

## The Nearest Duty.

BY SARAH A. GIBBS.

My soul was stirred; I prayed: "Let me  
Do some great work, so purely  
To right life's wrongs that I shall know  
That I have loved thee surely."  
My lips sent forth their eager cry,  
The while my heart beat faster:  
"For some great deed to prove my love,  
Send me, send me, my Master!"

From out the silence came a voice,  
Saying: "If God thou fearest,  
Rise up and do, thy whole life through,  
The duty that lies nearest.  
The friendly word, the kindly deed,  
Though small the act in seeming,  
Shall in the end unto thy soul  
Prove mightier than thy dreaming.

"The cup of water to the faint,  
Or rest unto the weary,  
The light thou giv'st another's life  
Shall make thine own less dreary;  
And boundless realms of faith and love  
Will wait for thy possessing;  
Not creeds, but deeds, if thou would'st  
win  
Unto thy soul a blessing."

And so I wait with peaceful heart,  
Content to do his pleasure,  
Not caring if the world shall mock  
At smallness of the measure;  
Of thoughts or deeds or daily life,  
He knows the true endeavour;  
To do his will, to seek his face—  
And he will fail me never.

## A Twentieth Century Church.

No past attainments will be sufficient for the church of the present day. The fathers wrought like heroes. We cherish them, and pay our tribute for what we have and are, to their faithfulness. But in this age of increasing achievement and growing intellectual and ethical light, the workmen of to-day, to be worthy of the fathers, must improve on them. To fall in the improvement will mean to fall behind the spirit of the time. Our Gospel is sure and steadfast. Jesus Christ is King. The heavens have opened to let him through and show us eternal life. But if we are to be true to the blessed revelation given us once for all, we must clothe it in the thoughts and feelings of men and women who live now. The people of to-day do not want,

and will not have, the excrescences of a seventeenth century proclamation, but if the preaching of this day of grace is to win and compel men to serve God in newness of life, it must reach them on the plane which now absorbs their thoughts and activities.

Moral homilies will not do. The living ethics and pulsing life of Jesus must be brought to light. One cannot be a Christian to-day and continue a moral reprobate. Christianity, to be anything at all now, must live and move and have its being in practical everyday conduct and life. Empty rhapsodies divorced from vital living will empty the churches. The sweetest and most potent word to-day is that of Jesus. The great, absorbing question is being formulated in the quick, sensitive heart. What would Jesus do? If this vital relation to our Saviour in all the personal affairs of our life is not brought home, it is clearly seen why so much of culture, refinement and intelligence seek a happiness apart from the church, and in the temporary gaieties of a fast age. As sometimes conducted the church is a veritable tomb, imparting feeling to be shunned. There is no life-giving water or nourishment. God's faithful ministers are seeing the need. The greatest era of Christianity is not only here, but it is coming in more revealing power. Men will tire of fads. Dazzling but empty theories will have their day. Every other resource will be exhausted! But meanwhile the fundamental and eternal value of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will become more luminous, and men will embrace it with a readiness and joy not known before. Not that those who have already received it received only a partial recompense; but greater numbers, vastly greater, are to find it the only healer of sore hearts, the only anchor for hope, and the only rest for reason's painful search. In full realization of the demands upon the church, and of its paramount value to the highest interests of men, it must be given right of way. When we will learn its full significance, society, industry, commerce and government will touch it at every point. The time must come when the house of God will be open, like the temple of old, seven days in the week. When no clubs or secret orders will take the place of this primal source of life. When men will learn to see whence their blessings flow, and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, as the waters cover the great deep.—Omaha Christian Advocate.