

IRREVERENCE.

It was a common saying of the Rev. Dr. Washburn, that unbelief comes oftener from irreverent association than from intellectual doubt. The sneer of a Voltaire has killed more than all his arguments. A jesting tone of talk on religious truth, a habit of reckless criticism on religious things, is to "take the name of God in vain" as the truly vulgar oaths; and when I hear him who calls himself a Christian, or a gentleman, indulging in a burlesque of this sort, I at once recognize some moral defect in him. Intellect without reverence is the head of a man joined to a beast. There are many who think it a proof of wit; but it is the cheapest sort of wit, and shows of much lack of brains as of moral feeling. I would say it with emphasis to each Christian who hears me, never indulge in that habit, nor allow sacred things to be jested at without rebuke, but keep them as you would the miniature of your mother, for no vulgar hands to touch. There is an anecdote of Boyle, that he never pronounced the name of God without a perceptible pause, and whatever you think, I recognize in it the dictate of a wise heart. We need this reverence in the air of our social life, and its neglect will paralyze our piety.

WHAT A SMILE DID.

A lady of position and property, anxious about her neighbors, provided religious services for them. She was very deaf—could scarcely hear at all. On one occasion one of her preachers managed to make her understand him, and at the close of their conversation asked:

"But what part do you take in the work?"

"O," she replied, "I smile them in and smile them out."

Very soon the preacher saw the result of her generous, loving sympathy in a multitude of broad shouldered, hard fisted men who entered the place of worship, delighted to get a smile from her as she used to stand in the door way to receive them. Why do not the working classes attend the house of God? They would in greater numbers, if self-denying Christ-loving Christians would "smile them in and smile them out."—*London Christian*.

DON'T STEP THERE.

A man started out for church one icy Sunday morning, and presently came to a place where a little boy was standing who, with a choking voice, said,

"Please don't step there."

"Why not?"

"Because I stepped there and fell down?" sobbed the little fellow, who had thus taken it upon himself to warn the unwary passer-by of the danger into which he had fallen.

There are many men in the world who have good reasons for giving such warnings as this. The man who had trod the dark and slippery paths of intemperance, as he sees the young learning to take the first glass of spirits or wine or beer, has good reason to say to them, "Don't step there, for I stepped there and fell down." The man who has indulged in gambling till he is despised by others and abhorred by himself, has good reason to say to the young when they are entering on the same course, "Don't step there, for I stepped there and fell down?"

How many there are to-day in prison and convict settlements, with reputations ruined and lives blasted, who could say to the young man tempted to enter the paths of dishonesty and wrong-doing, "Don't step there, for I stepped there and fell down."

It is well for us to be warned by the sad experience of others, and it is sometimes a duty for those who have fallen by these temptations to lift a warning voice. There are slippery places all around us, and thousands are passing needlessly along. Let us entreat them to beware, and as we remember the bitter experience of our own sinful lives, let us say to those who are just yielding to such temptations, "Don't step there, for I stepped there and fell down."

LET BY-GONES BE BY-GONES.

It is generally without thought, seldom with intention to inflict pain, that a child's past misdemeanors are kept fresh in his memory when they should be forgotten; but that this very often is done by those who should do better, sometimes even by parents, no careful observer can doubt. That the harm thereby done to the child is unrealized makes it none the less real. In some natures a hard sullenness is engendered; in others an unhealthy tendency to brood over their own failures and a sense of discouragement as to the future. Forgiveness which does not forget, nor allow the offender to forget, is of small value. It brings no peace. It will be prized lightly, and slowly sought, by any keen-witted child.

"Let by-gones be by-gones," is a maxim won from the wisdom of the ages. What need to probe a well-healed wound? If the discipline which follows a child's offense is wise, and his own repentance is sincere, the lesson has entered into his life. That is enough. He has taken a step forward, but it was a rough, hard road. Let him forget the path as far as he can. Do not keep vivid before his mind the thought that he has been naughty, and therefore cannot be so again. He will soon begin to feel that he is rather expected to be so, and he will be prompt to fulfil the expectation. Your child will find out soon enough that he is one of a race of "poor miserable sinners" without your trying to emblazon the fact on the walls of his inner consciousness. Make him feel that rectitude is expected to be the rule of his life; that lapses from it are not to be tolerated, only as the exceptions which shall prove to him the beneficence of the rule. Their lesson learned, they are to be cast behind his back—and yours.—*Babyhood*.

