

**HOW TO OVERCOME DIFFIDENCE.**

Forty years ago Channing, that eminent philanthropist and founder of New England Unitarianism, wrote to a friend: "What a mystery this diffidence is! I confess that I do not understand it, though it has palsied and unmanned me enough to make itself known. Before the multitudes I am strong, but weak before the individual. This is no sign of cowardice, for brave men discover it; it is no sign of humility, for I have seen it in the proud and aspiring. One would say, at first sight, that it is an indication of selfishness, a proof that a man is busy always with himself, anxious how he shall be viewed: and yet is it not to be seen sometimes in the disinterested? Its commonness in childhood seems to indicate that it is primitive. There are two great means of overcoming it. The first is, mixing with society, hardening ourselves by facing those whom we fear, the process that makes veterans out of raw recruits; this is fighting diffidence on its own ground. The second method of conquering this invisible foe is far more noble. It is the rational and moral one. It consists in self-culture and self-respect; in resolving to be, not to seem, worthy of regard; in estimating ourselves wisely, and feeling that others' judgments make us neither better nor worse; in becoming self-forgetful, by taking a generous interest in others; in adopting noble, immutable principles of action, and adhering to them through good report and evil report; in learning the weakness and follies of those whom we dread, while at the same time we are just to their good qualities; in putting down the passion for distinction, and in rising to a sense of God's presence with us. Unhappily, diffidence is apt to produce a despair of our power to conquer it."

This last remark reveals the utter insufficiency of the two methods above named, where they are tried in human strength alone, where there is not a conscious life in Christ. Noble, indeed, were these words of Channing. His methods of overcoming diffidence, partial in statement though they be, are worthy of transmission from age to age. Nevertheless, that power to fully subdue personal diffidence is deeper than mere self-culture. Christ dwelling within the soul can alone give to us the perfect victory over this and all other forms of weakness. Freedom in Christ is the only real disenthralment. We find him a conqueror—not partial, but complete, not occasional, but constant—when we know him to be our present, personal Saviour; receive him as our divine Teacher, our Atoning Sacrifice, our ever living Intercessor, our enthroned King.

Such a victory in Christ will start the new-born soul on the highway of genuine self-culture. Rather, we may say, Christ will then become the unerring spring or source of all our rational methods of self-subjugation. We will watch, but not with a vigilance which is our own. We "resolve to be, not to seem, worthy of regard;" but that resolve is the fruit of a deep, divine, sub-soil of experience with Jesus. We "adopt noble, immutable principles of action," but only as the sons of God, having received Christ, daily walking with him, believing fully in him who alone is the author and the revealer of "immutable principles of action."

We need not pause to explain the secret of this power in Christ to overcome human weaknesses; it is enough to know that it is a divine gift to the believer in him. That power by which we become the sons of God at conversion is a gift; so it is in the subsequent life of the Christian, even to the end—power to dethrone self and overcome all imbecility incident to our fallen humanity is God's unmerited grace. Who may limit this

power? Who will hopelessly resign himself to the bondage of any appetite, habit, prejudice, or inward debility, when omnipotent energy is proffered to all who will "receive" Christ? Look around! Behold how many witnesses attest to the excellency of spiritual subjugation through him! The "fear of man which bringeth a snare" is gone; that diffidence which is too often the manifestation of self-love or pride, has given place to holy, scriptural boldness; that apologetic tone has risen to the voice of clear, emphatic utterance. One can hardly conceive of the majestic progress of the Church of God on earth were all Christians thoroughly Christ's. How soon in desert places would "the fir tree come up instead of the thorn." That day is coming. Meanwhile, let each one upon whom the light has fallen, and to whom the privilege of receiving Christ has been made known, exclaim daily, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

**THE LORD'S SUPPER A GOSPEL TO THE EYE.**

BY REV. J. L. JENKINS, PITSFIELD.

Saint Paul's knowledge of the Lord's Supper was received from the Lord Himself. It is reasonable therefore to think it ample, minute and exact. An effect said by him to be accomplished by it may be believed to be an effect designed to be accomplished. Such an effect is stated in the words: "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." The word "show" carries its meaning on its face. Merchants show their goods, make a display of them. Manufacturers show, that is, display, their fabrics. Kings show to royal visitors armies, navies, make a display of them, arrange to have them seen. To show means this:—it indicates a purpose to make such an exhibition as shall attract attention, cause what is exhibited to be seen. This purpose is in the Lord's Supper. It is to make something seen. It was instituted to show something. This something is said in the text to be the death of Christ. This event it puts before men, and causes men to see it. So much is on the surface of the word "show," as used by St. Paul in the passage quoted.

The translators of our Bible made the English word "show" stand for a Greek word not elsewhere so translated. The exceptional rendering here is evidently to make prominent the fact that one purpose of the Lord's Supper is display, exhibition, and that of a most effective kind. When men partake of the Lord's Supper it is not said that they benefit themselves or edify one another. They make a show, an exhibition. This is what our translators would express by their exceptional rendering of the Greek word. If we study the Greek word behind the English word "show," we find it expressing an act of display restricted to a single manner or mode. The word is used in the following passages: "So hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel." "Declaring the testimony of God." Peter and John "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Paul and Barnabas "preached the word of God in the synagogues." The Greek word used by St. Paul in connection with the Lord's Supper means to proclaim. It bears to the ear the relation that "to show" bears to the eye. We have then St. Paul's testimony to the fact that the Lord's Supper is a proclamation. His language can mean nothing else. Dean Alford says:—"The act of eating and drinking is a proclamation of the death of the Lord till He come." Knapp, the German theologian, says: "The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a significant sermon on the death of Jesus." Dean Stanley quotes the saying: "The Lord's Supper is a living sermon, an acted discourse." It

is preaching addressed to the eye. The discerning men who made our translation clearly perceived this, and so substituted for *preach* the word *show*.

Showing is preaching to the eye. Our preaching is quite exclusively to the ear. It is not so in the Bible narrative. In the Old Testament times, if anything happened that should be preached about, a memorial was put up making its appeal and giving its teaching to the eye. Jesus used the eye. We do not. Organ, singing, preaching all are for the ear. We say to the eye, "We have no need of thee." A sample of our acting appears in our treatment of the Lord's Supper. It was instituted to be seen. Its object was to attract attention to the death of Christ. How could it do this if not seen? By its very nature it requires spectators. We have expelled the Lord's Supper from its rightful place; put it in concealment and allowed it no chance to exert its natural, legitimate and designed influence. It is preaching to the eye, and so a converting ordinance. Some who will not hear with the ear and be converted, may see with the eye and be converted. Says Mr. Barnes: "It"—the observance of the Lord's Supper, "should be public. Its public observance often has a most impressive effect on those who witness its observance." Many can indorse this statement. Ought not then the Lord's Supper to be so commemorated as in the most effective way to show the Lord's death? A church has few graver duties than to use rightly this sacrament, to use it not for its own comfort alone, but as a means of good to others. They have a partial gospel who have a preaching addressed only to the ear. Should the gospel have its two-fold proclamation, to eye and ear, might we not hope for a wider acceptance of it?

In view of St. Paul's teaching, can it be counted a right use of the Lord's Supper to administer it only in the presence of communicants. And what habit can be more unfortunate than that of many Christian parents who send their children from church when the Lord Supper is to be celebrated. How can they know and feel the death of Christ if it be never shown to them?

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