



"Where There's a Will There's a Way."

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.—Prov. xiii.: 4.
Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.—St. Matt. xv.: 28.

Never be idle, find something to do;
Water grows stagnant when still,
Tools, if neglected, will rust—so will you;
Work, while you can, with a will,
With patience and zest,
And hope for the best,
Whate'er the position you fill;
Men who were poor
Have pushed to the fore,
And toiled to the top of the hill:
What they have done
You may do if you try:
What they have won
You may win by and by!

Man is a wondrous self-acting machine,
Made with unmatchable skill;
Sloth clogs and injures him, work keeps him clean,
And potent for good or for ill,
Man needs no oil
Other than toil,
Labor-oiled works do not creak;
Action ne'er clogs
Cranks, pistons, or cogs;
Labor gives strength, sloth makes weak.
Be this your plan:
To persistently try
To work when you can,
And to rest when you die!

If you should call on another farmer and find him standing gossiping with a chum over the fence, and then if you noticed that his fences and barns were tumbling to pieces and his fields were overgrown with weeds, you would probably make up your mind to two things. The first, of course, would be that, as he set out to farm, he "desired"—like the sluggard—to make his farming pay. But the second thing that you would know without being told would be that he did not "will" to be a good farmer. There may be exceptions to the rule—"where there's a will, there's a way"—but they are scarce. The Syrophenician woman obtained her "desire" because she strengthened it with the whole power of her "will." Strange, indeed, is that one record in the life of the Good Physician, when He apparently turned a deaf ear to unselfish, earnest, faithful prayer. Over and over again she pleaded, until—like Jacob wrestling with his mysterious opponent—the blessing she had set her heart on was poured out richly on her head. And not only to her is the promise given: "Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." I suppose we all "desire" to be good, but do we all "will" it? "If any man willet to do His will, he shall know," says our Lord—I am quoting St. John vii.: 17, R. V.—and how many sit down contentedly under the burden of doubt and uncertainty, when the path to light is so clearly pointed out. He does not say it is enough to "desire" to do the will of God, we must bring the whole force of the "will" to the pursuit of holiness. No one ever does that persistently for years without having enough light to walk by. If the prayers are careless and hurried, Bible-reading almost entirely neglected, and no daily attempt made to conquer sin and grow in holiness, it does one little good to say, hopelessly: "I wish I was as good as so-and-so." You would know it was folly to look at another's farm or house, and say: "I wish mine was as well-ordered as that!" unless you went to work to improve matters; and the law of cause and effect is supreme in the spiritual world. Men who not only "desire" but "will" to be a good farmer will surely become one, if he should live long enough, and men or women who not only "desire" but "will" to become like

Christ—who has set us the one perfect Life to copy—will continually reflect more and more of His image. Failing over and over again to obtain their heart's desire, like the poor woman of Canaan, they will follow Him and plead with Him until they win the rich reward of His commendation. "Well done, good and faithful servant. . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." About 300 years ago a strange, mystical doctrine was preached, which has been called "Quietism." The chief business of the Quietists was to attain a state of passive rest or "quiet," in which total inaction of will and intellect was supposed to bring the soul into the best condition for becoming one with God through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Perfect prayer was considered to be a state of absolute quiet, with no thought or wish or hope. Any word of confession, petition, or even of praise, was considered a hindrance. Probably most of us ordinary people would go to sleep if we tried to pray in that mystical fashion, and this is too practical an age for "Quietism"—as it was taught in those days—to gain much ground. But too many seem to think that goodness is like a self-propagating weed. Like the "Quietists," they leave their souls in a state of inaction, and then wonder, in great surprise, that they are no better than they were a year ago. Better! the wonder is if they have not lost ground. Our life may be "victory all along the line," but it certainly will not be unless we fight; really make a steady effort to conquer our own besetting sins; unless we sow seed of high ideals and holy thoughts; and grow the fruit of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These will not grow of themselves, and they will be a very poor crop unless we live a life of prayer—communion with God. Prayer is no more altogether "petition" than communion with an earthly friend is altogether asking favors from him.

Mind, I am not raising the vexed question of salvation by faith or works. I am not talking about salvation, but about holiness. The penitent thief was saved, just as he was; but he was hardly what would be called a "holy man," or he would never have declared that the terrible punishment of crucifixion was a just reward for his misdeed. St. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, explains that some will be saved, "yet so as by fire." If their work cannot stand the fire—for "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is"—then the work shall be burned, but the worker, if he have built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, shall be saved. Is that all the salvation you care about? Just to be rescued from punishment? If that is all you want, then it is waste of time for you to ever look at the "Quiet Hour," for I have no message for you. I cannot understand a soul that has no aspirations after holiness. Surely any man who is made in the image of God must, sometimes at least, try to be like Him. But let us never rest satisfied with high ideals. Hear St. Paul's warning to some who made their boast of God, approved the things that are excellent, were not only instructed in the law, but quite willing to be instructors of the ignorant. He declares that because they were untrue to their own ideals, and broke the commandments of God, they brought dishonor on His great Name, which, as he says, "is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." One who has high ideals and rests satisfied with them, without putting them into practice, can do more harm to the cause of Christ than an open enemy.

Marden says: "Whoever evades the burden, misses the blessing. True living is never easy; there never comes a day when a noble life can be lived without effort." The soul is like the body, it needs food, pure air and exercise to keep it healthy. The food may be obtained in the Lord's Supper, study of the Bible and other good and helpful books, hearing of sermons, etc. The air which it should breathe continually is holy communion



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