a position with a firm whose business he knows to be a hurtful one. If it were in his power to exterminate the business, he would do it, but it is not. Somebody will take the place if he refuses it, so what difference can it make? The difference between staining his soul and keeping it clean. God's commands look not alone toward stopping the progress of evil without, but toward keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.

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#### LITTLE DANGERS.

The power of little things is n't always a pleasant thing to think about. A few years ago there was, in a certain section of our country, an awful loss of life caused by the breaking of a dam. A party of picnickers had been camping near the dam, and a young man drove a small, sharpened stick into the wall, that he might hang the dinner-pail upon it. It was a small opening, but it allowed a few drops of water to trickle through. It opened the way for the great flood of waters that, in a few hours, swept over the country. It is an illustration of what has happened in many a life. An evil thought has opened the way for an evil life. A little time spent in the company

of one who was base has ruined a soul for eternity. When we think of the awful power that may be wrapped up in a little thing, how dare we try to live our lives without His guiding hand?

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### CONTENTIOUS PEACEMAKERS.

Perhaps it has been true at times that the only way to get peace was by means of war; oftener, however, the remedy has proven far worse than that which it strove to banish. There is a story told of a man who was wakened one night by the sound of a pistol-shot in his room. On inquiring the cause, his servant replied that there was a rat in the room, and, fearing it would waken his master, he shot it.

Here is logic surpassed only by that of the brother who is willing to throw the whole church into a turmoil for the sake of getting rid of something that he fears may cause dissension.

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### WHAT THE TEMPLE IS FOR.

Suppose, when that beautiful chapel of yours was completed, the trustees had said: "From henceforth we are going to see that this temple is kept clean, and that nothing unworthy ever enters its doors." So the house was kept clean and free from dust, but it was

never once opened for service. No hymns of prayer or praise ascended here, and never a soul found Christ within its walls. Would n't we say that these men had been untrue to their trust? The temple should be kept clean, it is true, *but it was built for service.* So, Christians, let us not make sure that we are using the temple of this body to his glory, simply because we are keeping it strong and pure. It was built for service.

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#### AN IMPERTINENT QUESTION.

On the train last summer a young girl was fairly boiling over with indignation at a preacher who had been asking her some plain questions about her soul. "Why, he even asked me if I were sure I was really on the road to heaven," she said. "He had no right to talk like that to me, and to make me feel perfectly dreadful."

"What did the brakeman say to you when you boarded the train?" her friend asked.

"Why, he only asked me where I was going."

"And you didn't mind it at all. You knew that he was asking you to save you from a possible mistake. The preacher had the same motive, only the case was a good deal more serious."

The young woman is only one of a very large class, who consider it an intrusion when you concern your-

selves about their lack of concern. There is one thing here worth noting: whenever questions like this are disturbing us, it is pretty conclusive proof that we are shutting our eyes to danger.

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### THE COMFORTER.

During the war some of the men who were holding a few prisoners received a message that relief was on the way. They were holding their own at the greatest cost; provisions were low, and they felt that they could not hold out much longer. What cheer the message brought! They were not alone. They were allied to a great power that was at their service. But the prisoners did not rejoice; they had no part in the blessings of their captors. So the Comforter comes to help the children of God alone, and they alone rejoice in the promise of his coming.

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### DANGERS UNSEEN.

A doctor was hurrying along a lonely road at a late hour one night, thinking only of reaching home as soon as possible. As he neared a small house by the roadside, he heard what seemed to be a cry of distress. Alighting from his horse, he found that a little child had been calling to him from the doorway.

Inside was a man who would have died but for his timely aid. He remained all night with the man, and thought nothing of it, except that he had saved the man's life. He never knew that down the road that night two men had lain in wait to rob and murder him.

So those of us who have given ourselves to God will never know the full story of our deliverance. Saved, means saved from the evil that awaited us, had we pursued our own way.

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### “JEST DANGEROUS.”

Among those who enlisted during the Civil War was a man commonly supposed to be only half-witted. When the first skirmish in which his company took part was over, he was found crouching under a wagon some distance away from the scene of battle. He refused to go back to the ranks, but finally succeeded in making his way back home, where, on account of his mental weakness, he was not arrested.

“Run?” he exclaimed, a little while afterward when some one was twitting him on his army experience. “I guess anybody would have run. I tell you it's jest dangerous to be in the army.”

There is something truly ludicrous about the soldier being surprised that he should encounter danger, but

I am sure most of us could find a counterpart of it without seeking far. It is n't as much trouble to enlist Christian soldiers as it is to get them to stand at their post of duty after the firing has begun. Too many are surprised and indignant that they should encounter the enemy, and justify their desertion on the plea that it is "jest dangerous."

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### WHAT SHALL THIS MAN DO?

(JOHN XXI. 22.)

What Christian worker has not encountered this question over and over again? Press home to the heart of some one the plain teaching of God's word till he can no longer evade the truth, to but meet with the irrelevant question, "But what of this one, or that one? My mother never saw the matter in that light, and surely God accepted her." My friend, what is that to you? Be content to leave to God the things that are God's, and set to work upon the problem of your own salvation.

Hear this parable of the children. A group of children were playing in a grove near a schoolhouse. By and by the master came to the door and called them to come in. They heard the sound, but did not recognize the voice, and went on with their play, so the master kept on calling. At last some of the children

wandered near enough to discern the voice of their teacher, and to understand that he was calling them to come.

“Let us go into the house at once,” one of them exclaimed, “or we shall be punished.”

“No,” returned the other, “I do not think we need to go. The boys back there are among the most obedient scholars in the school, and they will not come. They do not even know that he called.”

“Yes, but we know it, Tom,” was the reply, “and *that makes all the difference in the world.*”

Why will we who have the light seek to be judged by the standard of those that have it not? They could not come, since they did not know He had called. But we have heard, and that makes all the difference in the world.

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## WHAT DOES YOUR FACE SAY?

A young man once said: “When I was a little fellow and a new dish came on the table, I was always afraid of getting something I did not like; so I would wait till my brother tasted it. If he looked as though he enjoyed it, then I would try it, but if he made a wry face, nothing would ever persuade me to take it into my mouth. His very look was a testimony for or against.” Did it ever occur to you that the world

is watching you and me in much the same way? I don't know that they are conscious of it, but the fact that you go with frowning, dissatisfied face to your work will count for more than you think, while the shining face is a wonderful testimony for Christ.

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### TWO WAYS OF LOOKING AT IT.

"Children and young people are often brought into the church before they know what the step means," a gentleman said the other day. "Fewer persons who have been brought to Christ in their maturer years fall away than those who take the step in early life."

Very true—for the same reason that white sheep eat more than black ones, and that the death rate among persons over ninety is far less than among people under that age.

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### YOUR NAME.

A salesman in a furniture store was showing something which is called a bookcase. "I wish you would open the door and show me where you put the books," said the lady to whom he was showing it.

"Oh, that is n't what it is for," was the rejoinder. "It is used as a bedstead." The good woman was indignant. It was dishonest, she averred, to call a



piece of furniture one thing when it was to be used for another. Doubtless she was right. The matter is, however, more serious when moral and spiritual things are concerned. For instance, to call a man a Christian when he is really devoted to selfish and not to Christian uses, is dishonest, but it is more than that. It leads men to go to him for that which they will not be able to find in him. Alexander is said to have commanded a retreating soldier who wore the emperor's name, "Honor that name or drop it." The Captain of our salvation is not less jealous of his honor.

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### USING YOUR LIBERTY.

Recently several small boys, left alone in the house for the afternoon, conceived the brilliant idea of forming a fire company. To make the affair more realistic, they built a fire of boxes and barrels in the cellar, with the intention of putting out the fire by means of the garden hose. When the real fire company succeeded in putting out the fire, it was found that the only serious damage done was the burning of the kitchen floor. That night the mother of one of the boys undertook to reprove him for his part in the affair. "Why, mamma," he returned, with an injured air, "you did n't tell us not to build a fire. You told us not to track in mud, or let burglars get into the house,

or load up the old rifle. I noticed the fire was about the only thing you did n't mention."

The incident reminded me of the individual, all too well known to most of us, whose eyes are open not to read the marching orders of the King, but rather to see how many things he can do without breaking the letter of the law. "Why, I can do this," he exclaims joyfully; "you can't find a word in the Bible against it." True. The Bible is silent upon a good many subjects that even common law takes up. For instance, there is nothing in the Bible about making counterfeit money, wrecking railroad trains, or riding on the electric cars without paying your fare. The fact that the Bible does not prohibit a thing is really no argument in its favor.

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### REFUSING THE PRIZE.

"There's a man that once offered me ten thousand dollars and I did n't take it," a young man said of a gentleman who passed down the street.

"Why did n't you?"

"Because I did n't know it was ten thousand dollars," he answered.

The fact was the gentleman had come to him and given him a bit of advice, to which no heed was given. It turned out afterward that if he had taken the advice

it would have made him ten thousand dollars. I think you and I have had a good many experiences like that, only the riches we might have won are imperishable. That day when Duty said, "Go," and you said, "Oh, I can't go," you missed a prize that would have been yours through all eternity.

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### UNCLE SAM AS A PRIEST.

One can hardly give careful attention to the end of the liquor question where the counting of the cost comes in, without being convinced that our Uncle Sam is exceedingly short-sighted. The liquor man pays him money—big money, to follow his own elegant way of expressing it—and our uncle builds him a few miles of turnpike, or puts a stained-glass window into some public building, in the belief that the liquor man is paying the bill. To be sure, he is held up for the support of idiots, lunatics and paupers, and to pay the cost of murder trials, etc., for which the liquor man is undoubtedly responsible; but—oh, well, such things do not count!

There is a little story, which comes down to us from the sixteenth century, that furnishes something like a parallel. When the practice of selling indulgences was at its height, a nobleman, who had a grudge against a certain priest, sent for the father and asked him to

name the price for the privilege of beating and robbing the man he hated. The priest named a good round sum, and, after some parleying, the money was paid over and the writ of permission delivered into the hands of the nobleman. On his way home with the gold, the priest was waylaid by the nobleman, and was beaten and robbed of his money. When he was arraigned for committing the crime, the "gentleman" produced his license and was discharged. But that happened in the Dark Ages.

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### THE DANGER OF REVIVAL MEETINGS.

The life-saver dashes out into the raging water, and comes to shore with a man who, but for him, would have perished. He turns the half-drowned man over to the group on the shore and goes back to his work. The next day we learn that the rescued man has died, and we say, "Ah! there is the danger in saving men." It is true that he was lost where he was. It is true that we left the poor fellow just where the rescuer laid him when he was brought out of the water. Some people might say that he really died of neglect and exposure, and—he did. The same thing is true of the large proportion of those who do not long survive the special meeting. We are not willing to work to hold what we worked to get. There is peril,

real peril, surrounding the soul that has lately been brought to shore, but it is not in the revival, but in the afterward. Surely the displeasure of God must rest upon the church that refuses to enter into an effort to bring men and women to Christ, because it does not want to take the responsibility of caring for them until they have become strong.

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### THE POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

Several years ago George Marsh went over to a factory town to work in the planing-mills. He was just a common sort of boy; he could read and write creditably, but he had not what any one could call an education. Still he was a deeply ardent Christian, and had faith enough in God to enable him to forget himself. He went into the church, and though he felt the coldness, he said, "I'll warm up my corner anyway." He shook hands with the young people next to him in the Sunday-school and in the Endeavor society, and told them that he was a stranger, and hoped they would help him to find a way to make himself useful. He invited the men at the shops to come to the meeting, and then went around to the president of the Endeavor society and the chairman of the Social Committee and asked them to help him give the young men a hearty welcome. The sight of strangers being cor-

dially welcomed stirred the whole society, and one and another ventured to do a little personal work. I can't tell the whole story, but the leaven worked, and to-day people like to go to that church, because the fires of love for souls burn so brightly. The preacher who told the story said that the whole transformation could be traced to George March, and the young man had n't done a thing either that any common man could n't have done.

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#### PAYING TOO MUCH FOR SOME GOOD THINGS.

The good woman of the house had just returned from a shopping campaign, and was showing her purchases to her bosom friend. "Here is something," she said, unwrapping a pair of warm, winter shoes of a peculiar fashion, "that I have been looking for for three years. I paid five dollars for them, and I expect them to save me no end of colds and neuralgic pains."

"They are certainly excellent shoes," returned her friend, "but you paid too much for them. I bought a pair exactly like them last week for three dollars."

"Oh, well," said the first, "I could better afford to pay fifty dollars than go without them."

No doubt this was true, but it remained that her five dollars had not returned to her the full equivalent

for its purchasing power. Some one was commenting on the folly of a man and his wife who had just returned from a three years' bicycle-ride.

"It certainly was n't a profitable expenditure of time and strength," he ventured.

"I do n't agree with you," said another. "You remember how they rode that morning they started out? They bent almost to the handle-bars. They came back sitting erect. It was worth a journey around the world for them to learn that it does n't pay to make a jack-knife of your spinal column."

Probably this would have been true if the lesson could not have been learned in a less expensive way. It is paying too much when one takes a journey round the globe to learn what was within his reach within the corporation limits.

In entering upon a series of meetings to which the church had long looked forward, the leader refused to consider the advice of the majority. While at first there seemed to be a promise that scores would be brought to the Lord, the effort resulted in the conversion of but one man. "Oh, well, it paid, if it was expensive," said the heady leader. "One soul is worth more than the meeting could have cost."

No one will dispute this last statement, and yet there had been money and power dissipated, that ought to have brought in good returns. God does n't ask us

simply to do something good: he asks us to do our best. In the Lord's business as well as in our own, we ought to concern ourselves about making the most possible out of that which has been invested in it.

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### PREJUDICED CRITICISM.

A young woman, just returned from a fashionable finishing-school, saw in the garden a flower that she greatly admired, and enquired what it was. She was informed that it was a hollyhock. "Surely, it can't be," she replied. "Or, if it is, it must be a very imperfect specimen, because I did some hollyhocks in oil when I was at school, and these are not at all like them."

The young woman reminds us forcibly of the critic who is certain of the faultiness of the Bible, because it is not at all like the theories he has contrived concerning it.

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### METHODS AND MEN.

A physician, taking charge of a patient, professed to be able to cure the man if he would follow directions. Less than a week after this the sick man died, and the doctor was severely censured. In reply to the charge of having made false pretensions, he said



that a part of his directions was that the patient should take the remedies for at least a year, and his orders had not been carried out. Whether the man of medicine were honest or not, we will at least agree that to begin upon a patient that can not possibly last a month, a course of treatment that it will take a year to complete, shows a lack of wisdom.

It is so in spiritual matters. While the Christian, who comes into the church with years of careful training behind the step, is apt to furnish the most satisfactory results, we must reach the man who is trembling on the verge of ruin by a speedier, more heroic method.

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### THY WILL, NOT MINE.

A young girl, who had struggled with the question of submission to God, said: "I could see easily enough that making God's way my way was very different from submitting just because I had to do it, or because I felt that it was my duty. I was on the way down to Miss Howland's to see about having my new dress made. I had some notion of how I wanted it to look, but when I showed her the materials she told me how it ought to be made and trimmed, and it was n't the least bit as I had planned. I did n't altogether understand her, but I fell right in with her plan and was

perfectly satisfied to have her go ahead with it. Now, it is just because I know Miss Howland so well, and we are in such perfect sympathy on questions of color, etc., that I am at rest in letting her work it out, though I do n't know just how she is going to do it. She knows what suits me better than I know myself. And it seemed to me," dropping her voice a little, "that we ought to be just that way with God."

If our hearts are in harmony, we will be able to say that his will is ours, even when we do n't know what it is. He knows what is suited to us better than we can possibly know.

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## RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY.

Now and then men seem to get satisfaction out of the fact that they have had opportunities for being religious. Jesus tells of the men who shall come up in the judgment and offer as a reason for the clemency of the Judge, "Thou hast taught in our streets." "Lord," they will say, "do n't you remember when, through one of your ambassadors, you spoke to the crowds down in Cincinnati, or New York, or Chicago, I stood on the edge of the crowd? When you taught in a little country church, where father and mother used to find so much comfort, I used to sit and listen." Very flimsy it sounds? Yes, my brother, it is worse

than that. Whoever has once consciously stood before the open door of opportunity can not be quite the same again. It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.

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### DRIFTING INTO IT.

A lady brought her little girl to a teacher that she might learn music. The child came up week after week without knowing her lesson, and finally the teacher appealed to the mother. "Does your daughter practice?" she asked. "No," returned the mother, "and I won't make her do it; I'd rather she'd drift into music sort of natural." It is needless to say that she never drifted into it. I am afraid that there are people who come into the church with pretty much the same ideas. They make the start and then never give themselves any more concern. They expect to drift into sainthood.

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### REALIZING ON THE PROMISES.

A man was found on the street almost frozen and starving to death. Those who took him in were surprised to find on his person, checks amounting to several hundred dollars. The checks were payable to the man, and bore the name of a rich philanthropist.

“Why did you suffer when you had these?” they questioned.

“Oh, well, that was not money,” he replied. “Then, how did I know that I would get the money if I presented them?”

—So we, with a check on heaven for strength sufficient for all things, often fail to realize upon it the great riches for which it stands.

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### HOW THEY FIND FAULT.

Last summer a florist, whose roses were in danger of being destroyed by slugs, sent a small boy out into the garden to help rid it of the destructive pests. After the boy had gone over the garden, the owner went out, and, finding the slugs seemingly as numerous as ever, went to the boy and said:

“Did you find any slugs on the roses?”

“Oh, yes,” returned the boy; “I found the bushes covered with them.”

“And left them in that way, it seems,” said the man, sarcastically.

“Why, yes,” was the wondering reply. “You told me to see how many I could find, but you did n’t say anything about my killing them.”

That boy was a typical faultfinder. I know of some churches who have his ilk upon their roll-books. They

can find faults and foibles in abundance in those who have been entrusted to their charge, but as to going further and trying to eradicate the fault—such a thing seems never to have entered their minds.

