

On Keeping Silence.

Be sure that humility, frequent silence and recollection, will do you more good than any amount of anxiety and self-chosen austerities. Silence is, above all, important for you. Even when you cannot withdraw from society, you might often practice silence, and let others take the lead in conversation. There is no way by which you can so effectually subdue your haughty, disdainful, contemptuous spirit, as by bridling it with silence. Keep a strict watch upon your tongue. The presence of God, which restrains your words, will likewise keep all your thoughts and wishes in check. But this work must be accomplished gradually. Be patient with yourself, as well as with others.—Fenelon.

The Teaching We Do Without a Text Book.

Twenty years ago a discouraged young doctor in one of our large cities was visited by his old father, who came up from a rural district to look after his boy.

"Well, son," he said, "how are you getting along?"

"I'm not getting along at all," was the disheartened answer. "I'm not doing a thing."

The old man's countenance fell, but he spoke of courage and patience and perseverance. Later in the day he went with his son to the "Free Dispensary," where the young doctor had an unsalaried position, and where he spent an hour or more every day.

The father sat by, a silent but intensely interested spectator, while twenty-five poor unfortunates received help. The doctor forgot his visitor, while he bent his skilled energies to this task; but hardly had the door closed on the last patient, when the old man burst forth:

"I thought you told me that you were not doing anything," he thundered. "Not doing anything! Why, if I had helped twenty-five people in a month as much as you have in one morning, I would thank God that my life counted for something."

"There isn't any money in it, though," explained the son, somewhat abashed at his companion's vehemence.

"Money!" the old man shouted, still scornfully. "Money! What is money in comparison with being of use to your fellow-men? Never mind about money; you go right along at this work every day. I'll go back to the farm, and gladly earn money to support you as long as I live,—yes, and sleep sound every night with the thought that I have helped you to help your fellow-men."

"That speech," I said to a friend of mine, one who has spent many years as a conspicuously successful teacher, "went into the bones of the young doctor's life, and strengthened him for a life of unselfish usefulness."

"Ah!" said the professor, "that one speech was worth years of text-book teaching! And yet it was made without an instant's preparation."

"Far from it," I answered quickly. "It had taken sixty years of noble living, struggling against sin and self, pressing forward in paths of righteousness, bearing the cross, following hard after the Perfect Man, to prepare that old Christian to make this speech. Then the moment came, and he was ready to teach the glorious lesson."

For the teaching without text-books, fellow teachers, life's normal school holds daily, hourly classes.—Elizabeth Preston Allan, in the S. S. Times.

• Our Young People •

The Disciple Who is Never Ready.

BY REV. J. K. WILSON, D. D.

He is really a disciple; there is no doubt that. In perfect sincerity he could return Peter's impassioned answer, "Lord, thou knowest all things; *Thou knowest* that I love Thee!"

And he is a disciple with the best of intentions. He means well. His instincts are loyal; his purposes ring true. He recognizes the world's right to some proof of his discipleship beyond his mere "say so," and he means that it shall have it. By his fruits he intends to be known as a follower of Jesus.

And yet it must be confessed that these intentions often fail to materialize. Between purpose and fulfillment a great gulf seems to be fixed. He has a good aim, but he is a bad shot; he doesn't hit anything. It is not that he abandons his intentions, or consciously swerves from his purpose of loyalty, only, he never seems to "get round" to doing what is demanded of him, and what he means to do. He is never quite ready; there is always something to be attended to, some arrangements to be made up, and some conditions to be complied with, before he can give his whole attention to the matter in hand. And then it is likely to be too late.

The door of opportunity swings wide before him,—opportunity for service or sacrifice,—for a word or a work; the chance for the testimony in the prayer meeting, or the action in the world. Of course he will take the chance, and embrace the opportunity. But he is not ready on the instant; he wants to turn the matter over in his mind, to think about it; he isn't quite sure what will be best to say or do; he is afraid to jeopardize important interests by a hasty and injudicious course. And while he is hesitating the door is shut; the chance is gone. When he could, he wouldn't; when he will, he can't.

