

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

LITTLE HALF-DONE THINGS

(By Rev. W. H. Sedgwick, M.A.)

What a long list it is! The shadow of the undone falls darkly across our life: we have omitted many things that we ought to have done. In our life, too, is the stain of things done; we have done many things that we ought not to have done. We are distressed by the remembrance both of the word spoken and the word unspoken, the letter written and the letter unwritten, the inspiration obeyed and the inspiration disobeyed. But there is something beside all this—life's half-done things. The Master of all good workmen writes across our achievements—"I have found no words of things perfected before my God."

God's work is perfect. You cannot paint the lily. Having begun a good work, God will perform it. Perfection is the hallmark of His handiwork. But the world of man is the world of things unrealized. Life is full of half-done things. How account for it?

First, there is the limitation of human power. It is given to all of us to see how our day's work ought to be done. Our visions come to us, and they beckon us on. But how different the actual achievement! Beethoven's polished symphony is but an empty echo of the heavenly music he heard in his dream. There is always a sadness at the heart of success. To have done anything in the way which men call successful, is only to see more vividly how imperfect one's work remains. Because human power is limited, the true workman's ideal always outruns his actual.

Secondly, there is the limitation of time. Sir Walter Scott's last entry in his Journal reads: "We slept reasonably, but on the next morning—" Thus death breaks off the sentence of man's career. Even those who live longest and work hardest are not able to round out all their projects. And so many are taken away while they are still attaining. For so many the sun goes down while yet it is mid-day. They live long enough to give large promise, and then their life-work was half-done, since "in short measures life may perfect be." But their passing swells the tale of earth's half-done things. Heaven's perfect round may explain, but it does not remove, earth's broken arc.

Thirdly—and it is this that we ought most seriously to lay to heart—there is the limitation of effort. It is not that our powers are limited, but we do not use to the uttermost the powers we have. It is not that our days are few, but we do not fill up with earnest effort the days we have. Because of this, our life is darkened and disfigured with half-done things. Often it is lack of will to do things well, often it is the lack of perseverance, that leaves our task only half-advanced towards perfection. If only we would do with our might what our hands find to do, do it in a way to satisfy our sense of how it ought to be done, there would be far less of the half-done in our life. It is no blame to a man that after he has done his best he is still far below the ideal which was in his mind. It is no blame to a man, that, as he bent all his energies to his day's task, his sun went down, leaving his task only half-completed. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." But it is to a man's shame that he has ever done less than his best. A man is to be blamed whose lack of will and lazy compliance with low standards leaves his life disfigured with things half-done.

Charlottetown, P. E. I.

A SENSITIVE CONSCIENCE

Quite recently in Halifax a Christian minister promised his brother to preach for a large and intelligent congregation. Before the time came the gentleman who promised to preach saw cause to change his mind. He accordingly sent word to his friend that he could not fulfil the engagement. On being asked the reason he stated that he had learned that the Lord's supper was to be dispensed in the church that evening and that his conscience would not permit him to take part in an evening communion. A tender conscience is to be tenderly cherished, and not by any means to be lightly spoken of. One would imagine that the time selected by the Lord Himself for His supper would be of all times the most fitting. But new times have brought in new ideas, and feelings on this point are keen and convictions strong. It has been a custom and a rule for ages with some Christians to partake of the Lord's supper in the morning, fasting. The thought in their mind is that the bread and wine are the very body and blood of Christ and that it is most becoming to eat that bread before any other food. How easily amazing changes are brought about! Conscience is trained to regard as a transgression the taking of the Lord's supper on the afternoon or evening of the Lord's day, and to eat that bread and to drink that cup at the hour they partook of them is a sin! Suppose Peter had refused it at the hand of the Lord Himself? Suppose Paul had refused it? Even we Presbyterians, and most Christians find it expedient to celebrate the supper in connection with the forenoon service. Of course our churches would have no objection to partake of the communion in the evening, or at any hour that should be found most expedient. Conscience and good sense may be trained and developed to this extent. Let everything be done decently and in order. It is a startling comment on the wisdom or unwisdom of human nature that the symbol of divine love and of Christian brotherhood should have become for many ages in many places the occasion of hatred, strife and cruel warfare—leading to assassinations and wars and burnings. And see how easily one is led to mistake the meaning and intent of the sacred ordinance!—Presbyterian Witness.

