

special duties arising out of their special relations. The apostles never say, "Trust, and all else will come as a matter of course;" "Leave yourselves in the hands of Christ, and He will set you right about your duties." That is not the way. But they repeat the duties, and they urge men to study them, and to give themselves to the discharge of them, to be earnest in their Christian work. They tell men that God is working in them to will and to do; but they do not say, "Just rejoice in that, and be happy." No; they say, "Because God is working in you—work out—work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

You remember Paul's words in the language I read at the commencement of the service: "Be strong," he says to the Christian soldier, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." He begins with that—have faith in Christ; do not go to this battle in your own strength; put no confidence in yourselves; be strong, courageous, but in the Lord, and in the power of His might. But does he stop there? Does he say that if they are only full of faith in the great Captain all will go right, and he need say no more? Oh, no; he has a great deal more to urge upon them. Just as that great English commander—I believe it was Cromwell—addressing his soldiers in the prospect of some battle, said, "Trust in the Lord"—that was his first word—"trust in the Lord, and keep your powder dry;" so Paul in much higher language, says, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might;" go into the great battle of life, leaving the great strife in the hands of Jesus; but mind to take the helmet and the shield, and the breastplate and the sword, and mind to be always praying. You are to be trusting, but you are to be praying and fighting still.

And how was it with Paul himself? Just look at him when he was in declining life; when he wrote that second Epistle to the Corinthians: when he was so full of his labours and his triumphs, and his honours as an apostle; when he was so full of faith in Christ, after he had been for long years in union and communion with Him. He had, times without number, left everything to His keeping; he put an unbounded trust in Him, and felt sure that he would be carried securely through all life's trials, and be more than conqueror at last. He was quite sure of it that his Master would never leave him, never forsake him. Well, then, he was happy and did nothing more. Not that. Only after expressing his longing to be absent from the body and to be with the Lord, he says: "I labour; I labour, that whether present or absent, I may be accepted of Him; for we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Ay, the old man, the old Christian, the old apostle, so crowned with honours, so full of faith, he was looking at the judgment-seat before which he was to stand, and he was, in his old age, labouring that he might be approved of the Master.

So, dear Christian brethren, I say, seek more peace, more confidence, more of the joy of faith; we all need more of it; but it is not the best thing of all. Now, I hear, and you hear, men speaking of consolation, peace, and blessedness in the experience, as though that were the very best thing. No; righteousness is better than that: to do your duty, to fight, to conquer, is a better thing than simply to rejoice; and a better peace and a better joy will come at last out of the faith and the trust.

Be sure that the highest function of faith in Christ is not to make people very happy in the present life. Be not contented to be only happy in the present life. The highest function of the Christian life is not to make men peaceful and happy; it makes them peaceful and happy that they may be thereby the stronger, the stronger in their love and gratitude, for doing the will of God.

May that faith be ours which will give us peace, and giving us peace, will inspire us with love, and so strengthen us for the Christian work!

[We have reprinted this sermon, by the kind permission of Messrs. Helder and Staughton, from their most interesting volume, "Memorials of David Thomas, B.A." By his son. It is a loving tribute to the many excellences of a truly noble character, and we trust many of our readers will possess themselves of these recollections of so great a faithful minister to man.—Ed.]

As the rays come from the sun, and yet are not the sun, even so our love and pity, though they are not God, but merely a poor, weak image and reflection of Him, yet from Him alone they come. If there is mercy in our hearts, it comes from the fountain of mercy; if there is the light of love in us, it is a ray from the full sun of love.—Charles Kingsley.

CHURCHLY CHURLISHNESS.

IF there is any place under heaven where good manners should be practised, that place is the church. But, in many instances, it is the very home of churlishness and boishness. A stranger, dropping in, finds himself in an atmosphere of such Arctic chilliness and freezing rigidity that his first thought is that he has suddenly intruded into a spiriferator. There he stands, uncertain whether to advance or to back out. No one shows him a paw, or speaks a kind word to him, or gives him the slightest look of encouragement or welcome. He feels that he is a stranger, an intruder, that he is not welcome, that to stay is only to be tolerated. What wonder the service has no effect on that man? or, if any, that he retires after the benediction more hardened than softened? He went to gather strength for the grand purpose of a new life; he leaves feeling that there is no strength nor grace to be extracted from this frosty selfishness which has built itself a temple in the name of Christianity.

Now had some kind-hearted Christian stepped up to this diffident new-comer, and, frank in speech and warm and sympathetic in heart, grasped him by the hand and bade him welcome, and given him to understand that the church wanted him, and had work for him to do, how different the result. Ah! when will the church be as wise as the devil? When at her doors will the stranger meet a welcome as bright and cheery, as hearty and warm, as he finds those doors which open on death and hell? Fill the Church with an atmosphere of radiant kindness, of genial welcome. Let there be exhibited the courtesy, not of outward deportment and etiquette only, but that also of the heart. Be civil. Be cordial. Be pleasant. Keep back your antipathies; but show your good-will. Be hospitable, for there is nothing like Church hospitality. Thence you entertain angels, who will come again. Then every flower of Christian grace will bloom in richest colours, and every stranger that enters will be conscious of an attractiveness and a warmth that will irresistibly bind him to it as his home.—*Chilham at Wells.*

ONLY.

Only a drop in the bucket,
But every drop will tell,
The bucket would soon be empty,
Without the drops in the well.

Only a poor little penny,
It was all I had to give;
But as pennies make the dollars,
It may help some cause to live.

A few little bits of ribbon,
And some toys; they were not new;
But they made the sick child happy,
Which has made me happy, too.

Only some outgrown garments;
They were all I had to spare;
But they'll help to clothe the needy,
And the poor are everywhere.

A word now and then of comfort,
That cost me nothing to say;
But the poor old man died happy;
And it helped him on the way.

God loveth the cheerful giver,
Though the gift be poor and small;
What doth He think of His children
When they never give at all?

GOD AS A FATHER.—A king is sitting with his council deliberating on high affairs of state involving the destiny of nations, when suddenly he hears the sorrowful cry of his little child, who has fallen down, or been frightened by a wasp; he rises and runs to his relief, assuages his sorrows and relieves his fears. Is there anything unkingly here? Is it not most natural? Does it not elevate the monarch in your esteem? Why, then, do we think it dishonourable to the King of Kings, our heavenly Father, to consider the small matters of His children? His infinitely condescending, but is it not also superlatively natural that being a father He should act as such?—*C. H. Spurgeon.*