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### MOVE SOMETHING.

It became noised about that a certain inventor had lost his mind. The first suspicion of the fact came while he was working upon a wonderful machine. It was costly and complicated. There were wheels and bands and bolts, and a steam attachment which set the machinery going at a marvelous rate. When asked what the machine was for—what he expected to manufacture on it—he replied coolly, “Oh, nothing.” The wheels turned and power was generated to no purpose. Isn’t that like some of our lives—like some of our church life? We want to be alive and keep the machinery moving, but let us be certain that it moves something.

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### HOW GOD ALLOWS US TO SIN.

A little girl, left in the room with her grandfather, disobeyed her mother by taking down a vase of flowers and pouring the water upon her dress. When her grandfather saw her plight, he said, “What do you suppose your mamma will say?” “I think,” said the

child, severely, "that she will scold you for allowing me to be bad."

The answer is a characteristic one, in that it is strikingly akin to what we sometimes hear from the lips of older children. "Why has God allowed me to do wrong?" the sinner questions imperiously, leaving out of the question his free will, and that he knew perfectly well what he was doing when he went contrary to the command of God. Truly the babies are not all in a nursery.

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#### USELESS KNOWLEDGE.

The prompt action of a young woman had saved the life of a man whose arm had been almost severed from his body. When the others were praising her for what she had done, she replied modestly that she deserved no especial praise, as her teacher at school had taught her what to do under such circumstances.

"Oh, I knew that, too," exclaimed another young lady, "and if any one had asked how to stop the flow of blood from a wound, I could have given the answer just as it is in the book; but I never thought of applying it to this case."

The young woman is a typical character. In cases of spiritual peril, a good many of us, who could give the answer "just as it is in the Book," never think

of applying our knowledge for the benefit of those who are in danger. Too many, who know the great Physician for themselves, never seem to think of sending their friends to him.

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### WHEN THEY ENLISTED.

When Jesus said, "Follow me," he did n't mean, "Do something," but, rather, begin to do. What would you think of the man who went to the recruiting-office, and, after being enlisted as a soldier, went back home and got into his slippers and his easy-chair, saying: "There! I've done my duty to my country—I can have some peace of mind!"

"Come, follow the Son of God!" the preacher exhorted. A young man went forward and took upon him the vows of enlistment. Then he went back and took his seat. But that was n't following Christ. Following him is n't an act. It is rather the beginning of action.

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### GRIEVING THE SPIRIT.

Once a man who owned a beautiful house invited one of his friends to come and live with him. He provided for his guest a room, a bed to sleep on, and a place at his table. By and by, though, he met another man, who charmed him, so he invited this one also to

come and stay with him. He went to the one that he had invited first and asked that he share his room with the stranger; a little while afterward he was asked to give up his bed for the same purpose; then to surrender his place at the table. We are not surprised to know that, deeply grieved, he left the house altogether.

Thus has many a man crowded the blessed Guest from his heart. When the world begins to war with the Spirit for the possession of your heart, beware lest the holy One be grieved and take his departure.

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### THE SAFETY OF FEAR.

The fear of evil ought to have a large place in the Christian's heart. One day a party of young people went out from a hotel in the mountains for a day among the rocks. While the place to which they were going was noted for its picturesque scenery, it was known that scaling some of the heights was attended with great danger.

"I am not uneasy about my daughter," said a mother, as she gazed after the party. "She is so cool-headed and so sure-footed that I have no fear of her getting hurt."

"And I feel equally secure about my daughter, but for another reason," said her friend. "She is



so timid about climbing that she will not go to the dangerous places at all."

The young person who fears the precipice to the extent that he will not venture near its edge is certainly safer than he who boasts that he knows no such thing as fear.

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### EVADING TAXATION.

A wealthy woman died the other day, after having spent thirteen years in a truly remarkable manner. From the time of the launching of the big steamer *Lucania* till her death, she never missed a trip, crossing the ocean but to recross it again. In this way she spent two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Was she sane? Yes, and no—it depends upon the view we take. Yes, if it is sanity to take account of self alone and shrewdly plan an escape from all personal discomfort. Freedom from the worries of maintaining a house, of entertaining and being entertained; from tax-paying, and from social and church obligations—all these things did this eccentric woman obtain.

It is true, there is another side. There were pleasures very dear to the heart of most of us that must be foregone. But, leaving them out of the question, what right has one human being, even if he may, to make life a play-day? When we stop to think of it, one of

the least pleasing pictures in the world is that of a self-centered life.

The woman might evade tax-paying here, but there will come a time when taxes must be paid; and however purposeless a voyage life may be, we are going somewhere, and will be obliged to put into port one day whether we will or not.

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#### COLD COMFORT.

A young woman once contemptuously informed an old preacher that she was as good as lots of church-members.

“I know it, my sister,” he replied, shaking his head sadly, “and no one regrets more than I do that we have so many unworthy people in the church.”

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#### A MEMORY THAT SAVED.

What a blessed thing to the prodigal was the memory of his father's house. However wretched and barren the world was here, at home there was bread enough and to spare. The memory of a Christian home and of Christian parents has proven a beacon-light to many a doubting soul. In a company of gay young people, a young man was speaking sneeringly of religion. The old ideas of God and of heaven and hell

were worn out, he declared. They were old-fashioned, and the world had outgrown them. A young woman, who had known the skeptic's mother, took him aside and said:

"You were not telling the truth awhile ago. You believe that there is a God, and that he used to hear your mother's prayers. And you will not dare to deny that you think of her as being in heaven at this moment."

The young man was deeply affected.

"You are right," he said. "I can not be a skeptic when I remember my mother's Christian life."

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### JACOB.

A young man, professedly pledged to the service of God, goes out into the world to make his way among men, who are mad each with the desire to supplant the other. Gradually and unconsciously the interests of this world begin to wrap themselves about him, until by and by his whole life is anchored fast to it. Suddenly, and without warning, there sweeps down upon him the menace of an awful danger. A horrible fear takes possession of him. The storm bursts upon him. Where are those things that a little while ago seemed everything to him—the flocks and the herds, the gold and the silver? Ah! these could not stand the test.

He has been swept away from his fastenings. But in this moment as, conscious of his peril, he wavers to and fro, he grasps at that which alone is an anchor in the midst of the torrent. This hour of darkness that came upon Jacob was, after all, his salvation. So such experiences have been to many a soul. Nothing short of this could have loosed the moorings that held us to the world, and given us that sense of helplessness that alone impels us to reach out after our Father's hand. Just how much Jacob owed to the memory of that night back in Bethel we can not know. Nor do we ever know how much we owe sometimes to the memory of the prayers and promises of our early days. But all men do not come out of the test like this; and the flood that drives some men to the rock sweeps others away to hopeless ruin.

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### KEEP THE WAY OPEN.

The head of a manufacturing concern was in the habit of going to a room on the roof of the building and locking himself in, that he might be free from interruptions. One day he discovered that the building was on fire. He flew to the door to find that the lock had become set, and he was unable to open it. He remembered the speaking-tube which communicated with the room below. But, alas! his calls were

in vain. It was many months since he had availed himself of it, and it had become so obstructed with soot and dust that it was useless. How fit an illustration is this of the prayerless life. It is by daily fellowship that we keep the way open between ourselves and God.

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### A QUESTION OF INVESTMENT.

(MATT. XVI. 25.)

Twenty years ago, a farmer died, leaving to his two sons nothing but a granary full of wheat. The grain was equally divided between the two. The elder remarked to the younger that he intended to use a part of his wheat for seed and sell the rest, as he knew of a profitable investment he could make with the money. The younger brother shook his head and said that he meant to hold his wheat for a higher price. He did so, but, instead of advancing, every year the price went lower and lower. He needed the money the wheat would have brought, but still he kept it hoarded away. At the end of twenty years he found himself not only in abject poverty, but so deeply in debt to the man who had stored the grain that he was forced to turn it over to his creditor. He had saved, but in saving he had been the loser. He lost not only his original capital, but the profit

that might have been his had he followed his brother's example. The lesson is not an obscure one. We make much or little of our lives in proportion to our investments. It is the man that spends who learns the meaning of heavenly riches.

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### GO LOOK IN THE GLASS.

Just inside the hall, where those who came and went could not help taking a look at themselves, swung a great, glistening mirror. In view of the fact that strict economy was the rule of the household, I had wondered not a little that so handsome a piece of furniture should have been placed where it was apparently of so little use.

I think the little woman of the house must have divined my thoughts, for, as I sat watching the boys, who were just starting out for school, one after another pausing to survey themselves in the mirror, she simply said:

“That looking-glass has paid for itself a dozen times over.” Seeing my look of surprise, she went on. “I need hardly tell you that a mother of seven boys finds the problem of having them always clean and neatly dressed no easy one. Well, I used to have a good deal of trouble with them, and unless I gave each one a personal inspection, some of them were likely to go

to school with streaked faces and soiled collars. Of course, they were always mortified, when they became aware of it. I saw that the trouble was that they had forgotten to look in the glass. I put on my thinking-cap and that was the result," nodding her head toward the mirror. "I have no need now of telling Ted and Joe to wash their faces, or Charlie that he needs a clean collar. That glass tells them in a way that they simply can't resist. For, after all," she added sagely, "I think one of the principal steps toward reforming people is to get them to look at themselves."

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### "NO INTERRUPTION TO BUSINESS."

Going down the street, I noticed that the sidewalk in front of a large building was obstructed with building materials. A great scaffolding had been built across the front, and from it was suspended a sign bearing the words, "No Interruption to Business." The public, however, seemed not to agree with the proprietor of the store, since not only were there no signs of customers about the store, but passersby even shunned that part of the street. The decision of the storekeeper that his business should not be interrupted did n't settle the matter, after all.

A young man who had been zealous for Christ and the church took on business responsibilities which ab-

sorbed the time he had been giving to spiritual activities. "I am not going to let it interfere with my Christian life," he told the pastor, and yet it did. He had piled so many obstructions between himself and the spiritual influences that had once had access to his heart that they ceased to touch him.

A preacher allowed himself to be dazzled by a bit of political honor. "I do n't intend that it shall hinder my work as a soul-saver," he said, but that was only one side of the case. Men ceased to come to him with their burdens. They saw obstructions between them and the man they had once felt free to confide in, so they passed by on the other side. The Christian's first concern ought to be that nothing shall interrupt him in his legitimate business—that of carrying out the commission of the Master.

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### LOT WENT WITH HIM.

When Abraham went out to Canaan, we are told that "Lot went with him." There came a time, no doubt, when Abraham devoutly wished that Lot had stayed in Mesopotamia. Even now, when a man resolves to change his plane of living, somebody is pretty sure to conclude to go with him. A father, who became a Christian after the age of fifty, was alarmed to find that, during his years of reckless living, his



young son had been following him. The son had gone still further away, and all of the father's efforts to bring him back were of no avail.

On the other hand, there is comfort in the thought that, if we are climbing upward, we will be sure to inspire other souls to do the same thing. And I believe that, when we reach the better country, we will find those who date their start in the upward way to the moment when we folded our tents and set our faces toward Canaan.

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#### WEIGHTED PRAYERS.

When it became known among the friends of a certain gentleman that he was going to go abroad, they came in great numbers to see him, each one with a commission for him to execute. A lady wanted him to buy her a real Paris bonnet; a scientific friend wanted a microscope, and so on with all who came to see him. When they had gone away, he looked over the list and found, to his dismay, that if he made all these purchases he would have no money with which to meet the expense of the trip. Of all the number, only one had brought the money with which to purchase what he wanted.

When the man returned, his friends gathered round him eager to see what he had brought back. To their

surprise, they found that he had made but one of the purchases he had been asked to make.

“One day, as I sat upon the deck, looking over your lists, a breeze came and blew them all away except this one,” he explained.

“But how could that be?” some one questioned.

“Ah!” was the reply, “his order was weighted down. It had the silver wrapped up in it.”

Do you see the point? Real, prevailing prayer must have your very best offering of self and substance wrapped up in it. When you pray for the relief of the poor, is your prayer anything more than words? When you somewhat peremptorily instruct the Lord to convert the heathen, is there any silver wrapped up in your prayer?

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### HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE.

Some one tells the story of a man who made a bee which, by some automatic arrangement, went buzzing around so naturally that he challenged his friends to distinguish between them when the real and the counterfeit were placed together. By and by some one brought a bunch of clover and placed it near them. Immediately one of the bees went for the clover, and began to extract honey from it; the other simply kept on buzzing. This is a pretty good illus-

tration of the difference between the real and the artificial Christian. They may make so nearly the same professions that you can distinguish no difference. The presence of some duty is usually the test. The real Christian is drawn to it, while the false one simply keeps on buzzing.

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### ONE KIND OF QUESTIONER.

There is the story of the keeper of a little railroad station in northern Michigan, who had been instructed to flag the train when there was a passenger to go aboard. Accordingly, on the first morning he hoisted the signal, and the train came to a standstill.

"Where are your passengers?" the conductor questioned, as he stepped down upon the platform.

"Well," rejoined the old man coolly, "there was n't anybody that wanted to get on, but I 'lowed maybe somebody might want to get off."

There is no more admirable or useful trait than that of healthful curiosity. And we all owe more or less to the individual who "wants to know" and is n't ashamed to say so. He is a good person to keep close to. But there is a good deal of questioning that has its source in an altogether different motive. Who has n't seen workers hindered and their valuable time consumed by some one who was intent on propounding

a "poser" rather than on really getting information? When we see men stopping missionary and Endeavor workers, the blessedness of whose labors can not be doubted, with all sorts of irrelevant questions, we are led to suspect that, instead of seeking information that they may get on and help, they desire rather to induce some one to get off.

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### ONLY A BLOCK.

Many years ago, a city, situated in an arid region, was supplied with water from a beautiful lake far up in the mountain. One day, in the midst of the hot, dry season, the water supply gave out, and the word went from mouth to mouth: "The lake is dry!" Twenty-four hours passed, the people were famishing for water, when one man declared his intention of climbing up to the lake, hoping to find a little water. Imagine his joy when he found the beautiful lake not dry, but overflowing.

All of the water which supplied the city must pass through a great leaden pipe. Into this a block of wood had floated, and had become so closely wedged as to stop the flow of the water.

This is a fair illustration of what a very insignificant block of humanity may do in the way of hindering the progress of God's work in the world. It is a

wholesome thought for us to carry home, that there are some souls in the world that will never receive the blessings of the gospel if we do not see to it ourselves.

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### REJECTING DELIVERANCE.

There is the story of a man of great wealth and goodness, who had heard that a little girl had been taken captive by a band of robbers, and was being cruelly treated. He resolved to rescue her.

The journey was long and perilous, and when at last he made his way into the robbers' camp, he was bruised and bleeding, and could scarcely drag himself along for weariness. But at the sight of the prisoner he forgot his sufferings.

"I have come to save you," he said, stretching out his bleeding hands. "I will give you my name, and you shall live with me in my own beautiful home."

The young girl saw the wounded hands and feet—she knew that he had borne it all for her; but she shook her head and said, "I will not come now," and, turning away from his pleadings, she went back to her old life of bondage. She had not spoken a disrespectful word. She had even wept a little, when he plead with her, yet the fact remained that she had despised his offer and the love that prompted it. Her sense of

value was perverted, because she saw more in her wretched life than in the one that had been offered her.

Let every one who rejects Christ read here the story of his own ingratitude.

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### A TARNISHED NAME.

A lady concluded to buy a grapevine of a man who was selling nursery stock. She selected the one she thought she wanted, but when she heard the name of it she refused to take it. An aunt of hers out in Iowa had a vine of that kind, and it never bore fruit. The nurseryman tried to convince her that the trouble was not with the kind of vine, but with the special one to which she referred. It is the same way with unworthy Christians. They cause some people to think badly of Christians in general.

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### WALK WITH ME.

If the commonest of us do not find opportunity for saving souls, it is because we do not follow in the footsteps of Him whose pathway always lay hard by the door of the needy and sinful.

A company of students were in the habit of going with a favorite teacher to the forest in search of bo-

tanical specimens. There were those who invariably brought back valuable trophies; a few, however, reported having found nothing worth while. One of the latter complained to the teacher of the barrenness of his search. "Walk beside me to-morrow," the teacher answered, "and I assure you that you will not return empty-handed."

Fellow Christians, if your life has been barren of results, take this to yourself. Go touch with your feet His footprints. I need not remind you where they will lead you. If you follow Him, he will *make* you a fisher of men. It is a costly thing to follow the Son of man, who despised all things that he might win souls for the kingdom of heaven.

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### BE FRANK.

While the soul-winner has need of tact (a name which we give to the wisdom that cometh only from above), anything short of frankness is sure to disgust those upon whom it is tried. Frankness, let us keep in mind, however, does not mean the brutal rudeness that sometimes masquerades under that name. The Christian has always a loving mind toward those he wishes to reach, and is, therefore, kindest in his speech when he is most candid. If you are interested in people, and want them to become Christians, tell them so.

Do it delicately and considerately, but do n't sham about it. A lady visiting in a minister's family was told of some bright, genial people in the neighborhood, who were, however, irreligious, and never even went to church.

"I will go and see them," she said.

"What will you have for an excuse?" said the hostess. "Oh, yes; take this pattern. Mrs. B—— asked me for it the other day."

"But I do n't want an excuse," was the reply. "I want them to know that some one is interested in them."

As a result of that visit, not only the father and mother, but the son, were led to regularly attend church and eventually to become Christians. "It touched me as nothing ever did before," as the mother said afterward, "to know that some one was anxious about me and was praying that I might become a Christian."

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### THERE'S A MAN IN THERE!

In a certain city, a great building was on fire. Along the street were great crowds of men and boys watching the fire. They were retarding the efforts of the firemen, but even the policemen were powerless in their endeavors to keep them back. Suddenly there was a cry: "There's a man in there!" Like a flash the words went from lip to lip, and in an instant the



indifferent lookers-on were eager to do something, even to the risking of their own lives, to save the life that was in jeopardy. Men and women will be ready enough to "throw out the life-line" when we can get them to realize that some one is actually drowning. Impress the church with the peril of those who are out of Christ, and we will have conquered, in a great measure, its apathy upon the subject of the evangelization of the world.

