

and it was quite inadequate for the undertaking.

So it is with men and women who merely make good resolutions. The purpose is good and the machinery adequate. But the power is lacking. High endeavor is like a high rate of speed. An enormous power must be developed to maintain it. Where is the power to come from? Depend upon it, God alone can supply it. He is the one Fountain of strength, and without Him our best resolutions are but vain imaginings. It is the man who not only longs to be a better man, but who in the earnestness of his soul goes down upon his knees daily and pours out his heart's desires to God, and pleads for strength in the battle, that will be the victor. We are accustomed to marvel at the power of Martin Luther. His moral force and courage, even as we know them from biography, are so great as to be almost contagious to-day. What made him strong? *Communion with God*. But for the hours spent daily in prayer, when his whole soul was poured out to God, he might have been like the very weakest in our midst. What men want to-day is the presence of Christ in their lives. Out of continual fellowship with Him will come not merely high aspirations and good resolutions, but the power to be true to them amid all the most trying circumstances of life.

It is a well-established custom to give and to adopt mottoes for the New Year, and PARISH AND HOME wishes now to conform to the rule. Our motto for the year is from those fine words of St. Paul to the Philippians, "I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENETH ME." We ask our readers to treasure up these words, and have them so engraven on their memories that they may be to them a finger-post directing their footsteps all through the year. Before us lies the New Year, and the moment is a solemn one. Behind most of us are the years marred by failure and shortcomings. Each has his own sad story. And time is hurrying on. The year that is coming is for many no small portion of the years that remains to them. It is high time to awake out of sleep. This year brings with it golden opportunities. Here on its very threshold let us lay our plans and make our resolves. Only this time let us do it as wise men, by the help of God. No more empty resolutions that die almost in their birth for want of sustaining power! At the throne of grace let us daily present the

wants of our souls and draw our strength. And when the year is near its close our motto will have changed its character very greatly. Not as a pious sentiment shall we hold it, but as a truth borne out by the facts of life and corroborated by every trial or struggle that has come to us.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

#### OBEDIENCE.

OBEDIENCE is the first great law of life. No nation could continue to exist if its citizens were not law-abiding. The most highly civilized nations are those whose citizens yield loyal obedience to the laws, and strive to make all men obey them. Every society has its rules which the members agree to obey, and it can only exist so long as that obedience is observed voluntarily and faithfully. No army could be successful against the enemy if the soldiers did not obey their officers. Unquestioning obedience to the commands of the captain is necessary for the safety of the ship and of the lives of the passengers. Those who are employed in business must obey the instructions of their employers if the business is to succeed. The first lesson that the schoolboy is set to learn is the lesson of obedience. What happiness could there be in our homes if the children did not obey their parents?

The greatest part of life is conduct, and it can only be attained by practising obedience. The little child learns it from its mother, the boy from his father, and from his master at school. The young man must practise it at college, or at business. The older man continues to obey some one all through his life. If he wish to govern others, he must first obey himself. If he will not obey himself, he cannot rule others. There is only One who is above obedience—that is God.

At the battle of Balaklava a small brigade of cavalry was ordered to attack an immensely strong battery. The order was a mistake, as every one knew that such an attempt would mean certain death. Yet the officer commanding the cavalry did not hesitate for a moment to carry out the orders, though he well knew what the result would be. Not a single soldier among those six hundred refused to obey.

"Theirs not to reason why;  
Theirs but to do and die."

And so the charge was made, and out of the six hundred only one-quarter returned.

Boys sometimes think it a manly thing to question the orders given them, and even to assert their independence by refusing to obey. Brave men think it

childish to stop to reason about the commands of those in authority. The wisest men believe that disobedience is one of the strongest signs of radically bad character. Experience teaches us that disobedience will, in time, destroy the character altogether. He that will not submit to authority must become, in time, not merely a useless, but a dangerous, member of society.

Obedience, to be worth anything in building up conduct, must be given *promptly and cheerfully*. Obedience which is tardy, or yielded through fear, is not right obedience at all. If a boy's father desires him to do a piece of work which is not agreeable, or not very easy, there is often a great temptation to put it off, and do other things first. A boy is told to cut the grass when he comes home from school. He returns home, and finds the afternoon warm, and the prospect of grass-cutting uninviting, and so he first feeds his pigeons; and that reminds him that he is very anxious to make them some new nest-boxes. The afternoon has nearly gone when he at length drags himself unwillingly to the lawn-mower; and he has barely finished the work when he sees his father coming in at the gate. Perhaps the edges of the grass-plot have not been clipped, as a finish to the work, because he did not begin soon enough. That is a case of tardy obedience—not real obedience. The work was done because the boy knew he must do it, and not because he loved to obey his father. Real obedience is *prompt* obedience.

Real obedience is always cheerfully given. He who grumbles at an order, and only does it through fear, is not obedient. A boy who will not cheerfully give up a game in order to carry out a command from one in authority must always be looked upon as one who is at heart disobedient. If the officers of the cavalry, mentioned above, had chafed under the order to put their lives in peril, and had sent the messenger back to find out if they were really to make the attack, they would have lost their claim to our admiration as truly brave men. If the troopers had grumbled when the order was given to advance into the valley of death, and had made the attack in a half-hearted way, they would never have gained the undying glory that is theirs, and they would probably have sacrificed the lives of the few who did return at last in safety. Their obedience gained them immortal fame because it was prompt and cheerful.