

loyalty to Him which is expressed by it, and He is, to-day, as of old, "walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks," marking by this test every act of service rendered by each disciple, and saying to each, "I know thy works." "He seeth not as man seeth. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

Our classification of services rendered to Christ into "great works" and "small works," "magnificent results" and "inadequate results," may, at the last day, share in the Master's reversal of the places of His servants. "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

We, as a society, are building for eternity. Let us see that our materials and our work be such as will abide the test of time and the final trial by fire. Let us not forget that it is our motive, spirit and aim in our work which decides whether it is classed with the gold, silver, precious stones, or with the wood, hay and stubble. Let us be very jealous over our own hearts in this matter, lest we suffer loss when the work of each one shall be tried as by fire. No amount of talent or wealth or social influence or active energy, or all of these combined, expended in Christian work, will be pleasing to our Master if such activity be prompted by worldly or selfish motives, all will be reckoned as wood, hay and stubble, and consumed accordingly.

Heart's love is the most precious revenue which earth yields to heaven, and whether it find expression in the godly ruling of a kingdom, or in the giving of a cup of cold water, it is equally pleasing to Him.

It is not the work, or the gift, or the sacrifice, but the loyal love which prompted these which will elicit His "Well done." It was this which won for Mary of Bethany the priceless commendation of Jesus, "She hath wrought a good work on Me; she hath done what she could." To such a disciple but one talent may have been given, but it is put to diligent use. Her only mission field may be her own home, but in that home she "holds forth the word of life," wise to win souls by the "meekness and gentleness of Christ shining in her consecrated life."

Her only outlook may be the four walls of her sick room; but the outlook of her soul may take in the whole earth, and bring down blessings on it by the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous. She may be holding up missions and missionaries, with their helpers and hinderers, their converts and their persecutors, before the eye of God, asking what she will, and having it done for her. Thus "she is fighting terribly in the van" of the militant hosts of the King of Zion.

The only offering she can cast into the Lord's treasury may be two mites, which make a farthing, yet Jesus, sitting over against the treasury and scanning the liberal givings of many, may pronounce concerning her offering: "More than they all." Is such a one not as truly obeying the Saviour's last command, and carrying out His "great commission," as did the Apostle of the Gentiles?

Let our society be composed wholly, or mainly, of such, rendering service directly to Christ, finding their motives in Christ, looking for acceptance in their work by Christ, and for their reward from Christ, who could estimate its vast capabilities for advancing the kingdom of God?

How many of such the Lord has in all our auxiliaries and mission bands we may never know; but we rejoice to believe that they are not a few, and we, gathered here to-day, are sharing the benediction of their answered prayers. But is it so with us all? Alas, no! Many of us are painfully conscious that we come very far short in these respects. Something of self is so apt to mingle with and mar our service, and, apart from this, the ever recurring details of our work are apt to be gone through as a matter of mere routine, or our interest and activity need to be sustained by contact and association with fellow-workers, or we persevere as being under a sort of necessity to carry through what we have undertaken, or we are stimulated by the instinctive desire that our auxiliary or society should equal or surpass others in efficiency. In as far as these motives, and others like them, are the source of our activities, we are mingling with the precious materials something of the wood, hay and stubble.

How is the future to retrieve the past? How are we "to rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things"? Before attempting to answer directly, permit me to say that an upward step is taken when

we recognize the habitual dominance of the purest and loftiest motives in our work as that which constitutes true success. This most blessed attainment, like all God's best things, comes to us as a promised gift.

The Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us. He "guides us into all truth," and it is truth, God's truth, thus brought to us that goes down into the deep places of the soul, and there controls the forces that make character and shape the activities of life. Christ's words, spoken by Himself to us, become spirit and life. We know the truth, and the truth makes us free. We know of nothing which would more blessedly revolutionize the Church in relation to the work of evangelizing the heathen as the prayerful study of the Bible, as a whole, taking the entire sweep of Revelation and viewing it in its unity, as the development of just one idea—Redemption. The missionary enthusiasm born of such study would be profound and abiding. Let these fundamental truths but take full possession, and they would transform the most commonplace character into one of Christ-like strength and beauty.

The Lord Jesus invites to such study of truth when He says, "Henceforth I call you not servants," etc. His promise of the Spirit is mainly for this end, "He shall teach, He shall guide you into all truth." In His great prayer He appeals to the Father: "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them." Here the knowledge of the Father's name is in order to the love—the love is born of the knowledge.

Are we ready to say, "This knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it"? Nay, dear sisters, see how very near He brings that knowledge to us. He comes with it into our very hearts, saying, "Abide in Me, and I in you." In these words of Christ we have the divine answer to the question we have asked, How shall we so work, from what motives, in what spirit, with what aims, that He, searching the heart, will say of us and our work, "Well done, good and faithful servants"? The secret of abundant fruit-bearing lies here, "If ye abide in Me," etc. Here lies the secret of successful work, because of successful prayer, "If ye abide in Me," etc.

The question returns, What is it to abide in Christ? what is it to have Christ abide in us?

