

no probability of reaching a man of national reputation as a preacher and most commanding talents, and drawing him to a place where his powers are cramped. He feels that his duty to God who has bountifully endowed him and made him capable of filling a large sphere, demands that he find the field where he will have ample scope for his best powers. Smaller men—but just as good—can fill to the full a smaller sphere and cultivate thoroughly a smaller field.

### TWO LIGHTS.

In chaos dark, the whole world lay,  
Unshapen and unknown;  
Gross darkness covered all space,  
But soon was overthrown

The Spirit of the Living God  
Upon the waters moved,  
'Til His creative work began,  
Which His Omnipotence proved.

At His command, the firmament  
Went quickly to its place;  
The sea rolled back—and the dry ground  
Filled up the vacant space.

But even yet confusion reigned;  
For darkness over all  
Hung deep—enveloping the whole  
With dark mysterious pall.

But hark! the mighty mandate speaks—  
"Let there be light," and soon  
From utter darkness comes a gleam,  
E'en as bright as noon.

Well pleased was the Creator then,  
To see the light was good;  
And since that time through ages all  
That light has firmly stood.

And so when sin's dark gloomy veil  
O'erspreads the world below,  
Man grovelled in its mirey depths  
And God's commands laid low.

Then, He another light did send  
From His bright throne above,  
To clear the gloom—the sin remove  
By the power of His love.

"I am the Way, the Truth, the Life,"  
The great Redeemer cries:  
"Believe on Me; I'll lead the way,  
To mansions in the skies."

And now the love of Christ constrains  
The sinner to His throne;  
And shall we gladly claim this Light  
And take Him as our own.

New Glasgow, P. E. I.

R. E. S.

### THE SILENT DEACON.

[A story, first published a good many years ago, has lately appeared in the religious press, and has been copied out for the *Montreal Witness* by a kind friend, who asks for its publication, saying, "I believe that the story would do good,—much good—for there are many doing to-day what the "Silent Deacon" did thirty years before he told the story to one who was a mischief maker.]"

Deacon Lee, who was a kindly, silent, faithful, gracious man, was one day waited upon by a restless, ambitious, worldly church member who was laboring to create uneasiness in the church, and especially to drive away the preacher. The deacon came in to meet his visitor, who, after the usual greetings, began to lament the low state of religion, and inquire as to the reason why there had been no revival for two or three years past.

"Now, what is the cause of things being dull here? Do you know?" he persisted in asking.

The deacon was not ready to give his opinion, and after a little thought frankly answered:

'No, I don't.'

'Do you think the church is alive to the work before it?'

'No, I don't.'

'Do you think the minister fully realizes the solemnity of his work?'

'No, I don't.'

A twinkle was seen in the eye of this troublemaker in Zion and taking courage, he asked:

'Do you think his sermon on "Their eyes were holden" anything wonderfully great?'

'No, I don't.'

Making bold, after all this encouragement in monosyllables, he asked:

'Then don't you think we had better dismiss this man and hire another?'

The old deacon started as if shot with an arrow, and in a tone louder than his wont, shouted:

'No, I don't.'

'Why,' cried the amazed visitor, 'you agree with me in all I have said, don't you?'

'No, I don't.'

'You talk so little, sir,' replied the guest, not a little abashed, 'that no one can find out what you do mean.'

'I talked enough once,' replied the old man, rising to his feet, 'for six praying Christians. Thirty-six years ago I got my heart humbled and my tongue bridled, and ever since that I have walked softly before God. I then made vows solemn as eternity; and don't you tempt me to break them.'

The troubler was startled at the earnestness of the hitherto, silent, immovable man, and asked:

'What happened you thirty years ago?'

