

of which is still more and more to spread the Divine glory, to widen the circle of Christian faith and joy.

It is not a matter of mere sentiment; it is a grave responsibility which rests upon every believer to carry out, as far as in him lies, the object of religion, which is to bring men to Jesus. Are you yourselves possessed of the knowledge of Christ? Then that very knowledge is imparted to you by the Holy Spirit, that you may impart it to others; and by the knowledge you possess your responsibility is increased, because of your moral relation with the other men, and the claims they have upon you by means of that relation.

Look at the working of this principle as respects the body. Did you know of a specific remedy for any of those fatal maladies which afflict the body, would you not feel it a duty to make it known, though no command to that effect was given? And if you found that, from ignorance, or malice, or misapprehension, a prejudice existed against this infallible specific, should that so paralyze your benevolence as to prevent you from publishing abroad its efficacy?

Well, then, where is the difference between your temporal and spiritual responsibility? Is not the weight fearfully increased when taken in a spiritual view, because of the infinite worth of the soul, and your express obligation, under the command of God, to make the way of salvation known to the perishing sons of men?

Some perhaps will admit all this, but excuse themselves, from want of ability or opportunity, to act out this principle. This, however, is not true. No man was ever disposed to do good who did not find opportunity; no man ever had a determination to do good who was denied the ability. Alas! had we more of sanctified energy, more of holy zeal, more of honest determination, we should find both ability and opportunity,—the “way and the means.”

But there is in us a cowardly spirit, a temporizing, selfish spirit. Fearing reproach, ashamed to be thought fanatical, or enthusiastic, or obtrusive, or ostentatious, we shrink from our duty, and prove ourselves unworthy. While the voice of prophecy is onward, and onward the voice of Providence, we shrink back, we trifle away our time,—we defer till to-morrow, but to-morrow never comes.

Perhaps with some who read these lines conscience is now at work, but who yet will put off to a more convenient season;

but be it known to them, that never while life lasts will they have a more convenient season than now. The Son of Man waits now to forgive them,—the ear of the Eternal is now ready to hear them,—the gates of their refuge are now thrown open wide to admit them,—and angels would delight to bear to the realms of glory the good news that they have repented and turned to God.

Then why should not their happiness begin this day?—and though it be “the day of small things,” it will not so remain. The penitent sinner becomes confirmed in righteousness, he becomes “holier still.” From the fulness of God he adds grace to grace. The day of small things shines more and more. The Christian pilgrims grow vigorous as they advance; they go from strength to strength, till coming within range of their native heaven, they inhale its atmosphere, and with heart ready, and tongues already tuned to Zion’s melody, they put on the brightness of angels, and enter the city of their God, Jerusalem, their happy home.

As to want of opportunity, alas! it is not so; there is no lack of opportunity. There is abundant occasion for all amongst us, be their talents, their means, their peculiarities what they may, for the display of the gospel, and for the exercise of benevolence in the haunts of ignorance, wickedness, and indifference,—these scenes of temporal and spiritual destitution with which we meet at every turn; ample opportunity for the offices of every good Samaritan to take up the poor and helpless, the wounded and stripped by worse than the passing robber, going on as they are unreclaimed, and sinking, parent after parent, and child after child, into an eternity for which they have made no preparation.

And how are we all encouraged in this holy work, knowing that “God is not unrighteous, that he should forget the labour that proceedeth out of love to him,—that there is a book of remembrance kept,—that there is a memorial kept before the Lord,”—that every act of Christian sympathy, every act of self-denying labour, every effort to alleviate the sufferings of our fellow men, to feed the hungry, “to clothe the naked, to instruct the ignorant, to direct sinners to the cross, to bring men to Jesus,” shall receive a glorious recompense. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”