PLAYING FOOL.

An industrious young shoemaker fell into the habit of spending much time at a saloon near by. One by one his customers began to desert him. When his wife remonstrated with him for so neglecting his work for the saloon, he would carelessly reply, "O, I've just been down a little while playing pool."

His little two-year-old caught the refrain, and would often ask, "Is you going down to play fool, papa?"

Smith tried in vain to correct this word. The child persisted in his own pronunciation, and day by day he accosted his father with, "Has you been playin' fool, papa?"

This made a deep impression on the shoemaker, as he realized that the question was being answered by the falling off of his customers and the growing wants of the household. He resolved again and again to quit the pool table, but weekly allowed the passion of play to hold him a long time. Finally he found himself out of work, out of money, and out of flour. Sitting on his bench one afternoon, idle and despondent, he was heard to exclaim:

"No work to-day—what I'm to do I don't know!"

"Why papa," prattled the baby, "can't you run down and play fool some more?"

"O hush! you poor child," groaned his father, shame-stricken. "That's just the trouble. Papa has played fool too much already."

But he never played it again, and to-day his home is comfortable and happy once more.—*Temperance Review*.

SENSITIVENESS.

We have heard people talk about their sensitiveness sometimes as if it was a peculiar meritorious quality—something to be proud of, indeed—until we had longed to undeceive them; for sensitiveness they only meant that they were extremely quick to take offense, and uncommonly apt to fancy hidden meanings where none existed.

Such sensitiveness has other names not quite so flattering to its possessors, as touchiness, suspicious temper, and even self conceit. Few people are more uncomfortable in every-day life than these sensitive ones; and too often they exhaust the patience and alienate the love of their best friends. To be explaining or smoothing over is a wearisome task, and when we must stop to measure our words and adjust our phrases continually, the constraint becomes irritating, as well as tiresome, and we feel like that Rhode Island woman who used to say to her son: "I don't know what to make of my Sammy; he is so 'sensible' I don't know what on earth to do with him."

A little good, wholesome self-restraint and homely common sense would greatly improve these "sensible" people, who seem to think the world revolves around them, and that everybody is thinking of them, or speaking of them, or intruding on them. When they learn the lesson of their own littleness, and find how small a place they occupy in the universe, they will be less self-conscious and sensitive, and much more peaceful and comfortable.—*The Christian*.

WHAT CHRISTIANITY CAN DO.

Writing from a town in northern India, a private correspondent says: "I had before me to-day a wonderful instance of the power of Christianity to regenerate Indian womanhood. I was calling on the old native pastor here. His wife, dressed in quiet native style, came into the little drawing-room, and sat down and talked with us as if she was a motherly old English lady, as simply and freely, and with perfectly well-bred propriety. It was marvellous to me that Christianity could, in a single life, without inherited traditions, have so raised an Indian woman from the poor shrinking thing she once was, ashamed to look at her husband even, let alone strangers, and thinking she would be guilty of grievous indecorum if she spoke a word to them, or to him in their presence. I could not but think, if a native heathen wife ever came to see her, how the sight would dwell in her memory and awaken longing in her breast, shocking as the conduct of her Christian sister would seem to her."

I may do little or I may do much. That matters not. It must be my own work. And by doing my own work, poor as it may seem to some, I shall better fulfil God's end in making me what I am and more truly glorify his name than if I were either going out of my own sphere to do the work of another or calling in another into my sphere to do my proper work for me.—*Ruskin*.

No wise man would seek to be exempted from the healthy discipline of trouble any more than an intelligent child would wish to be excused from school and be allowed to play all day and every day in the meadows. No; we are not butterflies that flit from flower to flower. Life is real, life is earnest, and the tonic of sorrow braces and strengthens us to make it so.—*Surgeon*.