

ONE THING NEEDFUL.

By Rev. Principal John McNicol, B.D.

It has been truly said, that "the supernatural value of our actions depends on the degree of our union with God at the time we do them." This vital principle has a searching application to the work of the Sunday School teacher. The effectiveness of his work is determined by the depth and intensity of his spiritual life. Without doubt, therefore, the teacher's spiritual life is the most important part of his equipment. It is the one thing needful. He should devote himself to its cultivation with earnest and resolute care.

The conviction of the reality of spiritual things will soon grow dim, if one's spiritual life is neglected. We are not likely to bring others to believe in the reality of Christ, if He is not an abiding reality to ourselves. The fatal weakness of much of our work is unreality. It is not an easy thing always to maintain a profound and clear consciousness that the facts of the Christian faith are real. The drift of the world about us is all the other way. Many of the forces that operate upon us every day, are selfish and materialistic. Unless we set our faces towards God continually, to live the life hid with Christ in Him, we cannot expect that spiritual facts will remain real to us, much less hope for that power which will enable us to make them real to others.

He that would train others up in the knowledge of Christ must himself be conformed to the image of Christ. We cannot lead others to a higher level than that on which we are living. The important thing, therefore, for the teacher is to see that his own inner life is yielded to the will, and molded by the Spirit of Christ. He should cultivate that wholesome habit of the soul which is taken up with beholding the glory of the Lord. It is thus that we are transformed into His likeness. Henry Drummond tells of a young lady whose beautiful, winsome life was the wonder of all who knew her. The secret of it was discovered by a friend in these words, engraved in a locket she wore, "Whom having not seen, ye love."

Furthermore, the work that tells is that which is backed by intense, persevering prayer. In his little book, *Secret Prayer*, Bishop Moule tells of a teacher who had been the means of bringing scholar after scholar into a new life of genuine conversion and devotion to Christ. After her death, her diary was found to contain, at some intervals, these three entries: "Resolved to pray for each scholar by name"; "Resolved to wrestle in prayer for each scholar by name"; "Resolved to wrestle for each scholar by name, and to expect an answer." It is a life like this that moves the springs of supernatural power.—*The Teachers' Monthly*.

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PRAYER.

O God, may Thy Holy Spirit in all things direct and rule our hearts, and guide us into all truth. Put upon us the whole armour of God, so that we may so pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal. In dark and cloudy days, as well as in life's sunny hours, may we hear Thee say, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Endue us with the knowledge of Thy will, and give us grace to do it. Defend us in all assaults of our enemies, that we, surely trusting in Thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries. Let Thy blessing rest upon all who are near and dear to us wherever they may be, and keep us Thine for ever, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

WHO GETS THE CARNATIONS?

As he stepped down from the pulpit, the people crowded around him. "O, Doctor, that was a precious sermon!" "That did my very soul good!" "God bless you, Doctor, that strengthens me." "I thank you from my heart!"

Anything wrong about these expressions? No; they seemed sincere, with no taint of flattery in them. If the hearers felt thus, it is very proper for them to say so.

The Sunday before there was just as good a sermon. But nobody took the preacher by the hand. He stood alone in the altar, with a sad hunger in his eyes as he watched the people—his own people,—turn their backs on him and go out. Then he took his Bible and hat, and followed, his feet heavy with disappointment, fearing that he had delivered the message so poorly that it had helped nobody.

However, it had been enjoyed, it had done good. But the preacher was only the pastor, and no one seemed to think it worth while to speak a word of appreciation to him. The "doctor" was a visitor. That the only difference.

That's like a young man buying dozens of fragrant carnations for young ladies in others' homes, and never giving a single one to his own dear mother and sisters, who cook his food, wash and repair his clothes, keep his room, and make him a pleasant home.

Certainly, say the sincere word of appreciation to the visiting minister; everybody appreciates appreciation. But don't give him all the carnations. Don't starve your own dear, hard-worked pastor. If he helps you, do tell him so. It will do him good; will make him a better preacher. Try it next Sunday. Will you?—Selected.