'Well, sir, I'll tell you. I was drawn into a scheme just like this of yours, to uproot one of God's servants from the field in which he had planted him. In my blindness I fancied it a little thing to remove one of the "stars" which Jesus holds in his right hand, if thereby my ear could be tickled by more flowery words and the pews filled with those turned away from the simplicity of the gospel. I and the men that led me—for I admit that I was a dupe and a tool—flattered ourselves that we were conscientious. We thought we were doing God's service when we drove that holy man from his pulpit and his work, and said we considered his work ended in B——, where I then lived. We groaned because there was no revival, while we were gossiping about and criticising and crushing, instead of upholding by our efforts and our prayers the instrument at whose hands we harshly demanded the blessings. Well, sir, he could not drag on the chariot of salvation with half a dozen of us taunting him for his weakness, while we hung as dead weight to the wheels; he had not the power of the Spirit, and could not convert men, so we hunted him like a deer till, worn and bleeding, he fled into a covert to die. Scarcely had he gone when God came among us by His Spirit to show that he had blessed the labors of his dear rejected servant. Our own hearts were broken and our wayward children converted, and I resolved at a convenient season to visit my former pastor and confess my sin, and thank him for his faithfulness to my wayward sons, which, like long buried seed, had now sprung up. But God denied me that relief, that he might teach me a lesson every child of his ought to learn, that he who touches one of his servants touches the apple of his eye. I heard my pastor was ill, and taking my eldest son with me, set out on a twenty-five miles ride to to see him. It was evening when I arrived, and his wife, with the spirit which any woman ought to exhibit towards one who had so wronged her husband, denied me admittance to his chamber. She said, and

her words were arrows to my soul, "He may be dying, and the sight of your face might add to his anguish." "Had it come to this," I said to myself, "that the man whose labors had, through Christ, brought me into his fold, who had consoled my spirit in a terrible bereavement, and who had, till designing men had alienated us, been to me as a brother—that the man could not die in peace with my face before him? "God pity me!" I cried, "what have I done?" I confessed my sins to that meek woman and I implored her, for Christ's sake, to let me kneel before his dying servant and receive his forgiveness. What did I care then whether the pews by the door were rented or not? I would gladly have taken his whole family to my home forever as my own flesh and blood, but no such happiness was in store for me.

'As I entered the room of the blessed warrior whose armour was falling from his limbs he opened his languid eyes and said, "Brother Lee! Brother Lee!" I bent over him and sobbed out, "My pastor! My pastor!" Then raising his white hand he said in a deep, impressive voice, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm!" I spoke tenderly to him, and told him I had come to confess my sins and bring some of his fruit to him, calling my son to tell him how he had found Christ. But he was unconscious of all around; the sight of my face had brought the last pang of earth to his troubled spirit.

'I kissed his brow, and told him how dear he had been to me. I craved his pardon for my unfaithfulness, and promised to care for his widow and fatherless little ones, but his only reply, murmured as if in a troubled dream, was, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

'I stayed by him all night, and at day-break I closed his eyes. I offered his widow a house to live in the remainder of her days, but, like a heroine, she said, "I freely forgive you. But my children, who entered deeply into their father's anguish, shall never see me so regardless of his memory as to take anything from those who caused it. He has left us with his covenant God, and he will care for us."

'Well, sir, those dying words sounded in my ears from that coffin and from that grave. When I slept Christ stood before my dream, saying, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." These words followed me till I fully realized the esteem in which Christ holds these men who give up all for his sake, even if they were not perfect. And since that day, sir, I have talked less than before, and have supported my pastor even if he is not "a very extraordinary man." My tongue shall cleave to the roof of my mouth and my right hand forget her cunning before I dare to put asunder what God has joined together. When a minister's work is done in a place I believe that God will show it to him. I will not join you, sir, in the scheme that brought you here; and, moreover, if I hear another word of this from your lips I shall ask my brethren to deal with you as with those who cause divisions. I would give all I own to recall what I did thirty years ago. Stop where you are, and pray God, if perchance the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.'

This decided reply put an end to the newcomer's effort to get a minister who could make more stir, and left him free to lay out roads and build hotels.

There is often great power in the little word 'No,' but sometimes it requires not a little courage to speak it so resolutely as did the silent deacon.