

WHAT THE DEACON SAID.

"Yes," said the deacon, "there's many a man that calls himself honest that's never so much as inquired what amount of debts heaven's books are going to show against him. I've learned that. There were years in my life when I hardly gave a cent to the Lord without begrudging it, and I've wondered, since, what I'd ever have talked about if I'd gone to heaven in those days, for I couldn't talk about anything but bargains and money-getting here, and those wouldn't have been suitable subjects up yonder.

"I know I read once about one of the Kings of England, Edward I., who had an officer called the Lord High Almoner, and one of the things that man had to do was to 'remind the king of the duty of alms giving.' I've thought to myself many a time that it would be well for a good many folks nowadays if they had King Edward's almoner to stir them up to give. Not to the poor only, I mean, but to all the needs of the cause of Christ. There are lots of people beside the children of Israel that need a Moses to say to them, 'It is He that giveth thee power to get wealth.' I've allers thought that that was a grand thing in David, when he'd done such a job, getting together that pile of gold and silver for the temple, and he just turned to the Lord, and said, 'All these things come from Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.' Most men would have wanted a little credit for the pains they'd taken themselves.

"Well, in those years I was telling you about, it was dreadful how I cheated the Lord out of His due. Once in a long while I paid a little to our church, but I didn't give a cent to anything else. Foreign Mission Sabbath was my rheumatiz day, reg'lar, and I didn't go to church. Home mission day was headache day with me allers, and I stayed away from meetin'. Bible Society day I'd gen'rally a tech of neuralgy, so I didn't feel like goin' out, and I stayed home. Tract Society day I'd begin to be afraid I was goin' to be deaf, and I oughtn't to be out in the wind, so I stayed in doors; and on the Sabbath for helping the Publication Society, like as not my corns were unusual troublesome, and I didn't feel able to get out.

"Wife wanted to take a religious paper once, but I wouldn't hear to't. Told her that was nonsense. I didn't believe any

of the apostles ever took religious papers. The Bible was enough for them, and it ought to be enough for other folks.

"And yet, I never even thought I wasn't doin' right. I'd come into it sort of gradual, and didn't think much about giving, anyhow, except as a sort of losing business.

"Well, my little girl Nannie was about eight years old then, and I was dreadfully proud of her, for she was a smart little thing. One Sabbath night we were sitting by the fire, and Nannie'd been saying her catechism, and by and by she got kind of quiet and sober, and all of a sudden she turned to me, and says she, 'Pa, will we have to pay rent in heaven?'

"'What?' says I, lookin' down at her, kind of astonished-like.

"'Will we have to pay rent in heaven?' says she, again.

"'Why, no,' says I. 'What made you think that?'

"Well, I couldn't get out of her for a time what she did mean. Nannie didn't know much about rent, anyway, for we'd never had to pay any, livin' in our own house. But at last I found out that she'd heard 'some men talking about me, and one of them said, 'Well, he's bound to be awful poor in the next world, I reckon. There ain't much of *his* riches laid up in heaven.' And as the only real poor folks that Nannie'd ever known were some folks down at the village that had been turned out-of-doors because they couldn't pay their rent, that's what put it into Nannie's head that maybe I'd have to pay rent in heaven.

"Well, wife went on and talked to Nannie, and explained to her about the 'many mansions' in our 'Father's house,' you know, but I didn't listen much. I was mad to think Seth Brown dared to talk about me in that way; right before Nannie, too.

"I fixed up some pretty bitter things to say to Seth the next time I met him, and I wasn't very sorry to see him next day in his cart. I began at him right off. He listened to everything that I sputtered out, and then he said, 'Well, deacon, if you think the bank of heaven's got anything in it for you, I'm glad of it; but I've never seen you making any deposits,' and then he drove off.

"Well, I walked over to my black-berry patch, and sat down and thought, and the more I thought the worse I felt.