THE MOTHER'S PRAYER.

Starting forth on life's rough way,

Father, guide them!

O! we know not what of harm

May betide them;

'Neath the shadow of Thy wing,

Father, hide them;

Waking, sleeping, Lord, we pray,

Go beside them.

When in prayer they cry to Thee,

Do Thou hear them;

From the stains of sin and shame

Do Thou clear them;

'Mid the quicksands and the rocks,

Do Thou steer them;

In temptation, trial, grief,

Be Thou near them.

Unto Thee we give them up,

Lord, receive them;

In the world we know must be

Much to grieve them,—

Many striving oft and strong

To deceive them;

Trustful in Thy hands of love

We must leave them.

—William Cullen Bryant.

Never trifle with one sin. It is like a little child which, as the poet has said, may hold a hurricane in its grasp. The next sin you commit may have a mighty effect in the blighting of your life. You do not know the streams that may flow from the fountain; for sin is a fountain—not a mere act, but a fountain of evil.—Andrew A. Bonar.

"None of the best things in life can be proved. Love defies analysis and God hides himself from speculation. There is no path to the highest experiences through the intellect alone. A man repents not of his wrong thinking but of his emotions gone astray."

The mysteries of God are beautiful to the believing soul, like tender lights and shadows of the dawn which promise growing day. They are tokens of inexhaustible riches of acquaintance with our Father in his house for evermore.

THE TRUST THAT TRIUMPHS.*

For all that men have trusted Christ in the past we may trust Him to-day. Every triumphant Christian, every martyr, every hero of the faith, and the Church of God itself are all witnesses to the truth that our Lord is to be unwaveringly trusted for everything needful.

Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the rock that naught can move.
—Anon.

"And Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went."

I know not where His islands lift

Their fronded palms in air;

I only know I cannot drift

Beyond His love and care.

—Whittier.

It is the trustful eye that sees farthest into the heart of God. Ways that are dark to wisdom are bright to faith.

No one man did a greater work for the race than Abraham. God is calling us all to a life of such faith as will enable us to exert an influence for blessing through the years. But to live it we too must heed His command to "come out and be separate" from the life of sin. Have we the spirit of Abraham?

A sacred burden is this life to bear:
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly;
Stand up and walk beneath it steadily:
—Kemble.

Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin.
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.

The secret of faith, the secret of endurance, the secret of success in the Christian life, is "seeing Him who is invisible." We get all our faith by keeping the eye firmly fixed upon Him in whom faith has its beginning and end. Would you trust most? Then look at Jesus more.

Marvelous and sad though it is, most of us are more willing to lean upon broken sticks of humanity than upon the unfailing staff of Omnipotence. We trust men daily and forget Him who alone is to be trusted.

They who seek things eternal
Shall rise to light eternal
On wings of lowly faith.

—Gounod.

There is a difference between a trust-in-heart and sure circumstances. Our faith may be calm and sure though home and friends and possessions and prospects be utterly taken away. Wars and calamities cannot disturb the serenity of the heart which knows that God is God and that God is love.

A Prayer for Faith: Bestow upon us a vision of Thyself, O Christ, that our wavering faith may be strengthened. May nothing disturb us. Forbid that we should lend our lives to the littleness of the world's way, when the greatness of the eternal life may now be ours. Impart unto us the faith that fails not in stress or storm. So keep us constant in loyalty to thy service and to thyself, in the name of our Master. Amen.

Good prayers never come creeping home. I am sure I shall receive either what I ask or what I should ask.—Bishop Hall.

God, who created the Light, will provide for the children who walk in its beams, and God, who made the twilight and the darkness, is Father also of the children of twilight and of darkness.—Dorothea Price Hughes.

*Christian Endeavor Topic for March 10, "Lessons from the Patriarchs," II. Abraham; Heb. 11:8-19.