Or, it is the door of high and exalted privileges. Through it streams the glories of transfiguration, and the joys of the heavenly communion. But as he rises to enter in, his unfastened shoes trip him, and he must stop to tie them; and when again he looks for the vision, it is gone. The door is shut. His fellow disciple has entered in, for he was ready; but he himself is left outside, because he was not ready.

I wonder why he is never ready when the calls comes and the chance opens. Possibly because he fails to see the importance of getting ready and being ready beforehand,—of "spending time and taking pains for Christ," as our topic puts it, not only in doing, but in preparing to do. Very likely he has some notions about the matter. He doesn't like the idea of making the religious life a "cut and dried" affair by calculating, and reasoning, and planning concerning the what and the how of all things that are to be. He desires more of freedom and spontaneity. He wants to do what he feels like doing, when and as he feels like doing it; and he objects to having any sort of strait-jacket put upon him. So he doesn't plan ahead for his missionary or church offerings, for that would be making his giving "mechanical" and "a mere matter of business," and would

rob it of its sweet spontaneity. And he doesn't think of the prayer meeting topic before he goes to meeting, for he wants to speak "as the Spirit shall give him utterance." And he doesn't take the trouble to examine into the conditions of his times and his surroundings, with a view to seeing how best the gospel may be applied to them, for this would militate against his idea of the divine leading.

And the result of it all is,—in so many instances that it makes one's heart ache only to think of them,—the result is just what our Lord has told us in the parable it must be,—a shut door, and an unready disciple left outside!

Now if I were certain that I had his ear in this little peachment, I should like to say to this man something like this:—

That the Lord's demand is for, and the Lord's favor is given to, and the Lord's work is done by "minutemen,"—the men who are ready at call.

That as it is much one's duty to be ready to do, as it is to do. Obligation is for preparation, as well as performance.

That, however good his intentions may be, an unready disciple is dishonoring his Lord as really as is the disciple who is consciously and purposely disobedient.

"Then they that were ready went in with him." "Be ye also ready!"

For Daily Reading.

Mon., Nov. 26.—Time and work. Ps. 90: 1-17

Tues., Nov. 27.—Results of Christian work.

Acts 5: 12-16; 16: 25-34

Wed., Nov. 28.—Jesus serving.

John 5: 36; 17: 4

Thurs., Nov. 29.—Using common lives.

Mark 14: 12-16

Fri., Nov. 30.—Daily service. Luke 9: 23-26

Sat., Dec. 1.—As unto the Lord.

1 Pet. 4: 8-11

Sun., Dec. 2.—Topic. Spending time and taking pains for Christ. Matt. 25: 1-13

A list of books in Belles letters from 45 Exchange St., Portland, Maine, is Mr. T. B. Mosher's annual catalogue; but it is not a mere catalogue put together in a slovenly fashion, as many are. It is a dainty booklet, which we can recommend to those who wish to buy a Christmas present for a friend with literary tastes or who can himself afford to buy these handsome volumes. Along with each title there is given a brief appreciation of the book by some reliable critic. Mr. Mosher, in a preface, defends his action in not publishing new books, but devoting his energies to the beautiful reproductions of books which have already won the approval of the best judges. He thinks with Frederick Harrison that "We need to be reminded every day how many are the books of inimitable glory which, with all our eagerness after reading, we have never taken in our hands." Scattered throughout the catalogue are apt quotations from great writers.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Pride is not once commended in the Word of God. Is it not strange Christians should so glory in it? Pride in the heart is soon written upon the face, and a proud look is instinctively shunned. Could the proud see pride's foul work on their own faces as they do on the faces of others, there might be found a balm in Gilead and a physician for their healing.

*Topic for December 2: Spending time and taking pains for Christ.—Matt. 25: 1-13. "Do it with thy night."