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#### AN UNFAILING TEST.

There is a great deal said about drawing the line between sinful and harmless pleasures, that might be settled by answering the question, "What hold does it usually have upon people?" Any pleasure that has made men lose their judgment, as Herod in the case of the dancing girl, may be set down as sensual and worldly.

In a certain circle one winter the craze for dancing broke out. The greater number of those who engaged in it were Christians. The pastor expostulated with them. A few renounced it, but the greater number said: "If we must choose between the church and the dance, we will give up the church." A lady, who had thus far looked upon it as a harmless amusement, said: "There must be something in it I have failed to dis-

cover. It is enough for me, though, to know that there is no safety in that which has so fascinated young men and women that they have expressed a willingness to give up for it that on which their hope of heaven depends."

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### GETTING ADVICE AND TAKING IT.

"It seems strange that nothing could have been done for her," some one was saying of a woman who had just died. "I have been told that she consulted some of the most eminent physicians in the country."

"Oh, yes; she consulted them," was the reply. "The trouble was that it ended there. She never took the advice they gave her."

The same is true of a good many of us. It is n't that there has been a lack of advice, but rather a refusal to take it.

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### WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS?

"What is your business?" or, as the Yankee would put it, "What are you driving at?" is the question that shapes everything about our lives. It forms our habits, chooses our friends, and determines the road we will take. If you meet a man with his fishing-rod on his shoulder, you do n't need to ask him what he is seek-

ing. You do n't wonder if he is n't going out to pick grapes. I believe that each one of us carries about us that which proclaims the object that we have in view. A man who goes into the mines dressed like a miner, and with a pick on his shoulder, may say that he is merely going to look at the scenery, but nobody will believe him. So, if we are dressed in the garments of the world and persist in hanging about its quarters, the fact that we call ourselves Christians is n't going to carry much weight with it.

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### THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.

When Jesus hung upon the cross, he said: "They know not what they do." Neither do they know what they do who turn away from him now. Some children were playing in the yard when the mother called them.

"I'm not going in," one of them said, "it is so lovely here, and I have n't been outdoors half long enough." It was not until it was too late that the child found out what it had missed. His mother had called him that he might go with her to a beautiful place up the river, which he had been longing to see. So, when God calls us to his service, there are so many who say, "Oh, I do n't want to give up this or that pleasure;" or, "I can't afford to follow him. It will

cost too much." Oh, if we could only get them to see the other side! Accepting him does mean giving up some things; but I tell you these things will look very poor and mean to you when once you have tasted what God has for those that love him.

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### WHY HE IS N'T HURT.

In a menagerie the public was wont to be delighted over an exhibition in which the lion and the lamb actually lay down together. Subsequent developments, however, revealed the fact that the lamb was a stuffed one. This is an illustration of what you will generally find on investigating cases where the saint leagues himself with the children of darkness, and yet boasts that he is not harmed by it. The sheep in the lion's cage looked genuine enough, and so it was, so far as the outside was concerned, but the lion recognized its natural prey by something else besides skin.

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### WITHOUT PAIN.

Occasionally I see something like this appended to a dentist's advertisement: "Teeth extracted without pain." It always brings to my mind the story of a man who went to one of these dentists to have a tooth removed. The operation was exceedingly painful, and

the man was indignant. "I thought you said that you extracted teeth without pain," he roared.

"So I did," returned the dentist, "and I assure you that I extracted this one without the least pain. I did n't even feel it."

"There is really nothing painful about confessing a sin," said an individual noted for his censorious spirit.

"No, not if it happens to be the sin of your neighbor," was the quick reply.

It is a good deal the same in many other lines. We are ready to correct our friends' faults and reform their lives by a painless process—so far as we ourselves are concerned. What it costs them is another matter.

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## REPEATING THE PROMISES.

Jesus had regard to the human need of his disciples when he reminded them of his promises. Just how much they owed to these frequent reminders we can not know. Nor do we know how much we owe to the open Word, where we may go day by day and be assured that "He has promised."

Cold reason might say that we have no need to read again and again what he has said. But it is the experience of every heart that, anon, as the way nar-

rows, and thick clouds shut out the light, we need to hear his voice saying, "Lo, I am with you alway." The mother bending over her child repeating, "Mother loves you; mother will take care of you!" tells it nothing new, and yet how those words calm and cheer the troubled little heart. So, "as one whom his mother comforteth," he means that we shall be reminded of his love over and over again.

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### LIFE'S LITTLE PIECES.

In most things we are reasonable enough to withhold judgment until we have examined them in their entirety. For instance, no man attempts to judge as to the vastness and grandeur of the ocean because he has seen a cup of its water; to the beauty and strength of a building from a bit of the brick of which it is built, or of the purpose of the author from a word cut here and there from one of his books. When we look at our own lives, however, logic seems to weaken, and we draw the most unreasonable conclusions. We plunge into some dark cavern and straightway raise the lament, "Oh that all my labor and pains should have come to this! Oh that God should have turned a deaf ear to my pleadings!" If we would wait long enough, we would see that we have been gently forced into the only avenue through which the light we asked

for can be reached. Israel stubbornly refusing to look beyond for the land to which the Lord their God would lead them, is not without a counterpart in our modern life.

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### THE COST OF A GOOD REPUTATION.

A young man, who had been active in Christian work, went to a distant city to take a position. Some time afterward a friend, calling on him, mentioned his former work in the presence of some of his new acquaintances. The young man looked annoyed, and when he and his friend were alone, he said: "I did n't intend that these people should know about my church work."

"I am sure your record was n't one to be ashamed of," his friend rejoined.

"Oh, no," was the answer, "but I did n't want them to expect so much of me." The fact was that he had made up his mind to lower the standard of his Christian living, and did not want those with whom he associated to expect anything better of him.

There is a warning in the incident. While it costs something to win a good reputation, it also costs something to hold fast to it. If there ever comes a time when you feel that you would a little rather those around you did n't know you professed to be a Chris-

tian, you need to question yourself closely as to the reason. Peter, who denied his Lord, first sought to have it appear that he belonged, not to the disciples, but to the crowd.

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### MAKE THEM HUNGRY.

A young girl had recovered from a long illness, and had no appetite. The doctor told her friends to take her where she could watch them eating, and to talk to each other, in her presence, about good things to eat. By and by she said, "I believe I'd like to taste that." I want to tell you that I believe we might make a good many people hungry for the living bread by applying the same principle. A young Christian said, "I remember the first thing that led me to thinking about becoming a Christian, was hearing the girls talk about how they enjoyed the sunrise prayer-meeting."

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### UNWARRANTED FAITH.

A man that had proven a failure at everything that he undertook, finally decided that it was his mission to preach. After he had begun his work he came home one night and offered up, in the presence of his wife, a prayer, in which he outlined rather minutely what he thought the Lord ought to do. "I



know the Lord will answer that prayer," he said confidently to his wife. When the good woman seemed to dissent, he was very indignant, and questioned excitedly, "Have n't you faith in God?" "Yes," was the calm rejoinder, "I've got too much faith in him to suppose that he's going to trust you to run his business for him." This is a distinction we do not always make. The faith that does n't trust God except when he lets us have our own way is a poor sort.

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#### YOURSELF AND OTHERS.

The newspaper wag represents Mrs. Housekeeper bubbling over with indignation because of some butter one of her neighbors has just brought in, in return for some she had borrowed.

"Jane," she says angrily, addressing the servant, "I believe this is the very same butter I loaned that woman this morning." Jane sniffs at the butter and agrees that it smells like it.

"Well," continues the injured woman, "I don't see how she could have the assurance to send such stuff here."

The difference was, of course, not between the butter sent and that received, but in the sender and the recipient. A good many things beside butter would seem more unpalatable to us, when sent to us from our

neighbors, than when we ourselves are the senders. It may be a needed thing that you give your friend "a piece of your mind," but before you do it put yourself in his place for a moment and ask how you would receive it, if this same friend were to attempt to correct you for some of your own faults. It might not keep back the rebuke, but you would at least be likely to temper it with mercy.

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#### AN EASY YOKE.

A young preacher, visiting for the first time in the country, was reading aloud the words of Christ about bearing his yoke.

"How do you understand that reference to the yoke?" his host questioned.

The young man began to say something about it standing for the hardships we endured for Christ's sake, when the farmer stopped him.

"Look here," he said, "do you know why I put a yoke on my oxen this morning when I took them out to draw a load of stone?"

"Why, I suppose it was to keep them from getting away," the young man replied.

"Just as I supposed. You thought, while it was necessary, it was adding a burden to the neck that carried it? On the contrary, it simply unites the two

for service, and the strength of the one becomes the strength of the other.”

Christ's yoke, my brother, unites you to him for service. Instead of being itself a load, it becomes possible for you to bear the load that you have.

The popular conception of the yoke of Christ is not the true one. Even those who come into the church often seem to think that the one purpose of it all is to keep them from breaking into something that they ought to keep out of.

When Jesus declared his yoke to be an easy one, he did not say that men found it easy to assume it. On the contrary, his words have rather the sound of reassurance to those who approach his service with trembling and doubt. The ox doubtless finds the yoke hard to adjust, and, before it is put to use, irksome. So those of us who have followed the behest of selfish inclination must come to the new life in the spirit of self-denial.

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### A COSTLY MISTAKE.

Not long ago one of our large daily papers was forced to pay an extensive damage bill for printing an advertisement that a certain firm would sell house dresses at 9c., when it should have been 99c. A large number of persons were misled by the statement, and

the results on both sides were disastrous. We say it served the publishers right, and will certainly lead them to be more careful. Perhaps so; but may not others besides publishers find here a warning? If it is a serious thing to mislead people as to the price of things that perish with the using, what shall we say of it when we fail to present the terms of salvation according to the divine copy?

Present the bright side of the religion of Christ to the world, because it has a side whose brightness is beyond anything the world can offer, but don't cheapen it by making people believe that it doesn't cost anything to be a Christian. If the plan of salvation were yours or mine, the omission of a few details would probably make little difference, but since it is of God there is but one way left to us.

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#### SAVED TO SERVE.

I once knew an old man who was possessed with a mania for buying up wheels of all sorts. A wheel, whether from a wagon, a cart or a wheel-barrow, possessed peculiar attractions for him; and yet in all his life he never owned even a wheel-barrow. He did not put his wheels to any use. He is a pretty good counterpart of the man the ultimatum of whose idea of successful church work is that of getting people to

join church. A good many churches where this idea has been followed up are, therefore, practically nothing more than a heap of wheels and bolts and bars that are of no use because they have been put to none.

“Saved to serve” is a good motto, but it implies more than we are sometimes disposed to take into consideration. It means that we must train people as well as save them. It is not enough that we induce men and women to be good; we are to see to it that they are put in the way of becoming good for something.

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### BELIEVE IN THEM.

More lost men and women have been rescued by the thought that somebody believed in them, than by any other human agency. There is nothing that will go so far toward making your class the most giddy or the most unruly class in the school, as to once let them know that they bear such a reputation.

I recall just now a striking instance of this sort. In a certain village the grade of conduct in the public school had fallen so low that the teachers universally agreed that it was beyond them. One after another came with stern visage and artfully laid plans, determined to conquer the belligerents. But all in vain. At length there came a teacher, a lover of young people, and a man of such guileless mind that he seemed to

have no other thought than that his gentleness would be returned in kind. To their own astonishment, the scholars found that there was something about him that put them on their good behavior when they were in his presence. Still, there were threats as to the daring pieces of mischief they would execute in his absence.

One day, after he had been with them not quite a week, he had occasion to go into one of the other departments.

"You may go on with your studies just as though I were here," he said naturally. They looked at each other in astonishment. No other teacher had ever thought of trusting them out of his sight. They were suspicious. It must be some kind of a trap he was setting for them. But they were mistaken. When they found that they had been really left alone, they were silent for a moment from sheer astonishment. Then the boy made bold to shy his geography across the room at the head of one of his schoolmates. But the fun, like the book, fell flat, and looks of disapproval were cast upon him. They seemed to say, "We are not afraid of whippings and scoldings, but a man that believes in us when nobody has told him anything good about us, is too much."

That man remained for almost ten years with the school, and saw it rise to be an acknowledged model.

He saw those boys and girls develop into a manhood and womanhood that was in every way different from anything of which they gave promise before they came in contact with him.

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### GIVE HIM THE BEST.

A young man, who had been employed to act as night watchman for a large business concern, made a practice of spending his days going on pleasure jaunts and coming to his post at night breathless and exhausted. The result was that he soon lost his place, because of the indifferent manner in which he performed his work. No man can come into the kingdom and serve God well if he has spent the early part of his life and strength in serving self.

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### A SERIOUS RESULT.

There came to one of our large cities, a year ago, a young man unused to the ways of the world. He was an easy prey to the tempter, and it looked for awhile as though he had utterly gone to the bad. A young man found him and heartily and cordially invited him to church. He went, and was so impressed with what seemed to him to be the unaffected piety of the young people, that he began to believe that there

must be something real in the religion of Christ. After the lapse of several weeks, he felt that a crisis had come, and so he resolved to seek out the young man who had befriended him, and ask his advice.

Going to the house, he was shown into a brilliantly lighted parlor, where a half dozen young men were engaged in a game of cards. Among the players was the one who had been to him these weeks the embodiment of all that was consecrated and unworldly. He did not stop to reason that it was merely "a little social game;" the cards had an association that nothing could reconcile with the solemn vows and prayers to which he had listened. The young man himself was embarrassed. He had told himself over and over again that there was no harm in what he was doing, and yet—the idea of meeting thus the young man he had urged to forsake the world and come to Christ, was disturbing. He felt that his hold upon the stranger was gone forever, and so it was. The young fellow went from the house railing at himself for having been made a fool of, and at Christian profession as empty and hypocritical. The end of the story is the saddest part of all. The young man who had been so near the kingdom, went out of life in the midst of a disgraceful drunken brawl.

Of course, I know that what seemed the inconsistency of one who had professed consecration to Christ,



was no excuse; but, if for nothing more than for the sake of keeping the weak one from falling, would n't it have been worth while for him to have given up that which it is so well understood belongs to the world?

If you want to make certain that you are ready for the revival, and that worldly people will not laugh in their sleeves and say, "Oh, what a Christian! He has to go to the same places we do for his pleasures," suppose you try reading those words of Paul's, something like this, "If progressive euchre and the dance make my brother to offend, I will engage in them no more while the world standeth."

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### HOME EVANGELISM.

It may be a hard thing to do, but that person makes a mistake who passes by the humblest member of his own household, and goes outside to invite people to accept Christ. A very worldly woman once said:

"I do n't know many Christians, but somehow I can't help regarding them as hypocrites."

"But your sister-in-law, she lives in the same house with you; surely you must acknowledge that she is a devoted Christian."

"That's just it," was the laughing reply. "She has a very lovely disposition, and she just devotes her life to missions and Sunday-schools, but she has never

said a word to me about becoming a Christian. It's only make-believe with her about souls being in danger. You need n't tell *me!* I know that she's fond of me, and if she believed all that, do you think she would n't have said something?"

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### INTO ALL THE WORLD.

"Go, bring in all the fruit from my orchard," the father commands.

"Not all of it," the son objects. "Some of it is so poor."

"Go, gather it all."

"But some of it is so far up in the trees. It will not pay for the labor."

"What is that to you? Do as I bid you."

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### YOUR ANCHOR.

The city was brave with flags and bunting; everybody seemed to be more or less bent on celebrating Independence Day. The trains were carrying loads of people out of the city, while down at the wharf the scene was a gay one. Boat after boat took on its load of human freight and bounded away across the water till only one was left—a trim little yacht, whose freshly painted sides and clean canvas told that it had not

yet tested its powers against wind and wave. The wind came and whispered to it as though inviting it to go. How happy and free the others looked, riding on this wave, and then on that; what happy shores might lie over yonder where the water seemed to touch the sky! The little craft began to tug gently as though longing to go. But, alas! it was powerless; it was fastened to a great, heavy weight, that held it fast, so that all day long it rocked to and fro, as though chafing against the unseen hindrance that kept it so close to the sheltering shore.

There was a storm that afternoon, and the clouds that a few hours ago had looked like angels of peace, blackened and spread till the heavens were a sheet of menacing blackness. The pleasure-seekers were, many of them, taken unawares, and the end of the pitiful story was told the next day by the broken fragments that strewed the shore. But the yacht? Ah! the storm had not touched it, and there it lay serene and smiling like a thing of life. It knew now that the heavy thing, whose weight it had felt so painfully, was only a friendly anchor, which had held it fast when the wind would have swept it away.

Do you find your sermon there, my brother? There were those plans you laid; you were certain that success lay in their fulfillment; but just when you were ready to venture out, something hindered

you, and you wondered that God could allow it to be so. Of course, you learned long ago that it was all a mistake, and you are glad for the hindrance, only it was not a hindrance. It was an anchor; call it that, and thank God for it, and never again think of it as a matter of chance.

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### THE BEST PREACHING.

Some years ago, an old woman went to make her home in a wretched cabin in one of the mining districts of Pennsylvania. The people were wicked and vicious, and the only church in the neighborhood was five miles away. Yet every Sunday morning the old woman might have been seen hobbling feebly along the road that led to the meeting-house. Here and there throughout the entire distance were scattered the cabins of the miners; and as she passed, many of them would stop their carousings long enough to fling some blasphemous taunt at her. But beyond an occasional word of kindness, or a gentle entreaty to them to go with her, the old saint took their railings in silence.

One day the word went from mouth to mouth that Mother Fulton was dead, and a man was dispatched to the town for a preacher. During the funeral services the rough men and women stood quiet and respectful; and many hardened cheeks were wet with

tears. As the preacher finished, one of the men stepped up to him.

