

SPECIAL  
ARTICLES

## Our Contributors

BOOK  
REVIEWSDOMINION W. C. T. U. BIBLE  
READINGS.

By Mrs. Margaret Bottome, New York,  
Ottawa, Ont., March, 1905.

"I cannot come down."—Neh. 6: 3.

It seems to me we very much need at this time the style of Christian that can utter these words. Nehemiah was doing a great work. He was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and there were fault-finders all around, and they would hinder him, so his one answer to them was, "I cannot come down."

Now there is everything to draw us, too, aside from what we are sure is the will of God for us, but we lack the spirit that says "I cannot come down." We see that this and that is a weight; it takes our strength, our time, but we get in the way of saying, "I suppose I must,—it is expected of me."

But you could take a stand that would be so decided that it would not be expected of you—if you would only "lay aside every weight." You feel they are weights, but you carry them. You give your time and strength not on the highest lines. If any one is to be robbed, you rob God. If there isn't time for everything, then the stay in the closet and the reading of God's word must be shortened, and the feeding of His lambs must be neglected. Yet the dress for your body that will soon be under ground,—that must be attended to. The fashion has changed, and there must be alterations, and you do not see that some alterations should be made on higher lines.

Seek "first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,"—Matt. 6: 33-34. I do not say other things must not be cared for—I only say they are not first. Keep things in order. You are very particular about order in your house, and you ought to be, but God has His order and you must keep His things in order. Seek first the kingdom. Believe me, there is need for the spirit of Nehemiah, that says, "This is my business and I must attend to it, and I cannot come down."

O, what a sad revelation should we have if hearts were opened to us. So many know and feel deeply that they have come down,—came down from their ideals,—come down from what they said they would do under such and such circumstances. The circumstances came, but they came down and did as other people do, and the ideal in many cases has faded out. I know the circumstances were not favorable as you thought they would be, they never are. You thought prosperity would make a spiritual life easy, but it was the reverse. The current set toward worldliness and you allowed yourself to go with the current. You came down. You say you couldn't help

it, but God could have helped it if you had been true to yourself and to Him. But you wanted to please everybody or somebody, and you displeased God—and you will never be the woman He made you to be and that you might have been. He said to His ancient people, "Oh, if thou hadst harkened unto Me, I should soon have subdued thine enemies. I should have fed thee with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."—Psl. 81: 13-16. But you have missed the finest wheat, and the honey out of the rock, and you will reap just what you have sown. It must ever be that—"Whatev'er a man soweth that shall he also reap."—Gal. 6: 7-10.

Now I mean this to be a very practical talk to mothers and wives. Have a purpose and stick to it. If you tell your children that they must obey, see to it that they do. Don't "come down." How often have I seen a weak mother "come down" after telling a child that it could not have what it wanted. The child continued to tease and at last the mother yielded. Such a step is indeed a coming down, and such mothers never regain the place which they held before.

Human nature is pretty poor stuff, but, as is often said, "it knows a good thing when it sees it," and I believe those miserable fault-finders of Nehemiah had a respect for him because of his not "coming down" even to talk with them. Along these and higher lines a wife ought to influence her husband; but there will have to be the spirit of "I cannot come down," or she will never influence him. I know some will disagree with me, but what I mean is that you must have principles, that you must stand upon them. I do not mean you must be angular and disagreeable. Oh, no, not that. The No, when it must be said, must hurt you to say. You must let him see how hard it is for you, but that you cannot hurt your conscience.

I remember a circumstance in my life of which I have never written. I saw before me, as in vision, a life of entire devotion to Jesus, and with my impulsive nature I started for that life. I was very fond of gay dress, rich dress, and my father and mother were very indulgent, and I had what I wanted. When this life of entire devotion opened before me I saw the necessity in my case of changing my style of dress, and dressing with simplicity, and I did what I thought was right. It did not please my father—and my father, of all earthly beings, was the one I most wished to please. He talked with me, urged me not to go to extremes, but I "could not come down." Oh, how much it cost me! One

day when in great trouble about it I took up my Bible and read in one of the psalms these words, "Forget also thine own people and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." I stood firm—and I certainly was a trial to my father and mother—but, if I had "come down" at that time my life would not have been what it is today.

Some years after that my father lay dying. I was alone with him for a short time the last Sunday of his life. He beckoned me to come very close to him and then he whispered, "Margaret, I am glad you stood to what you felt was right," alluding to the time of which I have spoken.

These tests have come all through my life, calling for a fresh consecration, and a determination to stand by the truth as it has come to me, and especially by the written words of Christ. And we attain to no grace where the temptation will not come to lower the standard a little, to take the advice of friends. That was what they wanted Nehemiah to do, but the walls had to be builded and he had no time.

Oh, dear friends, seen and unseen, let me beseech you to stand by your highest convictions. The wall of the New Jerusalem must be builded in your souls, or you will never see His New Jerusalem. You are called to holiness, called to be saints, and every thought and word and look and act has to do with the building of the New Jerusalem in the soul. I do not wonder that we sing so much of our desire for

"A heart in every thought renewed,  
And full of love divine;  
Perfect and right and pure and good,  
A copy, Lord, of Thine."

Let nothing hinder you. Take for your motto, as I did at the commencement of this New Year of 1905—"I cannot come down." I have heard the call, "Come out and be separate," and through all the corridors of the soul the solemn sound has been heard, "Be ye holy." Pet. 1: 15-16, and my work is before me. I have seen the vision on the Mount, and I must make all things according to the pattern showed me in the Mount. "I cannot come down," and that means I will not come down—my eternal life—my doing His will on earth, all, all depends on my faithfulness.

I am sure we do not use our wills enough. It is the only thing we own. "Our wills are ours to make them Thine." The simple surrender of your will, the uniting of your will with the will of God will bring you to your best. Your moods, your emotions will change, but the will can remain unchangeable. Not that you will not have to fight, but