THANKSGIVING

(By Bayard Taylor.)

Thou who sendest sun and rain,
Thou who sendest bliss and pain,
Good with bounteous hand bestowing,
Evil, for Thy will allowing—
Though Thy ways we cannot see,
All is just that comes from Thee.

In the peace of hearts at rest,
In the child at mother's breast,
In the lives that now surround us,
In the deaths that sorely wound us,
Though we may not understand,
Father, we behold Thy hand.

Hear the happy hymn we raise;
Take the love which is Thy praise;
Give content in each condition;
Bend our hearts in sweet submission,
And Thy trusting children prove
Worthy of thy Father's love.

Presbyterian Banner.—The problem of the best social order, whether individualistic or socialistic, is a grave question for the economist and sociologist. But deeper than any such question is that of the right moral order. Christianity looks into the heart of things and grapples with this question.

OCCIDENTAL ORIENTALS

The recent remarkable events touching the Far East have focused the world's attention there, and Japan is claiming to be the pivot of politics at present, and the vitalizing force of the "Three Yellows"; but China has always considered herself the yellow of the egg, and latter development in her direction is attributed largely not only to the Cantonese, but chiefly to those who have been abroad, on the principle "cansee cansee abroad."

Montreal as the distributing centre for multitudes of them coming and going, is of wide influence, so impressions here received are very important. There are those earnestly seeking to lastingly influence many of these residents and transients and give them the Gospel message for others. A summary of local action at a well-attended and interesting meeting of the Montreal Chinese Mission in Stanley street church, on last Tuesday, might be instructive to other places also. Rev. F. M. Dewey presided and offered prayer and with many of the superintendents and teachers, Rev. Dr. Fleck and Rev. J. G. Clark took part. The minutes of last meeting in Westminster church being read and approved, Dr. Thomson for this initial meeting of the winter season, offered in his report a number of topics for discussion mostly arising from a recent superintendents' meeting, also matter of information, as follows: Activities—18 church Sabbath classes, general average 28 scholars and 24 teachers, last year. Mission C. E. Society largely attended, enrolment 100, activities and benefactions extending to China, whence come attractive appeals. Chinese Service in Knox Church, 30 baptized Christians in city at date, some 75 in all having been received in Knox church, chiefly on profession of their faith, with a number of candidates. Several just returning, as with a dozen from various points, and some hundreds other Chinese to whom Christian Chinese literature was freely given, on the steamer bearing, among other missionaries, Rev. Milton Jack, of Montreal to Formosa. From such previously returned come news of opportunity and service, just now of one, of conversion of whole family through his means. Week-night Classes, at St. Paul's, and the Mission. Mrs. Chin Sunday Mission-class of women and children, who also attend Dorchester street Church Sunday school. Ju Ho also teaches a mission class of men; with a number taught privately. Some eight are in Public schools, ranking high. Prayer and Conference meetings, generally bi-monthly; local schools' monthly where possible; and Saturday evening devotions' remembrance of individual scholar and school. With much of helpful visitation by a number of agents and correspondence and distribution of Gospel and tract literature widely, with manifold duties of the paid workers seeking the uplifting and general help of these Oriental strangers. Division of field. The non-arrival for nearly two years of new-comers, and a proportionate decrease in the Chinese population leads to a revival of the original divisions of the field into 20 districts distributing the laundries, shops, restaurants, etc., among the various schools, for more careful cultivation of the field by superintendents and teachers. This leads to an appeal for additional Christian teachers necessary from shortage. The requirement from teachers is not a brief hour out of 168. As to the kind of teachers, referring to an objection from a neighboring city, that ladies should not be their teachers it was de-