"We want you to come back again, parson," he said. "We never had any use for such things, but if you can tell what made her like that," inclining his head toward the pine coffin, "we'll listen to you."

Thus a long-sought-for door was opened, and a harvest of souls was the result. While the preacher had been preaching Christ from the pulpit, this woman had every Sunday been preaching a sermon five miles long; and all along that road she traveled, a harvest was gathered.

We have certainly no need to envy those who, with the "tongues of men and of angels," reach the multitudes. You may, if you will, preach every day a sermon the length of the street up and down which you pass, or deliver sermons twelve hours long to those at your fireside. The world may do as it will with what we say; it can not resist what we do.

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#### WITH COMMON SENSE.

The value of most good things is relative, and means and methods are always to be considered in connection with the people upon whom they are to be used. There is a story of a young woman who, on her summer outing, spent two nights on an ocean

steamer. "I am almost dead for sleep," she confided to a friend, when she had reached her destination. "I read the directions for putting on the life-preserver, and tried to follow them, but I suppose I did n't get it right. Anyway, I could n't sleep a mite with it on." Now, the probabilities are that the life-preserver was all right, and that the young woman had literally followed directions. The trouble was that she was using it at the wrong time. Let us get a lesson from this; the fact that severe measures are necessary and successful on certain occasions does not justify us in resorting to them at all times. Do n't neglect to use the homely commodity of common sense.

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### BE SINCERE.

A gentleman one day came across a beggar, who, while wearing a card lettered, "I'm blind," gave pretty good evidence that such was not the case.

"You are no more blind than I am," the gentleman said.

"No; but the man I bought out was," was the reply. "He said it paid him, but I've found it a mighty poor route."

There are a good many people that have no thought that they are guilty of hypocrisy, who wear labels and adopt cant phrases just because somebody else has

made a success that way, all the while wondering why they are such dismal failures. Do n't say, "I am an unworthy and unprofitable servant," if you do n't feel that way, or that you are conscious of your lack of ability, if you are not. These professions are all well enough when worn by those who make them sincerely, otherwise they are not.

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### TRUST AND OBEDIENCE.

"Are you not uneasy as to the outcome of this illness?" some one asked of a sick man.

"No," was the reply. "Dr. B—— is attending me, and he says he can pull me through. I trust him fully." And yet the man died. What was the trouble? Misplaced confidence? No; the doctor was all he professed to be. The patient did not do his part. He refused to obey the doctor's orders. It is vain for men to trust the Great Physician so long as they do not obey his commands.

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### YOUR BEST FRIEND.

A young woman who makes her own living, and a very good one, too, put fifty cents into the basket when the collection was taken for Foreign Missions, and seemed rather complacent over it. The friend be-

side her, whose circumstances were about equal to her own, dropped in a five-dollar bill.

A few days later the two went out to select wedding presents for a mutual friend. The fifty-cent young woman bought one, which she grumbled was quite beyond her means; the other invested seventy-five cents in a modest little gift.

"Really," said the first young lady, indignantly, "I should be ashamed to give anything of so little value to my best friend."

"Very likely," was the reply, "but we have changed places since Sunday. You may count Miss Smith a better friend than the Lord, but I do not."

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### A NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITY.

The whole church, and particularly those who were interested in the Sunday-school, felt that they were subjects for congratulation when Miss Lexicon consented to take a class. She was teacher of ancient history in the college, and was an enthusiast on the subject of Sunday-schools. She impressed the pastor with this fact upon the occasion of their first meeting.

"We really have no thorough teaching in the Sunday-school," she said decidedly. The good man, remembering how many of the souls that had come into the kingdom under his preaching, whose conversion



he attributed directly to the influence of the Sunday-school teacher, acquiesced rather doubtfully. But when she told him of how one very bright young person had spoken confidently of Joseph, the husband of Mary, as having been sold into Egypt by his envious brethren, and of another adult scholar who had the impression that Palestine was the chief city of the Jews, he was quite ready to agree with her. A class of young men, who had been very irregular in their attendance at the Sunday-school, was given to her, and for awhile the superintendent rubbed his hands joyfully over the great interest that was manifested by these hitherto indifferent young people. There was a good deal of disappointment, however, when a little later a series of meetings, at which the gospel invitation was lovingly and earnestly presented, met with no response from them. At the very close of the meetings there came a Sunday so stormy that no more than a score ventured out. Miss Lexicon was in her place; so also was one of her pupils—a young man whose reckless life had been a source of much sorrow to his friends. Had Miss Lexicon been less deeply absorbed in some difficult points in the text, she would have noticed the look of nervous interest on his face. He did not come back to the evening service, but went instead with a gay party across the country for a sleigh-ride. The sleigh was struck by the fast train and the young man

went out of life without a moment's warning. The mother sent for Miss Lexicon.

"You were the last one that talked with him," she said; "what did you talk about?"

"About the probable location of the temple and the influence of such a structure upon the architecture of that time," she faltered, reluctantly.

For the first time in her life, and when it was too late, Miss Lexicon realized the meaning of the word "opportunity."

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### HOW THE SALOON BOTHERED HIM.

A young man, just going into business, was asked to join a society, the purpose of which was the suppression of the saloon.

"If every young man were like I am," he said, "the saloons would close soon enough. I never bother saloons, and am not afraid that they will bother me." His business was that of manufacturing soaps, and he had put into it all of his capital. A chemist of considerable ability had charge of the laboratory, and had furnished the formula and cost of the goods. After the factory had been in operation for some time, it became evident that something was wrong. The proprietor was hopelessly involved, and a failure was the result. Investi-

gation proved that he had been selling the soap at about one-half the cost of production. The chemist had been under the influence of liquor when he made out his estimate, and the mistake cost the young man all his earthly possessions.

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### MACHINES OR MEN?

“Why did n’t God make it impossible for me to do wrong?” some one asks. My brother, “a thing” constructed like that would n’t have been a man. It would have been a machine. No one ever feels like taking off his hat to a combination of wheels and belts and levers for performing its work. It can’t do anything else. God has made it possible for every man to be honorable and noble. If he had made it impossible for him to be anything else, honor and nobility would be meaningless terms.

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### ALREADY UNLOCKED.

What a great amount of fretting and blundering we sometimes do over troubles that are already past! Some time ago a pastor, wishing to show his new church to a friend, took his key, and the two went together over to the chapel. Putting his key into the lock, he made several attempts to unlock the door,

but all in vain. He was on the point of going to find the janitor, when the door opened from within and the man himself appeared.

“What is the matter with the door?” the pastor questioned. “I tried a number of times, but could not unlock it.”

“No wonder you could n’t,” the janitor replied. “That door was already unlocked.”

There are those to-day who are standing outside of the kingdom, trying first one key and then another of their own forging, and all the while the door is unlocked to all those that choose to enter in.

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### SAVING OR SHOWING OFF.

Determination is a necessary qualification for the soul-winner, but it is n’t the only one. A man, who had more determination than devotion, heard a preacher remark that the case of a certain man was hopeless. He made up his mind to show the faithless shepherd what he could do; so he worked day and night till he had induced the man to confess Christ. The convert was, however, soon disgusted with the inconsistent life of the man who had urged him to become a Christian, and fell back into his old ways. The worker had silenced the preacher, but he had not saved a sinner. The four men who brought the para-

lytic to Christ were not simply determined to show the crowd that when they started out to do a thing, they were not to be hindered. The fact that Christ commended their faith shows that they thought more about carrying the man than about carrying their point.

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### WASTING AND SPENDING.

The proprietor of a country store was displaying to a customer a piece of dress goods which he fished out from a barrel of rubbish. The stuff was thin, slazy and very narrow. On these grounds his customer objected to it. "Narrow?" the man roared, as he drew yard after yard from the depth of the barrel, "but look at the length of it!" There are not a few who, in like manner, seem to think of human life that length of days will make up for all deficiencies.

Not long ago a man, speaking of Frances Willard, said: "Of course she did a great deal of good, but she died twenty-five years before her time, because she worked too hard."

No doubt he was right; and yet a life like Frances Willard's, spun to the thinness her critics would have advised, would have made her a centenarian, and more. Length of life is beautiful only where the life has breadth and depth also. A life is wasted, though it be drawn out threescore and ten, if it has not been

the servant of men; and that life is profitably spent, though its course be run in a score of years, if it has made the world better. "He that saveth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall find it."

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### CALLING THE RIGHTEOUS OR SINNERS?

"Won't you see if you can't interest that young man in coming to church?" I said the other day, to a young Christian worker.

"What! that fellow?" he replied. "Why, I met him on Vine Street yesterday with a cigarette in his mouth."

I suppose that is the usual way of looking at such cases, yet it is fearfully inconsistent. If I were to call on you to help get a drowning man out of the water, you might doubt your ability to do so, but you would hardly say, "What! that man? Why, his clothes are wet!"

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### WEAR YOUR COLORS.

A young lady, a member of the church, and who felt very complaisant in regard to her Christian life, was thrown one winter a good deal into the society of a young man who was not a Christian. One evening

she went with him to a service where great religious interest was being manifested. On the way home he remarked:

“After all, I don’t know but that you and I are as well off as these church people.”

“But I am one of the church people myself,” she stammered.

The young man made a polite attempt at an apology, but the arrow had hit the mark. A private Christian life is an essential thing, but the one who has no public life is not likely to have a private one that is worth taking account of.

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## REJOICE IN THE LORD!

In a certain school several young women were trying to fit themselves for positions of usefulness. The struggle against poverty was a fierce one, and over and over again they were on the point of giving up. It was not the fact that they were sometimes hungry, and were continually the subjects of derision on the part of some of the well-to-do students, which weighed heavily upon them, but the fear that they might after all be forced to abandon their purpose. One of the young women, however, was never discouraged. She ate her scanty crusts and wore her shabby clothing with the utmost cheerfulness. The president of the

institution was her friend, and he had assured her that she should not leave the school even though her own means should be exhausted. When she had lifted all she could, he would lift the rest. In the midst of poverty not less grinding than that of her associates, she was able to rejoice—not in herself, but in her friend.

Do you not see, in this, my brother, something akin to your own experience? In the midst of trial, not unlike that which comes to the rest of the world, you may rejoice—rejoice in the Lord, who has promised to stand for you in the moment of your need.

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### UNGRACIOUS THANKSGIVING.

At school, one Christmas, the scholars gave their teacher a Bible. He was an eccentric man, and as he took it, he said, very coldly: "I thank you very much, but—I see it has no concordance in it." Of course, they were all hurt at this show of ingratitude, and his "I thank you" did n't count for much. I am afraid that a good many of us take our blessings from the hand of God in much the same way. We say, "I am thankful," in a perfunctory manner, "but—I could make things better if I had my way."

When we repine because of the unalterable environments of our lives, we render our words of praise of



no effect. A Christian grumbler is a monstrosity. And if we go from the praise service to find fault with everything about us, from the weather to the minister's sermon, we are guilty of dissembling with our lips.

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### FIRST PERSON—PLURAL.

A young man who had been a strong leader in Christian work, went away from his old home and there met with even greater success. On his return to the home church, he was eagerly invited to take his old place, which he did. This time, however, everything seemed to go wrong, and it was not long till it was plain that the work was on the down-grade. Mortified and hurt, he resigned the place, wondering all the while where the trouble lay.

In truth, the first word of the first speech that he made on assuming the place, revealed the root of the trouble. "You Endeavorers," he began, and with that cut the cord that ought to have bound leader and led together. Then he was not one of them! The old power to inspire and to lead was gone. This man might be a great deal better than they were, but he was a stranger. The mistake is one against which we need continually to guard. When we begin to think of our brethren as "you," there is the begin-

ning of the end of our usefulness. Jesus became the Son of man because it was man he had come to save, and the significance of that life which touched our own at every point is something we dare not forget.

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### WHO IS HURT?

The fact that you can go to the theater without hurting your morals, no more proves that it is right for you to go than it is proof that it is not wrong for a man to attend a prize-fight, because he comes back without a scratch or a bruise on his own body. He is not physically hurt himself, but he is responsible for the physical hurt of those who make beasts of themselves for his amusement.

The moral theater-goer should not forget those the wrecking of whose morals, which, while it is on the other side of the scenes, is a part of the yearly cost of the stage that must be kept up for his amusement.

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### IF YOU HAD N'T TRIED.

The writer remembers an incident that, very early in her career as a Sunday-school teacher, brought very forcibly to her the fact that the teacher's work may sometimes be a negative one. A man, noted for his

great success in Sunday-school work, was questioning me about my class.

“And what have you done for your boys?” he said kindly.

“Oh, I haven’t done anything,” I returned impulsively. “Not one of them has become a Christian; indeed, I’m not sure but they are all more reckless than they were when I took the class.”

“Yes?” and the answer that followed has helped me and encouraged me a thousand times; “but just remember, that if you had n’t done anything for those boys, they might have been clean gone to the devil by this time.”

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### WE THEN THAT ARE STRONG.

A young girl, who was being urged to come into the church, said frankly:

“I am fond of dancing and cards, and, though I do n’t see any harm in them, I know most religious people are opposed to them. Should I join the church and keep on at these things, lots of people would think I was a hypocrite.”

“Well, what of that, if you are sure you are right?”

“Why—why, I’d be harming the people who did n’t believe in me. At least, I could n’t do them any good.” Out of her own mouth she had condemned

herself. She had confessed that these worldly pleasures were responsible for her remaining out of Christ, and she had no reason for believing that her case was an exceptional one. She had admitted that they spoiled the Christian influence of those who indulged in them. The only plea in their favor was, "They do not hurt me." Has this admonition gone out of fashion, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves," or have we substituted, "We then that are strong ought to do as we please because we can"?

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#### "THE MASTER HAS SAID IT."

A schoolmaster gave to three of his pupils a difficult problem.

"You will find it very hard to solve," he said, "but there is a way."

After repeated attempts, one of them gave up in despair.

"There is no way!" he declared.

The second pupil had not succeeded, yet he was smiling and unconcerned.

"I know it can be explained, because I have seen it done."

The third worked on, long after the rest had given up. His head ached and his brain was in a whirl.

Yet, as he went over it again and again, he said without faltering, "I know there is a way, because the master has said it."

Here is faith—that confidence that rests not upon what it has seen, but upon the promises of God.

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### TWIN FRAUDS.

The other day a man was arrested and sent to the workhouse on a peculiar charge. He had a very sore hand: it not only excited the pity of most people to whom he insisted on exhibiting it, but it unfitted him for manual labor. What was the trouble? Why, the man was keeping his hand sore, that he might escape work, and live upon the bounty of kind-hearted people.

A young woman came into the society a year or so ago, affected with prayer-meeting-tongue paralysis. She had had it a long while; in fact, the pastor had been greatly troubled about her case. Then she had another affliction, that usually struck her when there were strangers at the services, and kept her from giving them a word of welcome. We all hoped that the Endeavor Society would help her to overcome her troubles, but it has n't. Shall I tell you why? *She won't let herself be cured!*

Like the man with the sore hand, she keeps pouring on an irritant by declaring that she never could

say anything in meeting, and that she is so dreadfully timid that it would frighten her to death to have to greet a stranger. She remembers of having once heard of a lady who turned her back on an Endeavorer who tried to shake hands with her. What if some one should treat her like that? She would never get over it.

Her malady is bad enough, but, as in the case of the man with the sore hand, there are compensations. She gets some sympathy—and she gets out of a great deal of work that people might otherwise insist on her doing.

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### WHAT HEAVEN WILL BE.

A banquet was to be given to a number of notable people. One of the projectors of it went to a friend, who was in greater authority than himself, and asked with some anxiety what the menu was to be.

“I really don’t know,” was the reply.

“And you are not concerned about it?”

“No; B——,” mentioning the name of a famous caterer, “is to prepare the feast, and that is assurance enough that it will be all right.”

He did not have to examine into the details. He would not have fully understood them if he had. It was enough to know that the matter was in the hands

of one who never made a mistake. When Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you," he told all that we need to know. He knows our needs and our longings as we do not know them ourselves. It is enough. If his hand is to make ready the feast, we have no need to question as to whether or not it will fully satisfy.

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### IRREPROACHABLE IDOLS.

The idols that the Israelites set up were made of pure gold. It was not that there was something base in the idols themselves, that made their sin so great, it was the fact that the place they gave them belonged to God. So, when something comes between us and him to whom we owe everything, it isn't always something that is wrong. Yet just because of this there is all the more danger.

A young man just starting in business desired greatly to have money to devote to carrying the gospel to the heathen. He said, "I long to get rich, that I may carry out my plans for God."

He was sincere enough in what he said. But he gave up the mid-week meetings of the church because he found he could use this time profitably in his business. The end justified the means to him. It was not long before he threw aside everything but that

which ministered to his one aim. He did become rich, but long before that time he had forgotten all about his first plan and put the god of mammon in the place of the true God.

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### THE TIME IS SHORT.

In a certain factory, where each man was required to finish so much work in a given length of time, bells were rung at intervals to remind the men just how much time they had left.

“The men work better when they realize that the day is slipping away from them,” the manager explained.

The same thing is true of us concerning spiritual things. We need often to be reminded that “the time is short.” “The night cometh when no man can work.” We work better when we realize that the day is slipping away from us.

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### THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

During the Civil War a young man was arrested on the suspicion that he was a spy. In vain he protested his innocence. The soldiers who took him had what seemed to be the best proof of his guilt, so they held him while they awaited the coming of the su-



perior officer before whom he was to be tried. What was their astonishment to find, upon the arrival of their superior, that the young man was not only a loyal soldier, but a personal friend of the officer himself.

“Were you not alarmed at the prospect before you?” they asked of the young man.

“No,” was the reply; “I knew that I was innocent, and that my friend would not allow any harm to come to me. I could literally see him standing between me and danger.”

Thus it is that the pure-hearted man shall see God, not merely in the life that is to come, but in every hour of need he may look up as did Saint Stephen and see God standing beside him as Master and Friend.

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### WHOM RICHES MAKE HAPPY.

