

who takes part with the weak against the strong, with the worker for a starvation wage against the man or the system which keeps him down. In the beginning his duty is plain. He must say boldly, since the question has arisen, what the Gospel of Christ teaches. He must run the risk of offending friends, perhaps those of his own household; perhaps, even, he may have to surrender something himself; anything, everything he must do for the right. This will be difficult, to help the weak to their due. But perhaps it will be more difficult still—at least it will be as difficult—when the tables are turned, and the weak party has become strong by the help of a spasmodic public opinion, or by a more permanent alteration of the current of affairs, to speak the words of warning, to check the rushing tide, to prevent the victors going too far. They want to know then the true value of money, to learn the meaning of the commandment of love, and, in consequence, to check the spirit of retaliation. Turn coat, half-hearted—these epithets will be freely used concerning him who will always submit to higher guidance, and not be carried away by momentary impulses. But now look on other pictures. See what is, not what ought to be.

How many living among the rich and powerful, having their own friends and relations among them, dare to tell what they know free and boldly? Some there are, of course. Thank God it is so! Many there are, too, who put the truth forward, though they take care to water it well with 'ifs' and 'buts,' and allowances. But many there are who never speak at all. Of these last, some exercise tact till it becomes a vice; others take no steps because they are not hypocrites enough to say one thing and do another, and they dare not act aright themselves; others have 'eyes and see not, ears and hear not,' for the prejudices of their class still cling to them, the Spirit has not yet led them into all truth, they have not learned that they have nothing which they did not receive.

This same class, too, does infinite harm among the poor. They indeed preach the true Gospel, that the things of this world which passeth away, are by comparison as nothing; that men should be contented with whatever lot in life God may give them. But they give the lie to their words by their deeds. They lay up treasures upon earth; they keep all they have for their own use, giving away a perfunctory little; they carry class distinction into most holy places. From them we turn with joy to think of those others who, though they err, err through excess of zeal rather than through selfishness. Nowadays there are many such. Our Church has become alive in recent years to the fact that whatever her aims, she is the Church of the respectable rather than the poor, and with the knowledge has come the desire not only to do right in the future, but also to remedy the neglect of the past. Some of her best and noblest are engaged in the task. They will do anything almost to reach those for whom they yearn, and with whom they sympathise. They see their difficulties, they learn their deficiencies, they even project themselves into the very life of their new friends; but they still see all things from their own standpoint, and are led to preach the gospel of discontent instead of the Gospel of Christ. We know what you miss, they cry, by living thus—you are shut out from a world which gives us joy. They forget that the truest happiness, the best riches, the pearl of greatest price, is the property of all men, especially of all those who are weak and foolish; they magnify the power of wealth. There are, as we said, many like this, so anxious to let the poor know that the Church cares for them that they forget the message of the Church and preach any other message.

This is true also of the friend of the down trodden, and for the same reason. How many

there are who urge men into unwise courses, who hesitate to tell them to remember that the ends for which they are striving are only of this world, that they must seek first the kingdom of God. By their lack of oratorical perspective, by their one-sided enthusiasm, they make the little big, and the big little.

These things ought not to be. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit* is true here as elsewhere. The Christian who will bring about the real brotherhood of man can only hope to do so by setting before all, rich and poor alike, 'the pearl of great price' as the one great object to be sought in life. When all know this, know it as it may be known in all its fulness of meaning, then we shall understand what Kingsley meant when he made one of his characters say, 'The only thing to regenerate the world is not more of any system, good or bad, but simply more of the Spirit of God.—W. J. PHAOKY in *Church Bells*.

HALF-HEARTEDNESS.

I have read somewhere or another an anecdote which runs, I think, as follows. A man was once standing on the platform of a railway station, waiting for the train to start. During the delay he overheard the following colloquy between a farmer and the engineer:

"What are you waiting for? Have you no water?"

"Oh, yes!" was the reply, "we have plenty of water, but its no boiling!"

