

Situated in the poorer part of the city, near the riverside, is St. Paul's Church, a dull, heavy building, but after the Cathedral and the church of St. Jacques—containing the tomb of Rubens—the most interesting ecclesiastical structure in Antwerp. At the upper end of the churchyard, built against the wall of the church, is a representation in grotto work and stone of the Crucifixion and events connected with it. On the topmost ledge of rock stands a large crucifix. At its base is a skeleton, while round the cross a serpent twines. Mary stands on one side, gazing at her dying son, and on the other the beloved disciple, looking at the spectator and pointing him to the cross. Other figures occupy the lower edges, and under the main archway is the sepulchre, with the horrors of purgatory depicted on either side.

### God's Work.

(Lina Orman Cooper.)

Many years ago, there came to the door of a celebrated monastery a man asking to be received as a lay-brother.

'I am anxious to serve God,' he pleaded. 'Make me what you like.'

The Abbot was a stern man. He wanted to prove whether the supplicant was in earnest.

'What can you do?' he enquired. 'Can you read and write?'

'Neither can I do,' humbly replied the stranger.

'Can you illuminate our parchments, or paint the walls of our chapel?'

'No! I can do nothing like that. But'—and the thin, eager face brightened—'I can cook!'

So, for twenty-seven long years, Brother Lawrence cooked for the monks. Then he died.

But before he died he left us a little book. I hold it in my hand as I write. It is called

'The Practice of the Presence of God.'

In it Lawrence tells of the pain he first felt at being nothing better than a cook. He so envied those learned brethren who could pore over the musty old parchments all day and turn them into gold. He envied the choristers who sang, the musicians who could play. He envied the preacher who spoke in the pulpit, and the master who taught in the schools. All these were, he considered, doing God's work. He was only—cooking!

Then one day he dreamed a dream, wherein was set forth the dignity of all work, and he concludes his story with saying,—

'I found it was not change of work I needed. It was change of motive. From henceforward, I made my pies and cooked my capons for the Lord—not for my brethren. And, behold! I found that cooking was even God's work!'

Now, I think this simple narrative from across the many years comes to each of us to-day.

Some think this is the beginning of a new century. Yet there may be no new work for many of us to do. We do not need such. If necessary, let there be change of motive. Let our daily, trivial tasks be done as unto the Lord and not unto me. The baby must be minded, the socks darned, the dusting done. About even these little duties we hear a voice saying,—

'Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently' (Jer. xlviii. 10, marg.).

Now, a dictionary will tell us that negligently means 'carelessly' or 'heedlessly.' Are you doing your work 'carelessly,' dear sisters, because you want to give more time to what you consider is God's work? Nay! do every bit of housework as well as you can, or this warlike verse will surely testify against you.

We have, perhaps, often heard of the servant girl who showed she had given her heart to do God's work by sweeping under the mats! A poet has sung just such an action,—

'Who sweeps a room as by God's laws  
Makes that and the action fine.'

Something very much the same was once said to me by another housemaid. She enquired one day,—

'How can I work for God when all my time is taken up in housework? Yet, I should like to do something for him.'

I turned her to St. John ii., and showed her how the servants there contributed to the glory of our Saviour's first miracle by obedience. 'They filled the waterpots to the brim.'

Her face lit up a few days after this conversation when I asked her how she was getting on.

'Oh! I always fill the water-jugs now, and don't leave rims of dust in the corners!'

That girl had solved the question of God's work as Lawrence solved it hundreds of years before her. It was just what her hand found to do.

There may be no grand prospects before you and me in all the twentieth century. But we can live in the practice of the presence of God. In that presence, everything we touch will turn into 'pure gold.'

An old Scotch woman proved this to be true.

'I can pray without ceasing,' quoth old Janet, 'tho' I hae ne'er an instant to spare. In the morn when I open my eyes, I pray, "Lord, open the eyes o' my understandin' that I may weel understand thy laws." Whilst dressin' I pray, "Lord, clothe me wi' the robe o' righteousness." At the washstand I pray, "Lord, may I be washed in the fountain opened for sin an' uncleanness." When kindling the fire, I pray, "O Lord! kindle a fire o' love in this cold heart o' mine." Whilst sweepin' I pray, "Lord, may my heart be swept clean o' all its abominations."'

Here the pivot of life was prayer. Is ours the same?

Let our cry be, not so much for great things to do as for grace to serve God perfectly out of an honest heart. The greatest saint I know is a girl who has never left her home. She controls the servants, keeps accounts, struggles in the farm, entertains guests, nurses her aged parents, provides the food, mends the clothes. She is doing what she can. One day I know she will hear the cry, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! Thou hast been faithful over a few things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

No one will have power with men who has not power with God for men; the victory may seem to be won whilst we persuade men, but it has to be previously won in the place of intercession. This place was to Jesus a place of agony and death: and there is no soul-winning without pain and sacrifice.—James Stalker.

### Sixteen Blind Men Converted

(A. P. Graves, D.D., in the 'Standard'.)

In a ministry of half a century there was no occasion of more thrilling interest than when I visited a blind asylum and led sixteen of its inmates to Christ. It was in a western town. As I stood upon the platform of the opera house one night, just before preaching, I saw a man entering the door holding the hand of another. I soon saw that he was at the head of quite a long company, each holding the hand of the other. I at once concluded he was the superintendent of the blind asylum. He led his company down the aisle and seated them. I preached tenderly and the blind men listened earnestly and with apparent deep interest. At the close of the service the superintendent invited me to visit the asylum and address the inmates. That night I went to my bed with prayer and anxiousness for the souls of these blind men.

The next morning at the close of the early meeting I repaired to the asylum, and said to the superintendent my work was pressing, but I would give him thirty minutes. He at once called the seventy-five inmates of the institution together, and after a few remarks on their soul's welfare, I asked, 'How many of you are Christians? The hands of sixty persons went up quickly. I then asked how many were not Christians? Sixteen hands went up at once. I then invited these to a room alone. They sat around me in a circle with ready ears and anxious hearts. I at once gave them the words of Jesus in John iii., 14, 15: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.' I explained to them that God required of the thousands who had been bitten in the wilderness to look and be saved. And that the salvation was not in the brazen serpent on the pole, nor the look nor their feelings, but God said that every man that looketh shall live. The saving was because God said so. But if there had been any blind persons among that large company, they could not look and would have had no chance. But now Jesus says that everyone that believeth.

Could you have seen those sixteen blind souls, waiting and anxious, grasp this thought. They believed at once and their countenances lighted up in the brightness of him who is the light of the world. And in twenty minutes from the time I took my seat in the circle of these blind fellow-travellers to eternity they all gave evidence that they were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

### Ignoramus.

The late Bishop of Derry, Ireland, used to be very hard upon sceptics. 'You young men,' he once said to a congregation of undergraduates at Oxford, 'are very proud to call yourselves "Agnostics." It's a Greek word. I don't think you're equally fond of its Latin equivalent, namely, "Ignoramus."'

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