I knew a man to whom riches brought happiness. I do not believe he would have been happy without them. When he was a mere boy he had a fine head for business. He was wise, industrious, and had a wonderfully clear financial insight. But he wanted to be a preacher. He tried two years, and then said, “I can’t do that, but I will give the Lord the one talent I have.” So he became a stock-raiser. He was fair, businesslike and painstaking. The result was

that he prospered marvelously. He became noted for the high grade of his stock and for his remarkable sense of honor.

There were temptations, but he stood so firmly by his Christian faith that men never felt that there was anything incongruous about it when he stopped in the midst of a business transaction and talked freely to them of the greater riches. All the while he gave, he gave for Christ's sake. Never a needy soul that came in contact with him went away without realizing that here was a man to love and to honor.

Toilers in hard fields at home and abroad were able to work with better heart because he gave of his substance, though many of them never knew his name. He thought sometimes of his boyish dream of preaching the gospel. Still it seemed to him the greatest thing in the world, but he was happy because he knew that he was doing it. Riches had brought him happiness.

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### HELP OTHERS—AND YOURSELF.

A lad saw a man lifting great, heavy weights. He would lift them and then put them down just where he found them. He did n't seem to be doing anything in particular; so, by and by, the boy asked the man what he was trying to do. He said that lifting would

make him strong. At once there was a question in the lad's mind as to why, while he was at it, he did n't lift something that needed to be lifted. Of course, I need n't remind you that, spiritually, it is lifting that makes us strong. Christian exercise, however, differs from physical athletics in this: The man gets strength when he is not making an effort in his own behalf at all. As a rule, his own uplifting and strength come to him as a surprise.

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### BE DEFINITE.

A certain evangelist, who had a marvelous faculty for drawing audiences, and for holding their attention, was continually puzzled over the paucity of the results of his preaching. The trouble was just here. Instead of throwing all his power into the presentation of one truth, he flashed out one truth after another, till his sermon was nothing more than an entertainment.

Instead of a single powerfully drawn picture, held up until it had burned itself into the consciousness of those that beheld it, there was a sort of stereopticon entertainment, whose rapidly dissolving pictures left only the impression that it had been "very beautiful."

A wicked man, who listened to the preacher, and had been repeatedly moved to tears by the flow of

pathos, was asked by some of his companions one night what he had been crying about.

“That’s the strangest part of it, boys,” he said mysteriously; “I know that I cried like a fool, but after I got out of the house, I studied the matter over, and I could n’t tell for the life of me what it was about.”

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### SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE.

In a poor and remote district of a certain kingdom, the peasants had constructed a rude bridge. They were unskilled, and their materials were poor; still, by means of the bridge, they were able to cross the roaring torrent to the forests beyond, where they went daily to cut timber.

One day the royal messenger came that way to announce to the people that the king, with his attendants, was coming, and would cross the bridge to the territory that lay beyond. “Our poor bridge will be ruined if the great chariot passes over it,” they said, “and we will not be able to build another one.” But they had scarcely done speaking, when a great army of the king’s stonemasons and bridge-builders appeared. The old bridge was taken away and a splendid one, with stone battlements and carefully fitted timbers, took its place. But for the severe test, the weak, un-

certain structure might have remained. So, my brother, do you not see that God blesses you in strengthening you for the trial, rather than in keeping the trial from coming? He has not promised to make the day fit for your strength, but instead your strength for the day.

“I have always prayed that the Lord would spare me that trial,” a young Christian said the other day, speaking of the experience of a friend. “My patience is so small that I am certain I should never be able to stand the test.” You see, she made two mistakes; one in thinking that the Father could so err in judgment or in kindness as to bring together a man and a burden that were not suited to each other; the other in thinking of him as fitting the burden to his children, rather than his children to the burden.

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### “BELONGING TO THE CHURCH.”

In the first place, there are more people who belong to the church than you have any idea of. Statisticians tell us that one-third of our adult population is in the church. But what of the other two-thirds who are not in the church? Why, they belong there. If the church is a divinely provided home for those who would be loyal to the Saviour of the world, then every man, woman and child, who is old enough

to understand the plain commands of the Bible, belongs there.

The wayward son, who leaves his father's house and becomes a wanderer on the face of the earth, may come back and peer in the windows at the brothers and sisters who are there. He may say, "If I were in there, I would be more respectful or devoted than they are." Well, he belongs there, at least; and his father has the same right to his devotion. So, my friend, whatever airs of indifference you may assume, you do belong to Christ's church, and it has the right to ask your whole-hearted support.

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### MOTH CAN NOT CORRUPT.

We wonder a little that the child can take such pride in a soap-bubble, not because the bubble is not beautiful, but because it is so soon destroyed. The artist puts a bubble upon the canvas and we say of his work that it is a great achievement. Yet the canvas will one day fall to pieces. There is just one thing which we may give ourselves that is absolutely imperishable. I have often thought of why it is that fellowship in soul-saving is so much sweeter than fellowship of any other sort. It is not transient. It is hardly possible that when they meet over beyond the river of death, those who are friends because they were of the same

business tastes will have the same things in common. But soul-savers will undoubtedly have something to talk over, since they will find there the treasures for which they toiled.

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### KEEPING UP THE LIGHTS.

One night, in a fearful storm, the great railroad bridge was swept away. The old section boss discovered the fact; but, as the wires were down, he could not communicate with the station-keepers. There was only one thing to do. He must build a fire on the track and keep it burning till after time for the four o'clock express. There were likely to be extra freights, and these must be warned. The storm raged, but for hours the old man stood and fed the fire. Finally he began to realize that his strength was giving away. What if he should drop at his post? Not only would he himself perish, but the fire would die down and there would be nothing to prevent the trains rushing to the wrecked bridge and to certain death. He went to the shanty, and, rousing his son, bade him attend to the fire while he took an enforced rest. For awhile the young man was faithful; but by and by the fire began to die down and he grew sleepy. "I will have plenty of time to replenish it when I hear the rumble of the train," he said, wrapping himself in his

great coat. When he awakened, the express was rushing by, and he knew that many lives would be lost because of his carelessness.

When Jesus was here he said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Now he says to you and me, "Ye are the light of the world." Do n't let your light grow dim, even for a single hour. Some one may go to his death because you did not honor your trust.

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#### A BUSINESS CHRISTIAN.

After a brief business career, which at first promised well, a young man ended in a particularly bad failure.

"The trouble with him was," said an old business man, "that he never knew exactly what he was trying to do. He took the road ostensibly to work up trade for his house, but he planned the trip that he might take in lakes and mountains and all sorts of attractive places. He stopped to visit some old college friends, and never allowed business to interfere with any social pleasures within his reach. The fact was, being a business man was only incidental with him."

The case reminded me of the Christian who made a failure of his Christian profession. He started out to follow Christ, but following Christ was never more



than a side issue with him. It was not that it would have been impossible for him to be a Christian and a business man, or a Christian and an agreeable fellow; the trouble was that he put these latter things first.

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### CONVERTS EXPECTED.

Are you expecting them? You may cast in the line, you may study methods of soul-winning, you may exhort and pray, but are you really expecting results? There are certain conditions that will answer that question more truthfully than it can be answered in words.

If your friend asks you to dine with him and you go around to his house at the appointed hour to find that no provision has been made for you—what then? Why, you will conclude that the invitation was not given in sincerity, and that he did not expect you at all. When C. E. stands for company expected, it means that you have your house swept and garnished and all things in readiness for the expected guest.

It can not mean less in the church. You have invited the stranger, you have put upon your cards and announced "Strangers welcome;" are you ready to receive them?

In some cases I am afraid that expectancy is so slight that if he were to come, the stranger would

find that no one really expected him. Perhaps he would have to stand unwelcomed while you settled it among yourselves whose place it was to speak to him first.

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### STEPPING OVER THINGS.

An office boy, whose duty was partly that of collecting bills, and partly that of taking care of the office, was recently responsible for his own discharge. While he was very zealous about the former tasks, he was extremely careless about the latter. His employer, thinking one day to give him a reminder, placed the empty coal-bucket where it would be in his way as he started on his morning rounds. Coming back, however, the gentleman found the bucket lying on one side, still empty. The boy had solved the question by stepping over the bucket. Collecting bills was certainly not less important than keeping up the fires, but, in passing a duty unfinished, to take up one beyond it, he showed himself to be untrustworthy.

A prominent woman philanthropist tells of how, when she was about to start across the continent on a mission to San Francisco, her baby put its soft little arms about her neck, begging mamma not to go away and leave it again, and how the little one volunteered to get into the little trunk and be very good, if only

she might be allowed to go with her mother. After telling how the child's pleadings wrung her heart, she adds, "But I did not tarry. Duty called me on."

Did it, indeed? Awful and pressing as are the needs of the men she is trying to save, do they call a mother to give over to strangers the duties that belong to motherhood? Is not the woman who does it, however much she may desire to do God's service, rather stepping over an obligation that is most important, because it is first?

Whatever condition deprives the little child of its home life (and there is no home life if there is not a mother in the home) is wrong.

But the illustration is only one of many. How many times have you been tempted to step over the commonplace duty right before you, because there was something beyond it, harder, perchance, yet for this very reason more attractive? You feel more like you deserve a laurel wreath, and your friends are far more likely to vote you one, if you spend your afternoon in climbing tenement-house stairs than if you give it up to making the hours pass more pleasantly to the fretful child or the dull invalid in your own home. You may be able to reach a half-hundred hearts while you are reading papers or delivering addresses at the conventions, but how will you settle it with God about the obligation you assumed when you

took charge of those six boys that were left teacherless in your absence?

God may call you to do something the world calls heroic—to labor in some remote field—but be assured that it is not his voice that calls, so long as it means stepping over that to which you have put your hand and have not finished.

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### A PULPIT ON FIRE.

In an article on how to fill up the pews in our churches, a writer drops the sententious remark that when a pulpit is on fire there will be no lack of people to come to see it burn. The meaning the writer intended to convey was that intense spirituality in the church always attracts. We know that this is true. It is not curiosity alone that fills up our churches when the members are aroused, or, to use a popular phrase, when a revival is in progress.

The statement, though, may have another meaning. It is no evidence that the church is fulfilling its mission when it attracts crowds of people. A house that is being devoured by flames is sure to have plenty of on-lookers. There are pulpits that are being consumed of worldliness and sensationalism which the crowds come to view with the keenest interest. The churches are frequented with very much the same spirit in which

a good many newspaper readers pounce upon a scandal that involves the downfall of those that have sat in high places.

When the church resorts to stage effects, and poses, it may be with the laudable desire of getting people to come to hear the gospel preached. The trouble is that the gospel has to be set aside to make room for these things, and is wholly lost sight of. Its predicament is similar to that of the good mother who resolved to buy sweetmeats with which to induce her children to eat the homely, wholesome fare that they needed, but discovered too late that she had spent all her money for the bribe and had none left with which to buy bread and butter. Those that have seen the Sunday service, the Endeavor Society, and the church prayer-meeting almost deserted, after some special effort in the way of a festival or spectacular diversion, will readily grasp the sad meaning of this illustration. The church has spent all its force before it came to the real issue.

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### THE BRIGHT SIDE.

“Look on the bright side,” may be a wholesome exhortation, but it depends on circumstances. There are individuals who are so determined not to have their pleasure spoiled by the unpleasant things of the

world that they either turn their eyes or pass by on the other side when they know there is a case of distress at hand.

“No, I never visit the sick,” said a young woman. “It makes me feel uncomfortable.” Another announces that she never attends a funeral or goes to the house of mourning, for the same reason. The attitude is an intensely selfish one, and is certainly not becoming to one who professes to be following in the footsteps of the Christ. *He* looked on the dark side of human life. He it was who saw the man blind from his birth, discerned the presence of the cripple, and stopped by the side of the mourning widow of Nain. If looking on the bright side means making the best of our losses and hoping for better things, very well; but God never meant that we should hide our faces from the world’s sorrows.

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#### WHAT YOUR IDLENESS WILL COST.

Your idleness and mine means souls lost throughout eternity. A young man who had just come from Cuba told how there were brought into their camp one day a lot of sick and starving soldiers. There were no nurses to look after them, and so the soldiers were detailed to help give out food, and otherwise minister to the needs of the distressed. The call was n’t

official, so some of the soldiers did n't respond. One of them was lying in his tent asleep, and a comrade went and tried to get him up.

"I'm not coming till I have taken a nap," was the reply. "I guess I need a little rest, and a half hour won't make much difference."

"Maybe it won't make much difference to you," was the reply. "But it will make a difference to the score or more poor fellows who will die for lack of what you might have done for them in that time."

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### SOME OTHER WAY.

(JOHN X. 1.)

Men who take great liberties with the plan of salvation are fond of telling us that it does n't matter how men are saved, so they are brought into the kingdom. Maybe that is true, though the assurance has not been given, except with God's plan; but has it ever occurred to you that there is a good deal of presumption in deliberately planning to accept the most gracious of offers and still to reject the conditions?

Suppose you make a splendid feast and invite me to your home to partake of it. Along with the invitation there are a few instructions. "Come to the main entrance," you say, "present this card, and the footman will admit you to the banqueting-hall." What

if, at the appointed hour for the feast, you should find me trying to force my way into the house through one of the cellar windows? It would not be easy, I think, for me to persuade you that my intentions were honorable ones. Jesus said, "He that . . . climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

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### THE GREAT QUESTION.

"Did you spend much time in discussing how far Cana was from Sychar?" one teacher said to another as they came from the classroom. "I didn't mention it," was the quick reply; "I was too much taken up with the thought of how far some of my scholars were from Jesus Christ."

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### UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

Is it not strange that we need to be urged to do the very things we profess to have adopted for our chief business? Suppose a man answers a farmer's advertisement for a farm-hand. The farmer says, "I want you to plow that field and put in a crop, and I will pay you so much." The young man accepts the offer and ostensibly goes to work. Yet all summer long the farmer and his family have to keep exhorting



the young man to go out and plow. He even employs a man to come once a week and urge the man to plow. Of course, all this is ridiculous; no farmer would tolerate such conduct, and no farm-hand would be so unreasonable as to think that he would; still, the ways of too many of the Lord's so-called servants are not much more consistent. We all know that our preachers have to use the time and strength that ought to be spent in saving sinners, in stirring up the saints and exhorting them to plow.

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### GETTING UNYOKED.

A good many people do; and it has been the problem of the church always why so many who have started well become recreant and cast off the yoke they have assumed. In every case, the trouble is just this—the desire to do things in which we can not ask Christ's help. There is one of two things to be done—subdue the wrong desire or take off the yoke.

A young Christian, who thinks it quite proper for her to amuse herself in the ballroom, at the card-table or at the theater, was disgusted with a preacher who made a practice of going to the play.

“But you are a regular habitue,” we suggested.

“That has nothing to do with it,” was the cool rejoinder. “I'm not yoked to the preacher.”

“Which means, I suppose, that if you were obliged to drag your pastor along with you, you would n’t go to some of these places?”

“Of course not. I think a preacher ought to be—different.”

“And how about taking Christ with you? I believe that you profess to be yoked to him.”

There was an ominous silence. She saw that when she indulged in things which she did not care to see those who made special pretensions at goodness imitate, she could not consistently expect to take Christ with her. She must, for the time being at least, slip off the yoke. It is true she may put it on again. But some day she will not care to go back to it, and the world that encouraged her to do it, will laugh in its sleeve and say: “Another backslider!”

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### DOCTORS AND REVIVALS.

A critic raised a protest against the revival, on the ground that it indicates an unnatural state of affairs somewhere. You are right, brother. We might add that we are forced to a similar conclusion concerning the state of affairs in your home, when we see the doctor’s buggy stopping before your door.

Of course, it would be better if all the Christians who have been made spiritually whole would remain

that way. It would be less expensive if sinners could always be brought around without a special course of treatment, just as it would be better if our throats and lungs and stomachs never needed to be readjusted. However, since we must deal with the real rather than the ideal, we are not likely to be in a position to dispense with either the doctor or the revival this side of millennium.

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### BABYLON AND JERUSALEM.

That the Jews learned at least one lesson from their captivity in Babylon can not be disputed. Never again did they cast their eyes longingly after strange gods. For all that, the lesson was dearly bought. In the day when liberty to the captives was proclaimed, comparatively few of the people responded. While many returned to Jerusalem, many more lingered in Babylon. Some of them, no doubt, were wedded to the ways of Babylon and had no desire to leave it. Others, perhaps, were so bound down by domestic and business relations that they could not get away.

The same things are true of those who are carried off into the Babylon of sin. A few return to the Jerusalem of peace, having profited by their bitter experience, but many more never come back at all. They love the ways of sin, or they have become so anchored

to its institutions that escape has become well-nigh impossible. Let the young man who counts upon taking his "fling" among the attractions of a sensual life be warned. He may be among those who will never return to the city of peace.

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### THE PRICE OF SUCCESS.

A tersely expressed truth was the answer of the business man when his friend asked him if he had met with success in business. "Met with it?" he rejoined; "I should say I have n't. All the success I've attained I had to run after."

Quite the same is true in our spiritual lives. Men and women do not meet the ideal casually. Neither do they become saints while they are asleep.

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### HOW THEY BROUGHT A REVIVAL.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it," the preacher read.

Well, surely they hoped that this might be the case at Broken Ridge. It had been long enough since

there had been anything like a revival. But the preacher was not talking about revivals. He was speaking of the old flour-mill in the valley below, and of the thoughts that had come to him yesterday as he passed it on his way to the Ridge.

A picture was before him, and he seemed to see an almost endless train of men and women moving through the low, broad doorways. It was made up of those that through almost half a century had come here and gone away loaded with that which, so far as the natural world was concerned, was the most precious thing in the world, since it meant bread. But there was another picture. Before these went out laden with bread, there had been a procession of ruddy farmers, who poured into the great hoppers something that looked like gold. Some years they had poured in with lavish hands, and there had been bread in abundance; again, the harvest had been meager, and the old mill had given out a scanty supply. As he came in sight of the meeting-house another thought had come to him. God's people were asking for bread. They wanted more fervency and zeal in the church; they wanted to see sinners brought into the kingdom, and surely God wanted to do these things for them, but had they brought the tithes into the storehouse?

