

'Has any one been up during my absence, Mrs. Wills?' asked he.

'No, sir; nobody,' replied the unsuspecting caretaker.

'Not Mr. Gray?'—naming the clerk.

'No, sir; he left before you did.'

'You are sure?'

'Quite sure, sir,' reiterated Martha, little thinking that she was certifying to her own condemnation.

Any one with eyes to see, could have read her innocence in her face and in her ready answer. Mr. Rothwell only read the confirmation of his own conviction that she was the thief.

'Perhaps, since you are so certain of all that has happened in my absence,' said he, fixing a hard look on her, 'you can inform me what has become of a cheque which I miss.'

'A cheque, sir?'

'A cheque!' repeated Mr. Rothwell irritably. 'Don't make a pretence of innocence.'

Martha looked puzzled. Then suddenly the truth dawned on her. 'Oh, sir,' cried she, her eyes filling at the bare thought, 'you don't think I've taken it? You can't think that?'

'I can think anything that comes into my head,' returned Mr. Rothwell grimly. 'And it comes into my head just now, that since you are so absolutely certain nobody has been here in my absence, and since I miss the cheque the whole thing lies with you.'

'But, sir,' said Martha, the hot color rushing to her face, then leaving it ashy white, 'you can't think I've done it? God in heaven knows I haven't.'

'Better leave the Almighty out of it,' observed Mr. Rothwell.

'But, sir, do believe me,' begged Martha, ready to burst into tears.

'And on what grounds, pray?' asked Mr. Rothwell. 'Appearances are against you, you must own.'

'But I'd scorn to do such a thing,' pleaded Martha. 'Put yourself in my place, sir. Would you have done it yourself?'

'Oh, come; that's a little too strong!' said Mr. Rothwell; 'in my own office, too. Well, I warn you, you'd better think it over, and return the cheque before I take measures, that's all.' And he returned to his papers.

'A pretty idea!' he said to himself, as he wrote.

But Martha's words would keep sounding in his ears.

Long after he had left the office, and Martha's husband had come home to tea and heard the news, that question kept repeating itself:—'Would you have done it yourself, sir?'

And somehow, all unbidden, there kept coming up numberless things about which Martha, had she known of them, might well have flung back his scoffing taunt: 'Better leave the Almighty out of it!'

Ah! that had been the mistake of Mr. Rothwell's life. He had left the Almighty out of the whole of it. He had been one of those of whom the Psalmist said:—'God is not in all their ways.' And now these things stood up in array against the man.

Perhaps in her place he might have done it! for she had an invalid mother at home to keep.

Perhaps in his clerk's place he might have done it, for he had begged this half day to bury his wife's father—an old wretch who had drunk himself imbecile,

and been no end of a drag on the young couple with their growing family.

Mr. Rothwell pulled himself together angrily more than once.

What had all this to do with the lost cheque?

The question was who had taken it?—not what he might have done with a long string of 'ifs?'

As to the past! well, let that go! A very convenient way with an inconvenient past, except for this one thing, that the past holds us; and that there is but one way of letting it go—that is by 'dying unto sin' and becoming 'alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

But now a curious thing happened. Chancing to draw a bundle of papers from his breast pocket, Mr. Rothwell suddenly came upon the missing cheque.

'So she gauged her honesty by mine to good purpose for once,' said he to himself. But oh! how the words burnt into his conscience; for in that near future which would so soon pass into present, and so go on to join the past he talked of 'letting go,' he was meditating an act which would put Martha's integrity far above his own.

'Would you have done it yourself, sir?'

Well for us if we listen to the voices that come to us in this way; for God 'who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past by the prophets,' has not left off speaking to us in this nineteenth century; and the voice of conscience is from him.

Open the Door

(The Rev. Dillon Bronson.)

Some years ago, in one of our western colleges, where the teachers are truly consecrated men and have always given largely from their meagre salaries that Christian education might flourish, an intercollegiate Young Men's Christian Association convention was held.

The delegates were wide-awake fellows, who spoke more of life than of death, and the brief, manly prayers made a great impression on one careless student in the senior class who called himself an agnostic, when he should have used the Latin equivalent, *ignoramus*.

Having never seen many full blooded young men, with good digestion and no tendency to biliousness, engaged in active Christian work, this callow skeptic was soon interested and could not remain away from the meetings. The culminating service was on Sunday afternoon. About 200 young men gathered in the old college chapel, and the leader of the meeting spoke with deep, quiet earnestness from the parable of the good Samaritan. After a graphic setting forth of the story he said in conclusion: 'Now, fellows, let us carry this parable a little farther. Suppose that the poor wretch who was robbed has recovered, and has returned to his happy home in the great city. He sits one day in his beautiful parlor, and looking out of the window, sees a stranger slowly coming through the gate. "Ah!" he says, "that is the Samaritan; the man who saved my life; the man to whom I owe more than to any other living creature. He comes to see me; perhaps to rest and sup here. But I will not receive him. I will bolt my doors and close my shutters, and will not let him in," and after repeated knocking and long waiting, the disappointed Samaritan goes away.

'Now, fellows,' said the leader, 'could you imagine a meaner thing than that? Yes, I did a meaner, a more unmanly thing than that. When wounded in the road of life, left half dead, and despised by all from whom I might have expected aid, the Lord Christ left his heavenly home, laid his life alongside of mine, and even gave his soul a sinless offering that he might save me. And then, after all that, when he came to the door of my heart and begged admittance, I closed the door and kept him out, and would not say yes to my loving Saviour. Is there a fellow in all this company who has been treating his best friend so, and will now slip back the rusty bolts and say to Jesus Christ, "Come in?"'

Instantly the skeptical senior, who now writes these lines, rose to his feet and started for the front seat. Nearly eighty young men followed in fifteen minutes. Dear 'Prexy,' as we called him, cried for joy, and that day became memorable in the history of the grand old college. Are there not hundreds of young men who would open the door of their life to the penniless Prince of Palestine if an appeal were made to their manhood, their sense of honor and hospitality? God help them to realize that the manliest, the noblest, the fairest thing to do is to admit him who stands at the door and knocks. Surely it is not manly or honorable to reject Jesus Christ.

Begin the Day with God.

(J. Hudson Taylor, M.D., D.D.)

See that day by day you begin with God, and, beginning with God, he will enable you to go through the day with the sweet knowledge of God. There is nothing so helpful. I am naturally very nervous. I remember very well when I went in for my final examination as a medical man. I was pretty well up in my subjects, for I had done honest work; but when I got the paper and read over the questions, my mind simply began to swim, and everything became black. I didn't know where to begin; I didn't feel I could write anything on any of the topics before me. What did I do? I just went to God in prayer, and after a few minutes of prayer, my mind was calm; I sat down and wrote, and, thank God, my examination was well and safely passed. There is nothing which helps the mind to be more clear, nothing helps in anything one has to do, more than communion with God. And if there is anything that God will not help one to do, keep clear of that. That which communion with God will not help is not a help to us in our preparation for missionary work.

Mail Bag.

Debert Station, N.S., Jan. 11, 1903.

Gentlemen,—I received my Bible and am very pleased with it. I did not have very much trouble getting the subscribers for the 'Messenger.' Every one that has seen the Bible says it is a very nice one for such a little work.

P. GRAHAM.

Sample Copies.

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