This answer shall furnish me with something to say to you on the subject of "Half-heartedness." For some reason or another, I can't help saying I don't like the name. One has preconceived notions about men and things, and a half-hearted man comes to me with a very poor recommendation. It may be because the Bible speaks to us in words of such strong condemnation about a man who is half-hearted. Barak the son of Abinoam, was a man of this stamp, and the consequence was that the journey he took was not for his honor. The Angel of the Lord uttered anything but half-hearted words against the inhabitants of Merod; and that for this reason,—not because they opposed the children of Israel,—not because they expressed unfriendly remarks,—not because they said, "We are not of your way of thinking,"—but because they were so lukewarm as not to come "to the help of the Lord; to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

I could multiply instances; I will only remind you of that scene which our Lord describes in the 25th chapter of St Matthew's Gospel. There He says to those on the left hand: "Not because ye were swearers or fornicators, or liars, or disobedient and unholy, Depart from Me!" but because, "When I was hungry ye gave Me no meat; when I was thirsty ye gave Me no drink; when I was a stranger ye took Me not in;"—all sins, the outcome of half-heartedness.

Now, half-hearted as some one may be, yet he cannot but admire what I may call a whole-hearted man. He cannot read without a reproach to himself, the daring, intense, passionate action of the three mighty men who jeopardized their own lives in order that they might draw water out of the well of Bethlehem, and bring it to their king. He cannot read without admiration of Phinehas, the fiery son of Eliezer, who, filled with a holy fury, ran through and through with his sword the wicked pair who were defiling the camp of God's people. He cannot help but be struck with the fact that, not Abel the just, nor Abraham the faithful, nor Moses the obedient, nor Job the patient, nor Solomon the wise,—that none of these were called the men "after God's own heart." No, none of these; but David the murderer. And why? Why? Because among

all the great Saints of the Old Law, he was the Saint who was most terribly in earnest. One of his burning tears as worth a million of our icy prayers. Neither love nor grief was a half-hearted matter for him. He knew that love meant a yearning for a union with the Lord; and he knew that to yearn for God by halves was a thing for devils to laugh at. He knew that for a sin a man must be, if he be anything, contrite; and he knew that to be really contrite a man must be in some sense broken-hearted.

Again, we, by baptism members of the Church, know that our Lord not only "came to be a sacrifice for sin, but also an ensample of godly life," and the keynote to that life was ever this: "I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled."

What a rebuke to our half-heartedness, when we read, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force."

"Strive to enter in at the straight gate." "Every man went unto his own house; Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives," and at the Last Supper we read of Jesus turning to Judas and saying, "What thou doest, do quickly!" so odious to Him is dullness and half-heartedness in any matter.

A farmer said to me one day: "What an easy life the life of you parsons must be; you have only to preach your two sermons on Sunday, and then your work is almost over." A detailed account of all the other duties which devolve upon a priest faithful to his Master, faithful to his promise, faithful to his flock, would have been thrown away, perhaps, upon him, so I simply said: "When you have finished ploughing that two-acre field of yours, what an easy life you will have for the rest of the week!" And said he: "What a half-hearted man you take me for. Haven't I the cattle to look after, the sheep to see to, and the horses to attend?" And said I: "What a half-hearted man you took me for, when you thought my week's work was over when the two sermons on Sunday were preached."

Let us rise, Brethren in Christ, to the dignity and responsibility of our calling. Let us not be half-hearted when we are twitted about "those binding rules," as some people call them. The ebbing and flowing waves of human opinion, however fascinating even in their very changeableness, should make very little impression on those who know that they are but waves. Let us be less negative in our religion, and more positive; and when, for instance, we are asked to join some party which we know will prevent our fulfilling a Christian obligation, let us be whole-hearted enough to say, I cannot; and not be so ready to fall back upon that subterfuge of a reply, Well, I will think about it.

"Of course," says the half-hearted, "I believe in some religion. I believe in saying prayers, and going to some place of worship, and reading the Bible on a Sunday, and all that; but why can't people be peaceable about their religion—why be so strict in paying rent for all the mercies God sends us?" I will answer this in a very few words and say: It is a sad thing to be near to Jesus and to get no word, no look from Him, to be within reach of His unsearchable riches and yet to miss them, to be so blessed by His neighborhood and yet not to be savingly united to Him. Oh! this is indeed a desolation, and it is the result of half-heartedness!—*Selected*.

A Nova Scotia advertiser and subscriber writes: "Your paper (THE CHURCH GUARDIAN) is the best literature that a man can read; it is good sound common sense reading, and is certainly a paper that every sound Churchman should have in his house."

"The stone that is fitted for the wall will find a place there."—*Smiles*.