A strange thrill went through the house. The question seemed so intensely personal, that men and

women moved uneasily as though some were about to hold up their hidden faults to the gaze of others.

At the mention of the word "tithes," Deacon Limber's eye had brightened. The deacon was known to be a "close" man, yet nobody could ever say that he shirked his honest obligations. Especially was this true in what he considered his debts to the church. He wondered just now how Asa Lemon felt. He had refused to pay anything toward the protracted meeting. He did n't pay more than seventy-five cents in a whole year to the support of the church, the deacon averred. Now, *he*—but the deacon progressed no further in his self-congratulations.

"Your tithe is not simply the money you owe God," the preacher was saying, "though that is a part of it. It is everything he asks of you, and everything you promised to give him when you confessed him before men. Do n't ask him to pour out a blessing while you say 'no' to him. He can't do it. The poor and the hungry are here in his stead. Have you given them the loving ministry he asks of you?"

Deacon Limber started. Some one had told him yesterday that Bidy McMorrow and her children were seeing hard lines. He had said that it ought to be a lesson to her. But now it looked different to him. Bidy never knew this. She only knew that

on that cold Sunday afternoon food and warmth came into her hut.

But to go back to the sermon: God had asked for their time. Were not some of them spending six days working for self, and one in idleness, while the Lord's work languished? The schoolteacher bowed her head. What was it she had said when they asked her to lend a hand to the discouraged little Sunday-school? No time!

God had bidden them to give cheer and kind words to one another. How dared they ask for spiritual blessings when their hearts were hard toward each other? A woman over by the stove turned a startled look toward a woman in the third row. No one else saw the look that met her own, and only a few saw the two, when meeting was out, meet each other in a clumsy embrace.

"Sairy, I'm sorry I said it," one of them sobbed.

"No, Lizzie, I'm the one that's most to blame," was the whispered response.

At the close of the sermon Sunday night three young people confessed Christ. "It was powerful preaching," some one said, a month later, "to start the revival the very first night."

"It was n't the preaching that started me," John Limber declared. "It was pa. I never thought he believed in his own religion until last night. But

when he and Sairy Morse and Miss Long and the schoolteacher talked and prayed the way they did, I felt like I wanted to get into it, too."

"Anyway, Bro. Bixley must be a masterful hand at movin' sinners," some one said to the deacon, as he finished reading the report of the Broken Ridge meeting.

"Well, yes," the deacon returned cautiously. "But I say his forte is movin' the saints; which we've found out here at Broken Ridge," he added, after a minute's reflection, "is about the surest way to move sinners."

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### WHAT WE DESERVE.

I wonder what an employer would think of one of the men in his service if he would assume the same attitude concerning his work that we do about our professed service of the Lord? Can you imagine a book-keeper saying that he thinks his employer ought to show him special favors because he has been at his post every day for a week? We say, certainly not; that is simply a part of what he agreed to do when he took the place. Indeed, he could n't expect to keep the situation if he failed to do these things. Not long ago I heard a man say that he served the Lord faithfully for three years, but he found that he did n't



get anything for it. His neighbor, who made no pretensions at being a Christian, had better luck in business and had prospered generally more than he had. I learned afterward that his "service" had consisted in going to church when everything was favorable. Well, I think that, if the Lord saw enough in his Christianity to entitle him to the hope and privileges of a Christian, he ought to have been humbly thankful; instead of asking for a premium.

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### HE NEEDS YOU.

While salvation is certainly a personal matter, men sometimes forget that there is God as well as themselves to be taken into consideration.

A young man had been repeatedly urged to accept Christ.

"I intend to come sometime," was his invariable reply, "but not just now."

Back in the old home he had left was a mother whom he loved with a most ardent devotion. One day the friend who had so often talked with him about his soul, said: "I wonder what you would do if a telegram should be brought to you, saying, '*Come home! Your mother needs you!*' Would you say, 'Well, I will go sometime,' and put the telegram in

your pocket and go about your business just as you did before?"

"No," the young man answered, emphatically; "I would go to her as fast as the train could carry me."

"And yet," his friend went on, "I have come to you and brought you a message not less tender and urgent. It says, '*Son, come home. Your Father needs you.*' How have you treated it?"

The arrow struck home. The young man saw that he had been treating his best friend with disrespect and ingratitude, and immediately answered the call.

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### NOT FASTENED IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

An old woman, who went away from home every day, was very much annoyed by the disobedience of her children. Every day she told them not to go into the garden to play, and every day they disobeyed her. At last she brought a locksmith, who put iron staples on their shoes so they could be fastened to the floor with a padlock. This the mother did and took the key with her. When she returned she found the shoes still fastened to the floor, but the children had slipped out of them. The fastenings were all right, but they should have been on the children instead of on the shoes. The story is a pretty good illustration of what

we often see. People join the church and sign pledges, and we think they are established. By and by, though, some temptation comes along and they break away because it was not their hearts that were anchored.

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### PALACES OR PIG-PENS.

A man who had been very unfortunate as to his temporal concerns took his family and sought out a solitary place in a rocky, barren country, and there builded him a rude hut. Out of the stone that abounded in the region, he constructed a shelter for the few swine he had brought with him. Here for many years the family eked out a scanty existence. Life was poor and hard, and yet they lived. One day a stranger came to his door and inquired concerning the stone he had used in making shelter for his animals. The old man told the stranger where he had obtained the stone, adding that it was of poor quality and had crumbled under the rough usage to which it had been put, but that it had answered the purpose. Imagine his surprise when he was informed that the stone he had put to such base use was a rare kind of marble that was worth almost its weight in gold. He had made a shelter for swine out of that which would have provided him with a palace. God has put

into the hands of every man that out of which he may provide for himself a royal crown and a mansion in the world to come. Too many, alas! use their riches of talent and treasure to shelter and feed the baser part of their being. Paul says, "It doth not appear what we shall be," neither doth it appear what we might be, if we would invest ourselves wisely.

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### HAVE A PURPOSE.

A good deal is gained by the young Christian when he makes up his mind as to what his business really is in the world. A queer genius in a back country district invented a wonderful machine. It generated a good deal of power, and seemed to be capable of accomplishing something, if only it were put to the task. "What is it for?" some one asked the inventor.

"Well," was the reply, "it might be used for a sausage-grinder, or it might do to hitch to a sewing-machine. Then I had thought some of using it for a printing-press." Because he never thoroughly made up his mind on this point, the wonderful machine was allowed to stand idle.

A good many really forceful people are lost to the church in pretty much the same way. They think they might be useful in this capacity, or perhaps in that. Then they have had an idea of devoting themselves

to something else. The consequence is that they have done nothing.

We are disposed to be hard on the rich man who had more of this world's goods than he knew what to do with, and sat down to devise some new way of disposing of them. I am afraid that a good many of us who have not an overplus of this sort of wealth are equally guilty. The young person who looks for something by which he may "kill time" needs to remember that he has at command that by which he might bless many who need his ministry.

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*"IF I WERE A CHRISTIAN."*

"If I were a Christian," a man was saying the other day, as he viewed critically a faulty church-member, "I would certainly try to live up to my obligations."

"If you would live up to your obligations, you would be a Christian," was the somewhat startling reply. The average man who holds himself aloof from the church seems to forget that the same God who created the Christian created him also, and that, in the strictest sense, God is the Father of them both. The fact that he goes into an alien land to live out his life, and deprives his Father of his service altogether, does not free him from accountability. It does not

even warrant him in making a favorable comparison between himself and the son who remains at home and renders imperfect service to the one to whom he owes so much.

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### PREVENTION AND CURE.

Some one wrote to the household editor of a certain magazine for a remedy for mosquito bites. I don't remember how the wise editor replied to the inquirer, but I think if I had been answering him, I should have suggested wire screens and a good mosquito bar. Cure up the wounded, of course, but see to it that the carnage stops right where it is. Preventive remedies are the very best kind, and are always the cheapest. Keeley cures and inebriate asylums are all right for those who have been victimized, but it is a poor way if we expect to keep it up.

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### HE SHALL HAVE THEM IN DERISION.

Such instances as the following give one a clearer insight into the meaning of the Psalmist when he says, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision."

A young college student who had taken up Ingersollism, because it seemed to fit his overwhelming sense

of self-importance, came home full of the desire to enlighten his less progressive relatives.

“What would you say,” he began impressively, addressing his brother, “if I should tell you that in twenty minutes I can produce arguments that will utterly annihilate the religion of Jesus Christ?”

“About the same thing,” rejoined his brother, “that I should say if I were to see a gnat crawling up the side of Mount Washington, threatening to smash the whole thing with its weight.”

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### THE MODERN PRODIGAL.

We can only conjecture what the plans of the young man in the parable were when he demanded his portion. He wanted to have a “good time,” we are certain of that. He wanted to live a life of sensual pleasure—to throw off everything like restraint. Somehow, though, he could not bring himself to do it under the eye of his father, and in the very shadow of the old home. There was only one way. He must put distance between himself and these things. Many a one has had the same experience.

“There were a good many things I wanted to do,” said a repentant profligate, telling his experience, “but because the thought of my mother’s teachings would come back to me, I could not quite bring myself to

do them. I found that I would have to get away from the memory of her words and prayers before I could really enjoy my freedom." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Paul asks; then he goes on to enumerate a number of things that can not do it. There is one agency, however, that can—the man himself. Whoever finds himself a great way off from his Father's house, may well reflect that it was his own feet that took him there.

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#### "IN THE BEGINNING GOD."

Does one duty ever take the precedence over another? It is the old question over which the rabbis disputed. "Which is the first and great commandment?" The question was, after all, a legitimate one. Even among unmistakable obligations there are those which have the right to rank first.

The man who builds a house can not leave out the framework, but before that must come the foundation. Roof and framework and foundation are all essential, but imagine the result if he attempts to reverse the order and begin with the roof! Jesus did not condemn thrift and carefulness about material concerns, but he did say, "Seek first the kingdom of God." Some one has noted it as a significant fact that the first four words of the Bible,



taken alone, set forth the same thing. "In the beginning God." When a man puts God first in considering that which claims his time and talent, and in mapping out his plans, he will not be unfaithful to any other obligation.

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### TO LET.

A gentleman going down the street stopped and looked for a moment at an empty house, then, stepping into the corner; asked: "Can you tell me what that house rents for?" "Why, I did n't know it was for rent," was the reply. "Well, maybe it is n't," said the first speaker, "but when a house is empty, one always takes it for granted that it is to let." There was something in this remark to moralize over. It is not only empty houses, but empty lives, that wear in themselves the announcement that they are to let. The busy life is the surest safeguard against intruders. Satan, of all others, never waits to be invited into the unoccupied heart.

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### MISUNDERSTANDING GOD.

A young man said, "Mother died when we children were small, and after awhile father brought home a new wife. We never took the trouble to find out what she was like; we had made up our minds that

we hated her. We treated her badly. Once in awhile father found it out, then he punished us, and so severely that we were sorry for what we had done and resolved to behave ourselves. But we never knew what repentance meant till we saw her real, noble self and learned to love her. That was repentance that cut to the quick." It is so with repentance toward God. We see his great love and his true attitude towards us, and our sins grow black as night beside them. We are ready to fall at the feet of Jesus and cry, "What must I do to be saved?"

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#### WHEN AN EXCUSE DOES NOT EXCUSE.

One of the dangerous things about many of the excuses men make for staying out of the kingdom is that, under some circumstances, they might be reasonable enough. In the parable of the great supper, the man who had bought land was only acting the part of the prudent man when he went out to look at it. That is, he would have been if there had been nothing more important to take the precedence. The importance of all things must be considered relatively. Ordinarily, it is a profitable thing for you to take a brisk morning walk, but you would be looked upon as insane if you should start out upon one when your house was on fire. The Lord never discouraged

men from being prudent and energetic about their business affairs, but we have the injunction, "Seek first the kingdom of God." The land the man had bought could wait; the feast could not.

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"THE VOICE."

From the brief sketch we have of the *personnel* of John, it would seem that, in itself, it was enough to arrest and hold the attention of the people. Yet so completely does the message overshadow the man, that he is referred to as a voice.

This has been, in a measure, true of every man who has been the bearer of the King's message. When people go away to talk of the fine appearance of the preacher, his graceful gestures, and his perfect enunciation, we may be pretty certain that the message itself was a failure.

It is not always an easy thing to do—indeed, it requires a good deal of grace to make us willing to have people forget us, if they but remember what we said. Too many who profess to be working for Christ count it no small part of success that people praise *them*.

Not long ago a man who had really done a good work in the way of rescuing boys and girls, and putting them in a better way, said complainingly: "Oh,

yes; they are doing very well, but they forget that they owe it all to me." Perhaps this was only natural, but he had been to these young people a warning voice, and the voice had fulfilled its purpose. Better, fellow Christian, be simply a warning voice to some soul, and with no personality at all, than to be the center of a much-praised spectacular performance.

The things we have lived for,  
 Let them be our story—  
 We ourselves but remembered  
 By what we have done.

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#### A NEGLECTED DUTY.

Word came to the school that the father of one of the students was dead. "Well, no fellow ever had a better father," one of the boys remarked. "You know I lived not far from him, and it seemed that Mr. Bly was continually planning some new way to help Fred or give him pleasure. I do n't think I ever saw such love or self-sacrifice." At this all were surprised. "I supposed his people were the sort that it was n't pleasant to think or talk about," some one else remarked. "I can't think of him having had such a good father, when he never said a word to any one about it." Of course, that conclusion was natural. It was hard to believe in the goodness of a father when the son never spoke in his favor. I have won-

dered if we have not made a similar impression on the minds of some who did not know our heavenly Father. Oh that the world should ever have reason to say of you or me, "I never heard him speak of what his Father has done for him"!

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### ABUNDANT LIFE.

One of the sweetest assurances that Jesus ever gave to his followers was that he had come not merely to save men, not merely that they should have life, but that they might have it more abundantly. Look upon some narrow, self-centered life, where the first question is always that of self-gratification, and then look at the life that is pouring itself out on the world, a stream of blessing, and you will begin to catch his meaning: "He that saveth his life shall lose it." Our Lord came to teach us a more excellent way. The saving soul can never know the meaning of abundant life.

Hear the parable of the vine-dresser. There is a vine, living and bearing leaves enough to feed its body, and that is all. There are no clusters of fruit to bless those who come to it. The vine-dresser looks at it. It is alive, but that does not satisfy him. Of what profit is it that the vine be kept alive, if it is to live on in this meager fashion? See, he begins to cut away

here a limb and there a limb; and when he leaves the vine it seems to be impoverished indeed from having given up so much of itself. But let us return at the time of harvest. Look at the weight of great, purple clusters under which it bends. "Ah! this is life," we say; "it is abundant life."

O men, women, learn this lesson. When the Master of the vineyard comes down to take away that which you cherish as a part of yourself, he has come not in anger: he has come that you may have life, and that you may have it more abundantly.

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### THE WORK WE LEAVE BEHIND.

We are told of Dorcas that, because of her deeds of charity, they mourned for her. They stood by, not merely weeping, but showing the garments that she had made. Have you thought that the work into which many of us put our best time and strength could hardly be exhibited to our credit after we were gone? What if it had been Battenberg doilies, or hand-painted throws for her drawing-room, to which Dorcas had devoted her spare time? However artistic they might have been, they would have seemed tawdry and trifling in such an hour. The homely garments were beautiful because of the beautiful spirit of self-denial which had been wrought into them. We sometimes say that

we wish to be remembered by what we have done. The nearest approach to immortality that can be known in this changing world is impressing one's self upon the hearts of our brethren.

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### THE LORD'S DAY OR OURS?

A good many people have been inclined to excuse themselves from attending religious service on the Lord's Day on the plea that six days of the week are given to work, and they must have some time for themselves. Here is another view of the matter that is worth considering:

"I should n't think you would feel like going out to church, even Sundays, now that you have to work so hard all week," some one said to a young woman.

"Oh," was the reply, "I feel under more obligation than ever. If I can spend six days, and so much time and strength, working for my own comfort, I'd be ashamed not to give a part of one day to the Lord."

Not very many of those who appropriate the Lord's Day for other than its rightful uses, spend it in a way that elevates. Facts demonstrate that a secular Sunday is a thing to be dreaded. In any locality where religion does not prevail it is a day fruitful in riots. A woman whose husband was making a strug-

gle against the drink habit, said: "I think we could pull Jim through, if it was n't for Sunday." We are frequently told that the church is too expensive an institution for the working people, hence they turn elsewhere. It would be interesting to know how much a single Sunday's amusements cost in dollars and cents, to say nothing of the costs that can not be counted.

One of the simplest, surest ways of settling the question as to how we shall spend the first day of the week—whether in our own pursuits or of our Master's—is to consider the meaning of its name. If I tell you that a certain building is Mr. Smith's, I will scarcely need to add that you are therefore not at liberty to go in and appropriate it to your own private use. So the fact that this day, divinely designated the Lord's, ought to stop all discussion as to how we may spend it. We have no right to take possession of it for our worldly pursuits or pleasures.

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### COWARDLY COURTESY.

At a banquet a young man who had been thus far a Christian and an avowed total-abstainer, allowed his wine-glass to be filled, and even went so far as to touch it to his lips. "Of course, I disapproved of the wine," he said, "but I thought it would be boorish for



me to intrude my personal opinions on the rest by an absolute refusal."

"My boy, carry that principle into all the walks of life and you will make a successful failure of yourself," was the reply. "However, you do not believe in it yourself. The other night in a political meeting, when some one tried to pin upon your coat the badge of the candidate you oppose, you said boldly enough, 'That is against my principles.' There is quite as much honor in having moral backbone as in displaying the same quality in politics."

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### THE PARABLE OF THE OIL-MILL.

