

IF I SHOULD DIE TO-NIGHT.

IF I should die to-night,
 My friends would look upon my quiet face
 Before they laid it in its resting place,
 And deem that death had left it almost fair;
 And laying snow-white fingers 'gainst my hair
 Would smoothe it down with tearful tenderness,
 And fold my hands with lingering caress,—
 Poor hands, so empty and so cold to-night.

If I should die to-night,
 My friends would call to mind, with loving thought,
 Some kindly deeds the icy hands had wrought;
 Some gentle words the frozen lips had said;
 Errands on which the willing feet had sped.
 The memory of my selfishness and pride.
 My hasty words, all would be put aside.
 And so I should be loved and mourned to-night.

If I should die to night,
 E'en hearts estranged would turn once more to me,
 Recalling other days remorsefully.
 The eyes that chill me with averted glance
 Would look upon me as of yore, perchance,
 And soften in the old familiar way;
 For who would war with dull unconscious clay!
 So I might rest forgiv'n of all to-night.

O friends! I pray to-night,
 Keep not your kisses for my dead cold brow:
 The way is lonely, let me feel them now.
 Think gently of me, I am travel-worn,
 My faltering feet are pierced by many a thorn.
 Forgive, O hearts estranged, forgive, I plead!
 When dreamless rest is mine, I shall not need
 The tenderness for which I long to-night.

THE following incident, according to Mr. James B. Wasson, in the *North American Review*, happened not long ago in one of the largest cities in this country (the United States): An important church in the city owed a large sum of money to a very wealthy man, one of its leading members. But though the money was overdue, the church officers felt no anxiety, as their creditor not only appeared to have the interests of the church at heart, but was abundantly able to wait until it should be able to pay him, and, indeed, frequently expressed himself to that effect. At this point he was proved to be guilty of having broken one of the ten commandments,—which one it is immaterial to say here,—and as the transgression was a matter of common fame, the officers of the church were compelled to take cognizance of it. They did so, and finding him guilty, declared him suspended from membership until he should give some proof of having repented. The offender, though acknowledging the charge against him, was furious at the audacity of the church in presuming to discipline him, and sent word to the officers that if he was not reinstated within a week, he should at once proceed to collect the money which the church owed him. He was reinstated within three days, or as soon as the meeting of the officers could be convened, and is to-day a member in good standing in that church.

Some few years ago, in a small town in the cen-

tral part of this State there was a church which had recently called to the pastorate a young man of strong religious convictions and fervid piety. He had not been pastor long before he learned that the leading member of his church, and the wealthiest and most influential man in the town, was living in open sin. It had been a matter of notoriety for years, but the former pastor, a weak, good natured man, having an eye to the rich man's very liberal contributions, discreetly ignored the matter. The new pastor, however, was a man of very different character, and, after privately admonishing the culprit to no effect, publicly cut him off from the membership of the church. What was the result? The sinner, of course, withdrew his contributions, and so great was his influence in the town, that the church members generally condemned the clergyman for so offending him. Some actually upbraided him for driving a good paying member away by needlessly raking up a little private matter that was nobody's business. The poor man's salary was so reduced that he was compelled to resign. This, of course, was a triumph for the rich magnate. A man was called as pastor who had no desire to stir up unpleasant matters, and was only too willing to conciliate a man of wealth and position. The rich man, still living in open sin, is an honored member of the church, while the clergyman, who tried to end the scandal of his membership is looked upon as a sort of quixotic crank, and with this reputation earned by his uncompromising devotion to principle, he finds it impossible to obtain any permanent or desirable charge. Multitudes of other instances, differing in many details, but all showing the subserviency of American Christianity to the money power, might be adduced. The churches in the United States do not perhaps worship wealth; but they conciliate it and toady to it to such an extent that their message of universal brotherhood becomes a farce. In no department of American life is the power of money greater than in the churches. But neither the churches in their corporate capacity, nor the clergymen in their individual capacity ever think of denouncing the social system which allows this state of things to exist, and even throws over it the sacred sanction of law. The early church retained its wonderful spirituality as long as it was obliged, on account of persecution to meet in caves and catacombs. But when it became rich and prosperous, it rapidly degenerated, until it lost nearly all its pristine faith and purity. American Christianity to-day is confronted by a problem that involves not only its well-being but its very existence. Shall it float along the tide of worldly conformity adjusting its lofty ideals to the low standard of the money-worshippers? or shall it do what one of the catechisms says every Christian should do, renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, no matter at what cost of popularity or worldly advantage.