

factor in our thoughts and plans, and the controlling influence in our lives.

Elgin, Man.

The Secret of Goodness

By Rev. S. H. Gray, M.A.

It has been frequently noted that great work, in whatever sphere of man's effort it be, always bears the mark of ease in accomplishment. If we behold in it the signs of immense effort and strain, we shall find in it also some curtailment of power, some uncertainty of grasp, which indicates, more plainly than words, that the worker was not wholly at one with his work, and wrought laboriously because he did not see clearly. When one enters the office of the great financier, he wonders at the apparent ease, and even unconcern, with which great enterprises are set afoot. One is amazed to read how simply and almost carelessly the great Shakespeare got the subjects of his immortal dramas, and how little apparent effort is visible in those very passages that have won the admiration of the world. In these cases, and in the case of all great workers, the seeming ease and naturalness of their work is the outcome of a spirit that moved with freedom and light in the region of its achievement.

There are in the works and words of the best of God's people the same marks of ease and naturalness. Great deeds and words do not come from hard-driven natures. They are not the outcome of hasty and spasmodic efforts to do great things; they are rather the fine flowers of the inner life, the perfect fruit of a spirit in harmony with God's will, running the way of His commandments, because He has set the heart at liberty.

The secret of a truly good life is, then, not far to seek. It is mainly a matter of heart, of the breadth and fineness and trust of the spirit. Religious faith and love are at the root of all good works and words. If Christ is much to us, it is certain we shall work the works of Him that sent us, and that, not in hasty, spasmodic efforts, but with the ease and naturalness that are born of love.

In his famous Christmas Sermon, Robert Louis Stevenson said, "If you are sure that God, in the long run, means kindness by you,

you should be happy; and, if happy, surely you should be kind." Can we not verify his words out of our own experience? Have we been one day, one hour, supremely, truly happy? Then we have known that very day and hour what it is to be truly generous and kind, in other words, truly good.

If we might admit the sunlight of the gospel into our souls, live as the forgiven, grateful, happy children of God, would we not be good in the sense that goodness, kindness, would become the easy and natural expression of the trusting and happy heart within? To attain that right relation to God in Christ is one great end and aim of Christian thought and effort. Our deeds and words will then take care of themselves,

Dundas, Ont.

A Little Child

By Rev. P. M. MacDonald, M.A.

A minister, in the early days in Nova Scotia, had become discouraged in his work. It seemed to him that no one cared for his message, nor for him. Especially was he downcast about the decline of religion in many homes of his congregation. At length he resolved to resign, but planned to visit again all his people before announcing his intention. Amongst the first calls he made was one at a home he had worried much about. He had thought it was a prayerless, careless place.

When he arrived at the door, a five-year-old child answered his knock and took him into the room, saying, "Mother will be downstairs soon."

"Do you know me?" said the minister.

"Oh! yes, you preach to us in the church. You are Mr. Walker."

"Do you come to church?" he asked, in surprise.

"Yes, sir, and I like to come, too."

"Do you pray at home here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"What do you say?"

"I'll say my prayer for you if you like", answered the innocent, trustful child; and kneeling down at the minister's chair, she artlessly repeated her bed-time prayer, ending with this, "And, O God, do bless our dear