

## Hope's Quiet Hour.

### Stored Treasure.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.—S. Matt. vi. 19, 20.

How familiar those words are, and yet how little attention we pay to them. The world is full of busy people who are acting as if their business in living were chiefly to pile up treasure on earth. One day is considered to have been a profitable day because more money than usual has been secured. Another day appears to have been wasted because no addition has been made to the heap of earthly treasure. And yet we know that our Lord was speaking the truth when He warned us that the earthly gain, so eagerly sought, could not be kept by any mortal man. A man may be a multi-millionaire, may invest his money in the best securities, and yet utter destitution may suddenly come upon him. There was a rich man once—our Lord sadly called him a "fool"—who felt quite secure because he had much goods laid up for many years. How easily God swept aside his wealth, when He said to that poor man who thought himself rich: "This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

Yesterday I stood beside the cold body which had a few days before been the home where a man lived, and I listened to the solemn truism which we all know so well and heed so little: "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." It is strange that we can act as if it were a reasonable thing to spend many years—the best years—of life in heaping up treasure on earth, when each one knows that the words of the Psalmist are true: "When he dieth he shall carry nothing away."

A man once sat in a church in Glasgow and listened to the words recorded in the fifth chapter of Genesis. If you look up that chapter you will probably think it very uninteresting, for it is a record of the genealogy, age and death of the patriarchs from Adam to Noah. Nothing there to convert a man, one might think; and yet that listener went out of the church a converted man, with his outlook in life completely changed. Why? Because he heard of men who lived for hundreds of years on the earth, and yet the record of each long life—except one—ended with the words, "and he died." The listener suddenly realized the fact, which he had known long before, that he also must die. What next? No one but a fool could live as if this world were all, when God might at any moment summon him to give an account.

If we are going to make a success of this earthly life, which is only ours to use, not to keep, we must make our chief aim and ambition something worth while, something that can be stored up. The noble Carey used to say: "My business is serving the Lord. I cobble shoes to pay expenses." So it is with the great Apostle to the Gentiles. His business was preaching the glad tidings of Christianity, bringing light into the darkest places he could find—he made tents, by the way, to pay necessary expenses. His advice to other people was to work honestly for reasonable pay. Was it in order that they might become rich men, above the common crowd? No, it was that they might have something to give away to those in need (Eph. iv. 28).

St. James is very severe when speaking of rich people who come to church grandly dressed, securing the best seats for themselves, and giving nothing but advice to their poor brothers. He reminds us that faith is dead and useless unless it blossoms out in good works.

Once a lady called on Mrs. M— to ask her for a subscription in aid of some poor neighbors, who had been burned out and had lost all their possessions.

Mrs. M— said she would pray for her afflicted neighbors, but—as she needed something very particularly for herself just then—she would not be able to contribute anything towards the fund. When the visitor had gone away, disappointed, little Amy said to her mother: "You always pray instead of giving, don't you? It's better to pray than to give, 'cause then you can have all your money for yourself. I believe in praying and keeping your money."

Mrs. M— did not answer, but she felt very far from comfortable. A little later she overheard her two children, who were talking in grown-up style. Amy was saying:

"No, I never give anything, never. I pray."

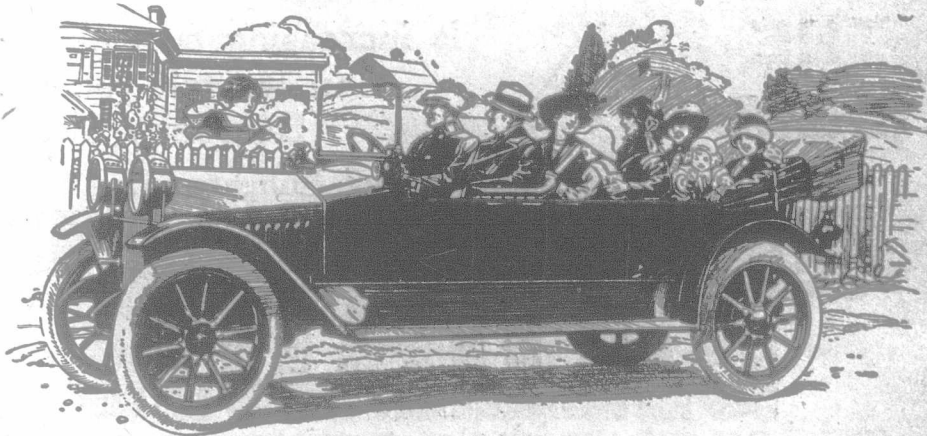
Her little sister—who represented a visitor—pleaded: "But this is a worthy object. The poor man has broken his leg and has six children."

Mrs. M— heard all her favorite excuses set forth, and saw for the first time that they were excuses she would never have dared to offer to the Master she thought she was serving. Later on she found that her husband, who was kind-hearted, but made no profession of religion, had been held back largely by her easy, selfish Christianity. She had never thought it worth while to sacrifice herself or her own luxuries to help forward in any way the cause of Christ, and a religion with so little enthusiasm about it could never inspire an outsider. When we are selfish, and indifferent to the welfare of our fellows, we are doing terrible harm to the cause we profess to love. If a man is enthusiastic about any favorite hobby, he proves it by the expenditure of money and time. If a woman makes a specialty of dressing well, she cheerfully pays out money and time for that object. If we really care about Christ, and about the welfare (physical, mental, and spiritual), of our brothers and His, we shall not wait until we have all possible luxuries for ourselves before we spend money for His cause. There should be no feeling of sacrifice in offering any gift of money or service to Him Whose wonderful love has won our hearts. At an enthusiastic meeting of a thousand members of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew of New York, held recently, one of the speakers said that a man had once brought him a generous offering for missions. His pleased thanks were cut short by the giver, who asked what he was thanking him for. "It was just his expression that he was a soldier and servant of Christ."

It is a privilege, not a sacrifice, to have the opportunity of copying the Good Samaritan, and helping a brother who has fallen by the wayside. It is a dead loss to be trying to be "an economical Christian," paying out as little as possible for your religion. The best investment you made last year was the money you spent wisely and generously for the cause of Christ and humanity.

Even from the selfish point of view, it is a poor economy which saves money at the expense of character. Even here on earth, kindness pays better than wealth, it gives more happiness, wins more friends, and is worth infinitely more than selfish, grasping miserliness. A few years ago two brothers were found by a neighbor in their home. One had starved to death, and the other was dying from lack of food. Yet they had with them, in actual cash, more than a thousand dollars. Gold in their hands—all wasted. May God keep us all from wasting His property—our health, time, talents, money, and life.

Just as I wrote that last word the postman arrived, bringing a card from "A Country Woman," expressing her pleasure in having been able to reach out and help an over-burdened sister to carry her heavy load. Thank God, there are many servants of Christ who feel it a glorious privilege to offer Him a gift of love through a needy comrade of His. How He treasures those shining gifts, counting them over and over as a miser does his gold. Not one cup of cold water, given in the spirit of love, will ever be forgotten by the King Who stoops to lift it from your eager hands. Life is such a grand opportunity, so full of chances to be kind. Don't let us waste it by making earthly treasure or ambition our object in life. Men often "die poor," though leaving millions of dollars to their heirs; but we shall be



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