Hear the parable of the oil-mill. There was a certain man who had a great possession; and, when he would find a profitable place upon which to bestow it, a friend said to him, "Behold, there is for sale in a certain city an oil-mill. Now, this mill is fitted out with the finest machinery, and is capable of bringing large returns to its owner." So the man sent and bought the oil-mill, and, after many days, he journeyed to the place where it was. When he came to the place he found the mill even as his friend had said.

"Surely," he said, "this mill must be getting me much gain." One thing he saw, however, that amazed him sorely. Nearly all of the great wheels and belts

were idle. In one corner of the mill a part of the machinery was in motion.

"How is this," he said to the overseer, "that my mill is yielding me no return?"

"Not so," replied the man, showing a small cruse of oil. "The mill is doing well indeed, since it turns out every day enough to keep its machinery well oiled."

Then was the owner of the mill wroth, and said, "Of what advantage is it to me that I have invested my money in this thing? If it is to do no more than to keep itself whole, it might as well be burned to the ground and its place given to another."

So is he who is satisfied with using the grace of God to keep himself pure and regards not others.

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### A DOUBLE REWARD.

A gentleman who was working in a factory as shipping clerk, found that his salary was hardly sufficient to keep his family. "My health, too, seemed to be failing," he said, "and I knew that if I were to be taken sick my family would suffer. I gave up my flat near the factory and took a little house near the edge of the town. There was plenty of ground, and I thought that, by working at odd times, I might raise enough to provide in part for our necessities. The result was that I raised potatoes enough to supply us

all winter. That was n't all. The exercise made a new man of me."

I do n't believe we ought to go into the business of seeking souls for our own sakes. Indeed, such a thing is impossible, but there is a reward that we reap in our own selves.

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### LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.

"He must have been looking for trouble," a young man said not long ago when the fact was mentioned that the good Samaritan seemed to have been so well equipped for taking care of the wounded traveler. Whether he can be said to have been actually looking for trouble, this much we know—he was ready for it.

There is a wholesome lesson to be found here. A fund of sympathy is a good thing, but there are cases where something else is needed. The Samaritan might have felt very sorry for the unfortunate man, and not have been able to help him.

"I never know what to do for any one who is sick or in trouble," a lady said. She had never tried to learn. She might have carried oil and wine along the way with her, but she had never taken the trouble to thus equip herself. Another confesses that, while she is often deeply concerned about her unsaved acquaintances, she does not know enough about the

Bible to attempt to talk with them. The man who realizes God's purpose in his creation looks for trouble to the end that he may relieve it. He not only looks for it, but he makes himself ready to meet it.

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### THE COSTLINESS OF SYMPATHY.

One of the very common fallacies is that sympathy is a very cheap commodity, that it may be bestowed in place of something more tangible. Smooth words may serve this purpose, but genuine sympathy, never. When we feel the need of others most deeply, we are least likely to be assuring them of our sympathy. It is because men have possessed the genuine sympathy for humanity that they have placed themselves and their possessions upon the altar. "Your husband is a man of large sympathies," some one said to a lady recently. "Yes," was the curt reply, "and they have cost him the price of a farm since I have known him."

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### IT WILL HOLD YOU FAST.

A company of fugitives besought the aid of a guide to pilot them through a dark and lonely cavern, by which alone they could reach a place of safety from their enemies. "You must lay aside your baggage," said the guide. "No man can carry anything with

him through the narrow gate." At first they demurred. One had this treasure, another that, which it seemed impossible to relinquish. By and by, however, they agreed to comply with the requirements. One alone clung secretly to a bag of gold. As it was dark when they set out, he tarried a little behind the rest and secreted the treasure in the folds of his robe. When at dawn they reached the place of safety, the man was missing. In trying to creep through a narrow pass, his gold had wedged him fast, and he had fallen a prey to his pursuers. So it is with those who would find safety in the kingdom and yet can not make up their minds to relinquish the world. The treasure sooner or later holds them back and they fall a prey to the enemy of souls.

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### KNOWING HIS VOICE.

One night, in a river town in southern Ohio, there was a fearful storm, which suddenly raised the river and sent a flood sweeping over the town. It was at the hour when the people were returning from the Sunday evening service. Friends were separated in the darkness and a number of lives were lost. A little girl, who had become separated from her friends, was saved in a way that seemed well-nigh miraculous. Her father, who had gone in search of her, wandered

about, calling her, with little hope of making himself heard, even if she were near. Suddenly he felt her little hands clasping his.

"I heard him calling, 'Come this way! I am here!'" she said afterward, when questioned about the matter.

"But how did you know it was your father calling you?" some one asked.

"How did I know?" she returned, wonderingly. "I think I ought to know my father's voice. I've been with him enough."

The child's reason was certainly sufficient. It was only by association that she could have become so familiar with his tone that she would know it even when she could not see. Jesus said of his sheep, "They know my voice." Those who know his voice in the midst of the world's distracting turmoil are those who have been much with him.

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#### A NECESSARY CHOICE.

A gentleman tells of having overheard this conversation between a lady and her four-year-old son: "Now, Robert," she was saying, "you can have either the wheel or the new suit. Do you want the suit?" The boy nodded his head very emphatically. "And the wheel, too," he added. "Oh, but you can have

only one," the mother answered; "which do you want?" "Both," the child persisted. When he left, she was still trying to impress upon the boy that it must be the wheel *or* the suit, not both. I am sure that many of us are equally unreasonable. God asks which we will have, earthly treasures or heavenly, and we answer, "Both." We are appealed to as to whether we will serve God or mammon, and we try to get on good terms with God *and* mammon.

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### TRIFLERS.

One of the sore trials that sometimes come to the Christian worker is the fact that men so often busy themselves with trifles when weighty matters ought to claim their attention. A preacher, who had been pouring his very soul into an exhortation to men to seek higher and better things, referred, by way of illustration, to the fact that some plants thrive better in the shadow than in the sunlight. At the close of the service a lady came to him and told him that she was so glad that she had heard him. The heart of the almost discouraged preacher revived. Imagine his feelings, however, when she went on to say, "I never knew till to-day what was the matter with my fuchsia. I shall go home and put it in a shady place." In this trial, however, the servant is not above his Lord.

Once, when Christ had been speaking to the multitudes upon the high theme of prayer, a man pushed his way to the front and asked Christ to help him get some money that was coming to him.

Sometimes people have so low a conception of the work of the preacher that they would have him leave his work to settle neighborhood quarrels. Men neglect priceless things and devote themselves to trifles, because they have a mistaken idea of values.

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### THE STILL WATERS.

“No, I can’t honestly say that I enjoy my religion,” a lady said not long ago. “Of course, I feel more comfortable and secure belonging to the church than I should if I were out of it; but as for peace, I do n’t see but that I am as full of worry and discontent as I was before.”

“Some of us do n’t take the trouble to find the paths of peace,” her friend returned gently. “We do n’t read the Word as earnestly as we should; and even when we do know, we do n’t try to walk where He would have us go.” The other looked mystified.

“Oh, well, I do n’t profess to be a saint,” she said; “I am too busy to spend so much time over the Bible.” There are too many Christians like that. They would like to find the green pastures and the still waters,



but they want to find them along the worldly, selfish ways they have chosen for themselves. When David speaks of the still waters, he says, "He leadeth me beside the still waters." Only those who let the Lord lead can expect to find them.

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### FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

A visitor, passing through a certain department of a large shop, noticed a set of regulations written on a blackboard. He also noticed that, in several particulars, every man in the shop was disregarding them. He questioned the foreman concerning the matter. At first the man was reluctant about answering him. Finally he said, "Those rules were written by one of the firm. He has neither wisdom nor judgment. If we should follow his directions, we would ruin a good part of the work." The men took their own way because they lacked faith in their commander. However else we may characterize it, failure to obey is simply lack of faith.

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### THE COST OF NEGLIGENCE.

An orange-grower, showing a visitor through his groves, pointed out several trees which, he said, were unprofitable, because they bore only an inferior, bitter kind of fruit. He gave as a reason for this that they

had been neglected for a long while after planting, and expressed his purpose of uprooting them, and putting the ground to a better use.

“But couldn’t they be grafted?” the visitor questioned.

“Oh, yes,” was the reply, “but it will pay better to plant new ones.”

I wonder how long it will take us to realize that the same rule holds good in dealing with individuals. There is no mistake quite so costly as that of neglecting the boys and girls, with the idea that it is only work among the older people that counts.

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### CHILDISH THINGS.

Jesus once told the captious, fault-finding Jews that they were like foolish children, demanding always the opposite to what they received. Alas that their tribe has in no way decreased! We find them standing outside the church, stubbornly refusing all entreaty to come inside. The church is too narrow. There is too much that is puritanic and rigid. And sometimes the church, like a foolishly indulgent parent, has attempted to make things over to their liking, and has laid aside her heavenly garments for those of a more worldly cut, to but discover that the objectors have changed their minds. What use have

they for the church when Christians are no better than other people!

But not all the pouting, whining children are on the outside. There are too many who have a name to have become men in Christ, who give the church no end of trouble with their ill tempers and their whimsical ways.

You remember the child who always withdrew from the game the moment some one else was given the lead? Well, she is grown up now. Indeed, she has been "grown up" these many years, but she has n't put off her childish way. She is now one of the most sacrificing persons I ever knew. I was about to say self-sacrificing, but, come to think of it, that is one of the things she has n't sacrificed. It is true that she is willing to give up her time and physical comfort to an extent that is a rebuke to the ease-loving souls in the church. When she had charge of the mission work down in the slums, her devotion was unparalleled, but when some one else took the prominent place her interest flickered out. Then, for awhile she was president of the Woman's Missionary Society, and her zeal caused some people to say that she was going daft. But, of course, she could not hold the office forever, and when she dropped to the place of a plain member, that was the last we heard of her on the subject of missions.

Passing a group of children the other day, I heard one of them say, "I won't play at all if I can't be 'it'." That is just the trouble with our friend. We have found that no matter what is to be undertaken, if she can't be "it" she will have none of it.

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### WORTHY OF THE COST.

What is it that the church has been bidden to carry into all the world? Is it something sufficiently precious to warrant the risk and expenditure? Suppose that to-night, in the still hours, some one comes knocking at your door. With difficulty you rouse yourself, and, going to the window, look out. A woman is standing at the door.

"What do you want?" you question impatiently.

"Oh," she replies, "I want you to carry this package to a friend of mine, who lives over on the other side of the town."

"What! at this hour?" you answer. "There is no light and an awful storm is raging. What is in the package, that I should brave such dangers in order to deliver it?"

"Well," she answers, reluctantly, "it is a bouquet—"

You do not wait for her to finish. Your indignation is kindled, and you are ready to have the woman ar-

rested on a charge of lunacy. Suppose, on the other hand, she comes to ask you to carry some sovereign remedy to a dying man? Her plea, instead of rousing your indignation, will stir you to the best that there is in you. The storm and the darkness and the danger will count for nothing, when you are a bearer of that which means life to another. Brethren, when the church realizes that men without Christ are lost, and that the gospel has power to save and redeem them, it will need no more bugle-blasts to arouse it to its duty and to its opportunity.

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### TURNING IT INTO MONEY.

(MARK XIV. 4, 5.)

The fabled stone that had power to turn everything into gold—what a blessed thing that it is only fabled! Imagine the stone in the hands of some men. Precious as is the glittering substance, we can readily see that there are many things the place of which it could not fill. There are men in the world to-day who would, if they could, turn not only all material but also all spiritual things into money.

There is a man who is using some splendid endowment—his eloquent tongue, his pen, his social gifts—in an unselfish way. He is pouring them out as a love offering upon the world. Some sordid-minded

Judas is sure to look upon his gift and exclaim, "This might have been sold!" Yes, so it might. But this by no means proves that he has the right to sell it. In a certain section where the farms are uncommonly fertile, the people are stunted and inferior in appearance. A traveler, noting this, inquired as to the reason.

"They are a miserable, undersized set because they sell everything that can possibly be turned into money and live on the refuse," was the reply. The Christian who turns every available power into money will find that he has done so to the detriment of his own spiritual self.

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### THEY THAT ARE SICK.

"I wish you would go with me to see my physician," a lady said to a friend who seemed to be in declining health. "I am certain that he could cure you if you would go at once."

"Wait till I feel better, and I will go with you," returned the invalid, looking up with a wan smile.

"But I said a physician," the friend explained, somewhat impatiently. "It is because you are sick that I wanted you to go to him."

The invalid only shook her head. "I believe all you say about him," she said, "but I want to get my

system toned up a little before I go to him. I do n't think he can do anything for me till I am stronger."

It is not difficult for us to see the folly of such an answer. The same thing is not always so plain to us when sick souls are to be brought to the great Physician.

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### INVITING TEMPTATION.

A young man, who had hitherto borne a good reputation, was arrested on the charge of being implicated in an extensive robbery. The trial developed the fact that he had been a tool in the hands of others, and that his part in the matter had been that of showing the men the places where they were likely to get the largest returns. The judge was at first disposed to believe the young man's statement that he had never before stepped aside from the path of rectitude. However, his suspicions were aroused by the fact that the boy had been singled out from among all his associates and approached with the proposal that he take part in the robbery.

"A young man who received such a proposal had done something to invite it," the judge declared. Subsequent developments proved that he was right. Those who asked his aid would not have dared to do so if they had not believed that he was for sale. While it is

true that all men must meet temptation, it is not a favorable omen when evil-doers make bold to ask us to join them in their deeds. We may be above that which they would have us do, but we have at least not kept our colors where they ought to be.

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### MISSIONARY SUBMISSION.

A young woman, who was anxious to go to the foreign field, was hindered from carrying out her desires. She was listless and indifferent concerning the work near at hand, and all effort to enlist her in it was in vain. "I consecrated everything to the missionary work," she said, "and will never be able to care for anything else." That was not consecration. It was stubborn willfulness. There is an utter absence of the "missionary spirit" in the heart that can not be enlisted in missionary work that lies outside of the realm of its special plans.

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### OUR ADVOCATE.

Two men, stopping over night in a little village in the Orient, unintentionally violated some tradition and were placed under arrest. One of them was badly frightened. The other took the matter very calmly. "Why are you not afraid to be brought before the



king?" questioned the first, somewhat impatiently. "You are as much an offender as I am."

"Yes, but I have a friend in court," was the reply. "He is all-powerful with the king, and he will speak for me."

Here do we behold the man who has Christ for his advocate and the man who has not. While the Christian is not exempt from danger, he has a Friend in court who will not fail him in his hour of need.

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### WILL GOD ROB MAN?

You mean, "Will a man rob God?" you say. No. I do not mean anything of the kind. We all know that men do rob him. It is n't worth while to raise that question. But the other one? Ah! we are not such a unit on that subject. The average man who is not a Christian refuses to put himself into the hands of the Almighty because he believes that all God wants is a chance to rob him of everything that goes to make life worth living. Brother, God does n't ask you to surrender one of your noble powers; it is only the devil who ever asks that. What the Lord does ask of you is that you let him use them.

In a certain family that traces its lineage back to the days of the pilgrims, there is an heirloom that no amount of money could buy. It is a lantern of the

most primitive pattern, and, to the casual observer, would seem to be of little value. Let me tell you the secret of its worth. During the war of the Revolution it was borrowed by one of the men who had much to do with the winning of independence. When he returned the lantern it showed signs of hard usage, but it had been made forever glorious by the man who had made use of it. So it is with the powers that we loan to God. They may become worn in his service, but they will be forever after glorious because he used them.

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### LOVE'S OFFERING.

Love always offers something that is a part of itself. Suppose your friend comes into your home just as you are ready to dine; you go to the corner bakery and buy him a box of tempting things to eat, and, leaving them with him, go into the dining-room, shut the door behind you and sit down to your dinner. You may have provided handsomely for your friend, but the chances are that you have wounded him by shutting him out from your fellowship. You have been willing to give him something, but you have refused to share your own personal pleasures with him.

It was said of a multimillionaire who died the other day, that while he lived a sensual life and re-

sented all efforts to enlist him in the service of God, he gave now and then large sums to religious enterprises. Whatever may have been the motives that prompted the gifts, we can not attribute them to the impulse of a loving heart. What God asks of you is not some splendid gift, but to be a sharer in your life, whatever that may mean.

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### WHY YOU ARE YOURSELF.

He was not given to finding fault with fate, but that day the young man had come home from a great meeting thoroughly sick at heart. He had been measuring up his opportunities alongside of those of the men he had met, and found it hard to keep back the bitter question as to why God had so meagerly endowed him. Half unconsciously, he fell to watching a mother and her children who were in the yard just across the way. The children were helping to carry sundry packages from the house out of which they were moving to the new one a little way up the street. The boy had been entrusted with only a tiny box. He seemed to be grieved over the fact, and was looking with wistful eyes at the packages carried by the older children, as he asked why she had given him so little. "Because mother knew that it was all you could carry and she did n't want you to fall," was the gentle reply.

The young man had received his lesson. After that when he looked at his small opportunities he would say, "God knew that I could n't carry a heavier load, and he does n't want me to fall."

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### SPIRITUAL VAGRANCY.

Nearly every man acknowledges that it would be a blessed thing to be a Christian, if only he could reap the benefits without the costs. The common tramp has pretty much the same idea about the things that pertain to respectable living. He would have no objections to being well fed, and clothed too, for that matter, if only he could have these things without working for them. "I often feel that you Christians are to be envied," a young man remarked, "but it would cost *me* something to become a Christian." In other words, he would have been glad to have eaten bread in the kingdom of God, but he was n't willing to work for it.

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### THE PERIL OF SOULS.

A party of young men were strolling along the beach at a fashionable watering-place, watching with idle interest the fantastic gestures of some boys who were disporting themselves in the surf not far away.

Suddenly one of the young men threw off his coat and dashed into the water.

“Men!” he shouted to his companions, “those boys are not playing, they are asking for help. Do n’t you see they are drowning?”

The knowledge that lives were in danger had, in a moment, changed indifference into the most intense solicitude. Let the church once realize that men are really dying without Christ, and it will have been enlisted heart and soul in the cause of missions.

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#### UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.

“I think a Christian can go anywhere,” said a young woman, who was defending her continued attendance at some very doubtful places of amusement.

“Certainly she can,” rejoined her friend, “but I am reminded of a little incident that happened last summer when I went with a party of friends to explore a coal mine. One of the young women appeared dressed in a dainty, white gown. When her friends remonstrated with her she appealed to the old miner who was to act as guide to the party:

“‘Can’t I wear a white dress down into the mine?’ she asked petulantly.

“‘Yes, ’m,’ returned the old man. ‘There’s nothin’ to keep you from wearin’ a white frock down there,

but there 'll be considerable to keep you from wearin' one back.' ”

There is nothing to prevent the Christian wearing his white garments when he seeks the fellowship of that which is unclean, but there is a good deal to prevent him from wearing white garments afterward.

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### WHERE THE HYPOCRITE BELONGS.

“What is a hypocrite?” I ask the pompous individual who had been railing at the despised class who wear that dishonorable name.

“A hypocrite?” he answers. “A hypocrite? Why, he is one of your miserable Christians, who is just as bad as the worst one, if the truth were known.” My friend, you are mistaken. That the hypocrite is the worst man in the world, we are ready to admit, but he is n't a Christian. He is guilty of the despicable act of stealing the clothes that belong to some Christian and of palming himself off upon the world as one, but in reality he belongs to the other side. He is an infidel and a rebel.

My soldier friend, let me ask you a question. What is a spy? You say, “He is the man who, while he is not loyal to our cause, gets in among us by means of false pretensions.” Precisely! And you never dream of counting the spy as a part of your forces. The

name itself bears testimony to the fact that he belongs to the other side. No loyal man was ever foolish enough to refuse to enlist for the defense of his country, because of the spies who had crept into the ranks. There is no excuse so truly the fool's excuse as that of the man who refuses to become a loyal soldier of Jesus Christ because of the few who have crept into the ranks and are wearing the uniform to which they have no right.

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#### WHY THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT AFRAID.

In a shop where the employes were, during a good deal of the time, left to themselves, some of the men paid very little attention to the rules. It was only when it was known that the inspector was about to make one of his rounds that they took care to keep the rubbish out of the way and their work-tables in order. One man, however, was an exception to this. There was never a time when his corner was not in proper condition. He took pains to keep it so. Some of the men laughed at him. They said he was afraid of the inspector. And yet he was not. He knew that his coming meant commendation. He was the only man in the shop who did not tremble to hear the inspector's footstep. We have a way of speaking of the day of final reckoning as being an awful day, and yet let us

remember that it will be a day of reward as well as a day of judgment. Unbelievers may sneer at the man who sets his house in order and keeps it that way, and say that he is afraid of death. The fact is that he is the one man who has nothing to be afraid of.

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### YOUR SUPREME OPPORTUNITY.

An eminent physician picked up in the street one day a homeless lad, and, taking him to his home, treated him with the utmost kindness. He took the boy into his office and gave him the training that would fit him to be a skillful nurse. "Some day, when I am sick and in need of attention, he will be able to care for me," the old doctor said, when his friends remonstrated with him for the care he was bestowing upon the boy. "That will more than repay me for my pains."

One day, when the boy had grown almost to manhood, he went away on a pleasure excursion, contrary to the wishes of his benefactor, who needed his help. While he was gone, the old doctor was stricken with sudden illness and died alone in his office for want of some one to minister to him. "To think that the lad should have failed me at the very moment for which I have these years been planning!" he moaned again and again. And the boy echoed the lament when he returned to find his friend cold in death. But how



was he to have known that he was missing that for which he had been brought to this moment? How are we to know when we are slighting the supreme opportunity for which God placed us here? My brother, we can not know. If the boy had never been faithless to his duty, there would have been no such sad denouement; if you and I took every opportunity earnestly, there would be no danger of our failing to grasp the great one. Better that life should be a series of seeming defeats that end in victory, than a succession of brilliant achievements that end in failure.

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### THE BEST EVIDENCE.

While the truth of the religion of Christ unfolds itself to the thoughtful mind in many ways, one of the best evidences is the one which the believer carries in his own heart. The longing to know something about God is a natural attribute. It is to be found even in the lowest type of mankind. When he finds that which satisfies this longing, he has no need to be urged to believe. A company of men were shipwrecked upon an uninhabited shore. They sought in vain for something to satisfy their hunger, and there seemed to be nothing but starvation before them. One of them, going some distance inland, found a sort of fungi, growing at the root of a decayed tree. He ate some of it, and hastened

back to his companions to tell them of what he had found.

“Ah! but it may be poison,” they said. “How do you know that it was ever meant for food?”

“I know it has satisfied my hunger,” he returned simply, “and that where before I was weak and fainting, I have gotten strength.”

This has been the testimony of every man who has partaken of the bread that cometh down from heaven. It satisfies an implanted longing, and makes him strong where before he was without strength.

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#### DEALING JUSTLY WITH GOD.

A gentleman spent many months in collecting materials for the construction of a certain machine. The metals were of the finest and the wood costly and rare. Taking these to a skilled mechanic, he gave orders for the construction of the machine. Months passed. The time came when the machine was to have been completed; but, though the owner sent for it again and again, he was each time put off with some flimsy excuse. At last, at the end of the season, the maker of the machine sent it to the man who had given the order. He had followed directions in its construction, but during all these months he had been using it for himself. Now that it was worn out, and he could

have no more use for it, he gave it to the owner. It was an insult, you say? Yes, beloved, but how much more grossly do we insult God when we wear out the best of our life, that was never our own, and in the end offer him the broken pieces!

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### THE WORK OF HIS HANDS.

The great heart that really loves PEOPLE, that causes its owner to shed tears over the needs of Jerusalem, or Cincinnati, or Chicago, is all too rare. We can love our friends, our proteges and even our enemies, but to really yearn over people we can not call by name, and who present to our gaze simply a great troubled human sea, is another matter. Loving God and loving people is the same thing when we keep in mind the fact that God made the people. The work of those we love is never lacking in interest to us. I saw the other day a pathetic little word picture which illustrates this. A young man is fondly gazing at a picture that has been painted and given to him by the woman he loves. He has bought for it a beautiful and costly frame. Most people would pronounce the picture common and crude, but to him it is full of rare beauty. He sees in it the soul of the one who conceived it. The trouble with most of us is that we forget that God made man. So long as he is simply

a creature of the earth, earthy, we will pass him by as an uninteresting clod. We need to associate him with the great Father to whom he belongs, before we can appreciate him.

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### HE UNDERSTANDS.

A young mechanic became involved in some trouble with his employer on the question of money that was due him. A friend expostulated with him, upon learning the name of the lawyer to whom he had gone for consultation. "Why, I could direct you to a score of better lawyers," said his friend. "That man is only a commonplace fellow."

"That may be true," replied the mechanic, "but he understands my case as no one else would be able to understand it. He used to work at my trade himself."

Jesus Christ attracts the man who is in need of help, because he knows all about human sorrows. He was once in the place of the sorrowing one himself.

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### THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT.

The small boy who admitted that he had several times had all he could eat, but never yet all that he wanted, finds his counterpart among children of a larger growth. While there is such a thing as desiring

great possessions for a noble purpose, such instances must always be painfully rare. The capacity of the millionaire and the multimillionaire for eating and drinking is no greater than that of the poor man. He can only wear so much clothing. He must acknowledge that he has long ago had all he could make use of, but the greed of getting has not abated. Paul says: "Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content." And he might have added: If you are not content with that, you never will be.

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#### A QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP.

When we want to describe certain very disagreeable people, we say that they act as though they own everything. Perhaps not many of us are disposed to be thus in our intercourse with each other, and yet it is a common fault. Nothing is plainer than the teaching of the Bible on the subject of our indebtedness to God. He gives nothing, though he entrusts us with many things. Yet there is a common feeling that it is our business, and ours alone, as to how we make use of that which has been left in our hands. In other words, we act as though we owned things.

Suppose, if, when you leave your watch with the watchmaker to be looked after, he should put it on and use it himself. Suppose the tailor should make

up the cloth you bring him, and wear it out going about his own affairs. It would, to say the least of it, cause a coolness between you and your watchmaker or tailor, as the case might be. When you are about to decide how you shall use this opportunity, or that talent, remember that the Owner has some rights that ought to be considered.

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### PUTTING THEM TO SILENCE.

A student, noted for his indiscretions, went to one of his teachers and complained because he was being made the subject of unfavorable comment.

“How can I make them quit talking about me?” he asked.

“Quit giving them anything to talk about,” was the sententious reply.

While the answer was not exactly pleasing to the young man, he had the good sense to see that his friend had offered the only remedy.

While there are idle tongues and malicious tongues that busy themselves when they seem to have absolutely no pretext for doing so, we may be sure that we can never put them to silence so long as we allow what they say to be true. Sharp answers and adroit reasoning, without the backing of absolute truth behind them, will never effectually silence criticism.

An evangelist went into a town where there were a few people who chose to be known simply as Christians, and began to plead for a return to primitive Christianity. The tongues of the gossips began to wag. "Those people are whitewashed infidels," they said; "they don't believe in anything but baptism." In vain the evangelist denied the accusation, and in vain did they all seek to stop the mouths of the slanderers. Though in time they despaired of getting justice, they went on seeking to save the lost and to serve where they were needed. Years rolled by and their neighbors began to point to those they had despised and to commend them for their spirituality, for their fervent zeal and for their consistent living. The disciples had long ago ceased trying to vindicate themselves, and had devoted themselves to the simple performance of duty. In so doing they had unwittingly put to silence their traducers.

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### DIAMONDS AND CORN.

(JOHN XII. 24.)

Generally speaking, there is no comparison to be made between the value of a diamond and that of a grain of corn, yet all depends on the disposition you make of the corn. Put both of them away, and at the end of a hundred years the grain of corn will still

have no money value, while the diamond's value, running up into the hundreds of dollars, will be undiminished. At the end of ten times a hundred years the same thing will be true. But suppose, instead, we bury the grain in the warm, moist earth, and year after year throughout the centuries let it go on producing and reproducing. In that time it will have produced a store that the whole earth could hardly contain. Its production represents a money value that makes the diamond's price not more than an atom in comparison. To have saved the grain of corn would have been to lose all it was capable of producing. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone." Brother, to save your gift from God may seem to be the prudent thing, but let me tell you that in the end it will mean loss.

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### THE WISDOM OF GOD.

"The woman means well, and I am certain that she loves her boy," some one said concerning the mother of several children. "I can't understand why she is such a failure when it comes to family government."

"The trouble lies in the fact that she has no conception of the abilities and disabilities of her children," was the reply. "She asks them to do things that are out of the range of possibilities. The chil-



dren, who are naturally of an obedient temper, have found this out, so they have given up trying to obey her." The whole trouble lay in the mother's lack of wisdom. There is no more unmistakable sign of un wisdom than that of asking men to do the impossible. Most men believe that God is good, but multitudes of them charge him with being unwise when they declare that he has asked of them things that it is impossible for them to do.

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#### PRESERVING THE LANDMARKS.

The summer after the flood of 1873, in which a part of Cincinnati was submerged, a country merchant visiting the city was in conversation with a German citizen on the subject, when the latter volunteered to show him the high-water mark on his warehouse just across the street.

"Why," said the merchant, in astonishment, looking at the chalk-line above one of the upper windows, "I had no idea the water rose so high."

"Oh! it did n't," the German returned complaisantly, "but I had to put it up there to keep the boys from rubbing it out."

In religion, from the beginning until now, men have been setting up "ancient landmarks" for other people to let alone.

I am afraid that there are not a few "apostolic landmarks" to which some have been fond of pointing people that are about as genuine as the German's high-water mark.

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### PARADE OR SERVICE.

A little girl, watching a regiment of soldiers march down the street, turned to her mother as the last section of the band went past, and asked with a note of impatience in her voice, "Mamma, what are soldiers for if they can't play?" The child had lost sight of, or really had never understood, the fact that the real business of the soldier is not to make a part of an attractive spectacular performance. In our very laudable desire to make the church attractive, we often make a similar mistake. The real business of the church is to save souls and not to furnish an attraction that will draw "the best people in town" into its charmed circle.

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### WHY HE FELT SECURE.

"The promise that has helped most in my Christian life," said a traveling salesman, "is this: 'My God shall supply all your need.' When I first began, I was troubled for fear that some sudden temptation would

prove too much for me. The first house I traveled for was n't very reliable, and several times I found myself stranded in a strange town, just because they were not able to honor my draft. But since I've been working for my present employers, it's different. When I run short of funds, I have only to draw on the house, knowing it is all right, because they are to be relied on. Well, I've put that into my Christian life. And though I have passed through some pretty hard experiences, I find that I have only to look to Him, and he supplies my need according to his riches of grace."

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### WHAT THEY REALLY WANT.

(JOHN XII. 21.)

"The people of this town do n't want the gospel," said a disgusted preacher who was just quitting a large congregation—made up mainly of empty benches. "I have tried in every possible way to make the services attractive, but they simply will not go to church." The man thought he was telling the truth, and yet within two years after he quitted the field, the old church was the center of life and interest for the entire community. Instead of empty benches, there were not enough to seat the people. What made the difference? A better preacher? Yes and no. The first man imagined the people were tired of the religion of

Christ, when in reality they were tired of the poor substitutes he had been offering them. Even worldly men who go up to the temple do not go there to hear scientific discussions or flowery orations. They can get them elsewhere. "We would see Jesus," their hearts are saying. Men may grow tired of the man who steps between them and the Son of God, but they have never yet grown weary of looking at the Christ himself.

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### SACRIFICED FOR US.

Under the old law the blood of the sacrifice was a reminder to Israel of the awful nature of sin. When man saw it, he said, "I am worthy of death, but the loving, merciful God accepts the slain beast in my stead."

A young man went away from home to start in business. He was wild and reckless and had repeatedly to call upon his father for help to save him from getting into serious trouble. After several years of profligacy, he returned home, to find his aged parents in the most straitened circumstances. The old farm had been sold to pay the debts he had contracted, and by hard labor his father was eking out a scanty living. Then there were on the faces of both father and mother deep lines, which told a tale of what they had suffered. The

sight opened the young man's eyes and brought him to repentance. "I never realized the enormity of my sin till I saw something of what it had cost," he said. Thus has the blood of Christ spoken to the world of the awfulness of sin. Men, looking upon it, see the cost of their disobedience and are brought to repentance.

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### CONTRADICTORY TESTIMONY.

If you do n't recommend Christ by your life, you need not expect that your words will carry conviction with them. A young lady was very enthusiastic over her music teacher, and went about among her friends telling them what a good teacher he was and advising them to employ him. That would have been all very well but for the fact that the young woman's musical performances were atrocious. They spoke of just the opposite to efficient teaching. It may have been that her teacher was not responsible for her mannerisms, but because of them his reputation certainly suffered.

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### THE GARMENT OF SERVICE.

A certain benevolent association had several times provided decent clothing for the child of an improvident family, only to find the girl, a week or two later, with dirty hands and face, and her dress soiled almost

beyond recognition. When the others were about ready to give up the case as hopeless, one lady offered to take the child in hand. This time the new dress and trimmings were creamy white, and fine and delicate in texture. On the following Sunday she appeared with clean face and hands and neatly combed hair. During the rest of the season no one had reason to complain of her untidy appearance. She had put her grimy hands alongside of the white dress and thus became conscious of their unattractiveness. "What! Put those giddy young people to work in the church?" said an objector in the early days of Christian Endeavor. "They're a disgrace to us now, and it will be enough worse if they are given responsible positions." A trial, however, proved that he was wrong. More than one young Christian saw, for the first time, the faultiness of his life as it lay alongside the white garments of service he had donned.

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**"EXCEPT YE TURN."**

Do n't imagine that you can progress into a Christian life without first turning squarely away from the world and toward heavenly things. If you were on the wrong road last year, your only salvation is in a right-about-face. A man who started from Cincinnati with the desire of reaching San Francisco, turned

his face toward the east instead of toward the west. He realized his mistake, but he did not want to turn around; and so, in spite of regrets and resolutions and protestations that he wanted to go to the Pacific coast, he one day found himself confronted by the Atlantic. Conversion means turning about, and it means that you are to do the turning yourself.

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### LAMPS OR LIGHTS?

An enterprising dealer advertises a lamp which gives a light so brilliant as to make the sun feel like it is almost a back number. Passing by the fact that the language of the dealer is, to say the least of it, a trifle florid, we are ready to go further and say that neither his lamp, nor any number of lamps, can of themselves light up a room ten feet square. The mission of the lamp is not to give light, but to hold it up and to spread its beams. The same thing is true of the church; it is not a light. It is a light-bearer. It is so with the individual Christian. We can not have the light without the vessel to hold the oil, but without the oil all the lamps in the world can not send out a ray of light. There must needs be the visible forms that have to do with the perpetuation of the church and that test our loyalty to him that planned them, for all our professions and performances amount

to nothing if they are not more than this. The foolish virgins were, probably, very well satisfied with their lamps till the time came for them to be put to use. Mere church membership may salve the conscience, but it will never save the soul.

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### LIVING GRATITUDE.

We may offer fervent expressions of gratitude in the prayer-meeting and sing aloud in the praise service, but our real sense of indebtedness must manifest itself in more practical ways. A king had saved the life of one of his subjects, and every day afterwards she came to his gate with protestations of gratitude. "I can never begin to pay the debt I owe him," she bewailed. One day the king, in his chariot, passed her cottage. He saw in her garden a tree bearing some luscious fruit, and was seized with a desire to taste it. When he sent his servant with the request that he be given some of the fruit, the woman replied that she would gladly give the fruit to the king but for the fact that there was no more of it than she needed for herself. She thus laid bare the fact that her expressions of gratitude had been mere words which lacked the element of truthfulness.



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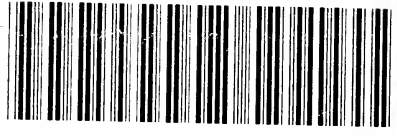
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