We are not asking for a logical definition or a philosophic theory of this mutual indwelling. We desire to get hold of the very simplest conception of what our Lord asks of us when He says, "Abide in Me," and what He does for us when He abides in us. Abiding in Him we claim and use as our very own all belonging to Him as Mediator, attributes, offices, gifts and graces, and we thus using Him, He abides in us. The mind which was in Him becomes ours, the "tender, gracious, self-sacrificing love which made His whole life a ministry of instruction to the ignorant, of sympathy for the sorrowing, of salvation for the lost."

The central idea, and that with which we have to do, is the intimate union between the living Saviour and those in whom He abides. This union is one of the mysteries into which the angels desire to look, and in which is made known to them the manifold wisdom of God. Let us also look into it. We may find inspiration in our work. On His part humiliation, to the assumption of our nature, and with our nature, our guilt, with its dread penalty, that so He might make possible this mutual indwelling; on our part exaltation to more than angelic honour and dignity—His own joy fulfilled in us, His own love, measured only by the Father's love to Him, and His own glory—the glory which the Father had given Him, joy, love, glory, all infinite. Is it possible for one to understand and feel such love and not be "constrained," borne along as by a resistless flood to a life of consecration to his Saviour? If he who hath two coats is debtor to him who hath none, if the learned be debtor to the unlearned, if Paul was a debtor to the Greeks and to the barbarians, we are debtors to the amount of our receivings from Christ, debtors to the heathen who know Him not. "How much owest thou to my Lord?"

Let us try to compute our debt, taking the items as we find them in our catechism. We are justified, adopted, sanctified, hence we have assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, perseverance therein unto the end;

at death our souls, being made perfect in holiness, do immediately pass into glory, and our bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in our graves till the resurrection; at the resurrection we being raised up in glory to all eternity. "Then, Lord, shall we fully know—not till then—how much we owe."

Fellow Christians, this heritage of infinite and eternal glory may be the realized possession of the outcast millions of heathen lands, it needs only the linking of each weary heart to the living Christ by faith, and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Ah, thus then we can pay our debt by carrying or sending to them the Word, which has been spirit and life to ourselves. Blessed debt, and thrice blessed payment, which yet lessens not the debt!

Our hearts sing for joy that He puts into our hands some of this work to do. This, more than all else, makes life seem to us worth living. Had we a thousand lives, to this work would we consecrate them all.

Beloved friends, by the manifest signs of the times in which we live, the Lord is calling His own to double their diligence in this great work. Blessed in these respects are our eyes, for they see. Think of Brainerd and Carey, of C. Zinzendorf and Bishop Heber, and many others of the pioneers in mission work among the heathen, how would their souls have "magnified the Lord and their spirits," could they have heard the tidings that come to us month by month from all the ends of the earth!

In all the great mission fields in Africa, India, China and Japan the Lord is standing to-day, stretching out full hands toward His people and saying, "Here are golden opportunities for you; take them and make them glorious successes. The fields are white already to harvest. We can but name a few of the many."

One of these is the marvellous utilizing of the mighty forces of nature in our day, so that almost literally the messengers of Christ are "flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all them that dwell on the face of the earth." His messages can be flashed round all the world to-day with a speed compared to which "the tempest itself lags behind." Our missionaries in Formosa and India can tell us of their successes of yesterday, and of their consequent needs of to-day, and so instantaneous is the passage of the tidings that we fancy we can hear the very tones of exultant joy, or of earnest pleading for timely succour.

The dullest mind cannot fail to recognize such an opportunity altogether unique in the existence of the "Congo Free State of Central Africa," with its 50,000,000 of people, placed by God's own hand before the wondering eyes of the universal Church, already furnished with all the modern facilities for the practical annihilation of time and space—placed there that these millions may be evangelized.

Such, also, the marvellous access to the imprisoned dwellers in the zenanas of India—the open doors now counted not by scores, or hundreds, but by thousands. Such, also, the recent opening of Upper Burma and the vast stretches of the inland portion of China to the Gospel. Such the opportunities for the evangelization of Japan—little short of miraculous—the universal thirst for western culture, the disestablishment of Buddhism and Shintoism, the appointment by law of the seventh day as the day of rest.

The voices of ten thousand angels from heaven could not speak more loudly to the Church of Christ bidding her "know the time of her visitation," and seize the golden opportunity, taking "at the full" the propitious "tide in the affairs of men."

Time forbids us even to glance at the most significant "sign of the times" by which the Lord appears to His Church and to us as a society. I refer to the mission successes of the past few years which in all their aspects are simply marvellous, but in view of all these manifest indications of His will, the question presents itself, and presses for an answer, What, on our part, would be an adequate response to these appeals of Christ? If we cannot give a direct answer to this question we can at least indicate the principle on which such response should be given, namely, that we come before God, recognizing His right to claim and our obligation to render and say: "Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me, here are the worldly possessions with which Thou hast entrusted me. All are at Thy disposal. Use all as Thou wilt. Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Show me Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth."