

“One Oath.”

My hand is sworn to thee, O Lord, how solemnly the day... Would I could be my mind... I had been a man of God, I had been a man of God...

Select Reading.

Religious Vows.

BY C. S. ROBINSON, D.D.

Few persons have reached maturity without having been passed, first or last, with some most perplexing questions concerning the duty or privilege of making vows.

Classic history makes clear the fact that all religions and schemes of faith have encouraged their devotees in the practice of offering their gifts to their deities.

Hannah vowed that Samuel should be devoted to the service of the Lord all the days of his life and no razor come upon his head.

During the winter season a young lady, while crossing the ice, came to a thin place and fell through.

A gentleman sitting by his office window, hearing a cry for help, hastened to the spot. He immediately put out both hands, saying: “Clasp my hand tightly, and I will save you.”

She replied: “Oh, I cannot lift up both hands! One rests upon the ice; were I to raise it I should surely sink.”

He answered: “Let go your hold upon the ice, trust me, and I will save you. Were I to take one I could not draw you out.”

She then raised up both hands, he caught them, drew her out, and she went on her way rejoicing.

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to its smallest provisions—this excellent legislator proceeded to lay down what now appears to be most complicated enactments.

Thus the practice inevitably brought with it a most intricate and perplexing train of canonical distinctions. And the Rabbi in after years had to keep up the hair-splitting evasions.

Now, when we pass over from the Old Testament into the New, the most observable thing to be noticed is this: no precept whatsoever is given on the subject.

These are the two instances: The Apostle Paul made a vow, nobody knows what about (Acts xviii. 18); and there were four men in Jerusalem, unnamed, and unknown, who had a vow on them so that they could not shave their heads (Acts xxi. 23).

On the whole, therefore, it would seem that we are at liberty to infer entire release from the old bondage of such customs as these.

If it be asked, with any real candor of desire for an answer, whether there may be some good in the practice of special vows or definite covenants with God, to which young Christians might resort profitably, the only reply must be given with serious caution.

Lifting Both Hands.

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The Saviour hears the cry and stands with outstretched arms to save them, but, like the young lady, they are unwilling to put up both hands, saying in the heart, if not in words: “Oh, were I to lose my hold upon earth I should surely sink, for I might not save me; and then what should I have to lean upon?”

But the Saviour stands waiting, saying, “Trust me. You cannot cling to both. Let the floating world go. Look to me. I will take you from the horrible pit and many clay, and set your feet upon the rock, where you can rest secure from time and eternity.”

Some obey the voice, lift up both hands, crying: “Lord save me or I perish,” and are saved, and go on their way rejoicing.

Live in the sight of God. That is what heaven will be—the eternal presence of God. Do nothing you would not like God to see; say nothing you would not like Him to hear; write nothing you would not like him to read, and read nothing of which you would not like God to say, “Show it to me.”

A Lamentable Fact.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

One of the most lamentable facts of the day is that so large a number of native born Americans are applicants for political appointments, and for “easy berths” in post-offices or custom-houses, or in some way of getting a livelihood without hard work.

The idea of acquiring proficiency in some skilful art or handicraft, and of rising into honorable success, does not enter into the calculations of these innumerable place-seekers. To do as little, and to get as much, as possible, is the chief consideration.

As a necessary result of this growing mania for living by the wits, there is a lamentably small number of our native youth who are learning any trade.

It is not popular or pleasant to say it, but we honestly believe that this is a sign of national degeneracy. A New York Collector of the Port, remarked not long ago, that he had in possession seventeen thousand applications for “berths” in the Custom-house; a vast majority of these were native Americans!

Faith, not Works.

Some years ago two men, a bargeman and a collier, were in a boat above the rapids of a cataract, and found themselves unable to manage it, being carried so swiftly down the current that they must both inevitably be borne down, and dashed to pieces.

Faith has a saving connection with Christ. Christ is on the shore, holding the rope, and, as we lay hold of it with the hand of our confidence, he pulls us to shore; but our good works, having no connection with Christ, are drifted along down to the gulf of fell despair.

Go and tell your difficulties to some Christian neighbour or friend, and if the passage be too hard for them, pray for light from above.—St. Augustine.

No religious work is unimportant, but the conversion of sinners is the main object of all religious efforts. A revival gives unity to the church, development to its resources, prosperity to its finances, enlargement to its borders, and causes even the angels in heaven to rejoice.

The First Widespread Sin.

In the education of the early world, the earliest commands almost entirely refer to bodily appetites and animal passions. The earliest widespread sin was brutal violence. That willfulness of temper—those germs of wanton cruelty—which the mother caresses so easily in her infant, were developed in the earliest form of human society into a prevailing plague of wickedness.

Violence was followed by sensuality, animal appetites which must be indulged in childhood, if they are to be subdued at all—were still the temptation of mankind. Such sins are, it is true, prevalent in the world even now.

Ancient Babylon.

Mr. George Smith, of the British Museum, who has just returned from his explorations at Nimrod, writes, in one of his letters to the Daily Telegraph of one of the places all the chambers had been riddled at some early period, and they were full of coffins and skeletons belonging to an epoch after the fall of the Assyrian Empire.

How to Drive.

There is another point of importance in driving any horse, but especially a young one; it is the way you handle the reins. Most drivers overdrive. They attempt too much; and in so doing, distract or hamper the horse.

God writes the Gospel, not the Bible alone, on trees, and flowers, and clouds, and stars. Let us be liberal and bountiful towards all men, and that without weariness. For it is an easy thing for a man to do good once or twice, but to continue, and not to be discouraged through the ingratitude and perverseness of those to whom he hath done good, that is very hard.

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A Universalist Answered.

In the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, many years ago, an eloquent Universalist preacher who had addressed a large audience, at the close of his remarks said that if any one present wished to ask any questions or reply to his arguments, he would be heard.

The invitation was accepted by the Rev. John Hordner, a member of the Reformed Church, a pious, but eccentric old gentleman, who, sitting in one of the aisles, addressed the audience substantially as follows:

“My friends, I have a few words to say in confirmation of what has already been said. No doubt you have all heard of the inhabitants of the world before the flood, how wicked they became, and what violence and bloodshed poured out against God, in wrath, sent the waters of the deluge, and swept them from the face of the earth, and took them all up to happiness and glory. But there is a poor Noah, a just man, who vexed his righteous soul with his filthy communications; the Almighty shut him up in an ark with a great lot of beasts, birds and reptiles, and he was buffeted about by the waters of the flood until the ark rested on Mount Ararat, and then he did not dare to come out of the ark until he had first sent a raven, and then a dove to see whether the waters had subsided. And, my friends, there was also Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plain, whose inhabitants were corrupted, and were guilty of innumerable iniquity; the Lord rained down fire and brimstone upon them in wrath, and took them all up to happiness in heaven. But poor Lot, who was vexed with their filthy and wicked nation, the Lord sent him out of the city of Sodom, and he went wandering about in much fear and perplexity.”

“Now, my friends, my advice to you is, go home, be neat, sweet, polite, the Sabbath, and do all manner of iniquity, and then the Almighty will, in wrath, take you away from this world of trouble, and if what the speaker says is true, take you up to glory, like the inhabitants of the old world before the flood, and of Sodom and Gomorrah. But if you obey God and keep his commandments, repent of your sins, and trust in Christ for salvation, God may keep you here a long time in this troublesome world before you are called away, and he takes you to himself in heaven.”

The audience, pleased with the remembrance, laughed heartily, and no converts were made to Universalism.—Presbyterian Weekly.

Milton's Daily Life.

Milton lived in a small house in London, or in the country in Buckinghamshire. Of all consolations, work is the most fortifying, and the most healthy, because it solaces a man, not by bringing him, not by bringing him ease, but by requiring effort. Every morning he had a chapter in the Bible read to him in Hebrew, and remained for some time in silence, grave, in order to meditate on what he had heard. He never went to a place of worship. Independent in religion as in all else, he was sufficient to himself. He studied till midnight; then, after an hour's exercise, he played the organ or bass violin. Then he resumed his studies till six, and in the evening enjoyed the society of his friends. When any one came to visit him, he was usually found in a room hung with old green hangings, seated in an arm-chair, and dressed quietly in black. He had been very beautiful in his youth, and his English cheeks, once delicate as a young girl's, retained their color almost to the end. Few men have done such honor to their kind. Amidst so many trials (a servicer caused him to lose \$10,000; at the restoration he was refused payment of \$10,000 due him from the excise office; his house was burned in the great fire; when he died he only left \$7,500, including the produce of his library, a pure and lofty joy, altogether worthy of him, had been granted to him; the poet, buried under the Crucifix, had re-appeared more sublime than ever, to give to Christianity a second Homer.—Taine.

All creatures are merely shells, masks (larvæ), behind which God hides himself, and deals with us.

Doctor Luther, said one evening, when he saw a little bird perched on a tree, to roost there for the night: “This little bird has had its supper, and now it is getting ready to go to sleep here, quite secure and content, never troubling itself what its food will be, or where its lodging on the morrow. Like David, it abides under the shadow of the Almighty.” It sits on its little twig content, and lets God take care.

And to persuade us he addeth: “For in due season we shall reap if we wait not.” As if he said, “Wait and look for the eternal harvest that is to come, and then no ingratitude or perverseness of man shall be able to pluck you away from well-doing; for in the harvest time ye shall receive most plentiful increase and fruit of your seed.” Thus, with most sweet words, he exhorteth the faithful to the doing of good works.

“BREAKING IN” BOOTS AND SHOES. The Herald of Health has the following on “breaking in” boots and shoes. It is as follows:

“1. Never ‘break in’ new boots or shoes. If they are not easy when new don’t take them; for the boots will break your feet oftener than your feet will break the boots.”

“2. If you go on ‘breaking in’ boot leather you will need a special last, made with all sorts of protuberances to correspond with your distorted joints. That you will be sorry.”

“3. If you have large feet, admit it in all honesty, and have your boots made accordingly. Then you will be happy.”

“4. If your shoemaker don’t know enough to make easy boots and shoes, refuse to take his work, and tell him to learn his trade before asking you patronage.”