

ing others toil, our own hands folded. Illness has laid upon us its arrest. Some handicap of circumstance, or bondage of infirmity has been providentially appointed for us. "They also serve who only stand and wait." Shall they not serve the Lord with gladness, though the service be merely passive inaction, restraining the querulous cry, accepting the bitter with the sweet, and lighting in some dark corner a prison cell of pain, a little shining candle of patience, in his name. They are not wasting time, who thus carry exultant over trial, the martyr's palm. This is no idle sitting by the road. Rather is it a lowly watching and waiting with the Master in Gethsemane.—Christian Intelligencer.

The Passing of Conviction.

We do not like to sound a pessimistic note, and we do not believe that pessimism is the dominant tone in the universe, but it does no good on the other hand to shut one's eyes to what is wrong in social or public life, or to imagine that everything is going well simply because we wish it to go well.

Among the signs or tendencies of the times which may seem to warrant the protest of warning, if not the pronouncement of pessimism, is that failure to believe anything very positively or heartily which is characteristic of large numbers of people. On the part of many a failure to think at all results in an utter indifference to all moral values, and on the part of some the very exercise of the thinking faculty has raised a brood of new difficulties and questions which are not indeed unanswerable by faith or even insuperable by reason but which where faith is lacking, seem to block the way to all religious experience.

It has been often remarked that the epochs in which belief has prevailed, in whatever form it may be, have been the marked epochs in human history, full of stirring achievements, blessed memories and substantial gain for all after-times. The epoch in which unbelief prevails, however imposing or successful they may appear inevitably in the longer perspective of after history, sink into insignificance. We use the term belief here in a deeper sense than mere assent. True belief is conviction—asserting itself, because in the fires of enthusiasm and the alembic of faith, it has come to a white heat. Of this belief in the sense of conviction the present age had none too much. The very increase of knowledge has in many cases seemed to paralyze the powers of belief, not of necessity, but actually, a good deal as the everflowing flood of a muddy stream may carry its devastating drift and detritus over fields once fair and fruitful, making growth impossible because of the floods. The culture ground of belief is found in reflection, and an age which hurries and worries all the time will never mature vigorous beliefs.

Dr. W. Jethro Brown, Professor of Comparative Law in the University College, Wales, writing in an English magazine on the subject of "The Passing of Conviction," says: "To him who looks long and intently upon society to-day, the moralities of our men and women, suggest the analogy of a structure, tolerable to look upon, but based on foundations which have been sapped. Not that odd beliefs have been wholly falsified, or that they have been superseded by new beliefs demanding a different morale. Either of these things might have been; what is apparent is that, from some cause or other, conviction is succeeded by doubts or an apathetic assent, intellectually significant, while morally valueless."

Professor Brown moreover thinks that the established beliefs of the mass of the population have been more understood by new wealth than by new knowledge. "Reflect," he says, "upon the creation in our time of a new class of wealth controllers who are free from the checks that accompany inherited wealth, free from the calls that spring from close contact with workmen, and free perhaps from the restraints which education or good breeding impose. They are able to bring desolation to thousands as far removed from one another as the ends of the earth. They can command the services of intellect, can buy rank and position, corrupt the honor of public assemblies, and ruin or delude the public by controlling and bribing the press." Rivalry for gain deepens the strain of life, and lessens interest in those invisible values which are the main hope and help of religion. Materialism is high to scepticism albeit the scepticism is of the practical and thoughtless rather than of the reflective kind.

All moral teachers in or out of the pulpit, should be careful to inculcate the necessity of intelligent yet ardent belief which passes into energizing conviction without which no really good results can be achieved either in private living or public affairs. Men of conviction go to the front in all callings, and men of religious conviction win the praise of God as well as that of men. Even the world admires a man thoroughly in earnest, and though it calls him a fanatic and does not sympathize with his cause it secretly commends his zeal. The heroes of the Bible were all men of deep and driving convictions. Their ideals impelled them to high achievements and their sense of stern duty preserved them from wasting themselves and their substance on side issues and trivial interests.

We pity the age from which conviction passes—the age which has forgotten how to believe and which raises the

weary question whether life be indeed worth living. We do not believe that this or any other age will be wholly without religious convictions. But whatever convictions exist should be clarified from all remaining admixture of error, and intensified. Belief of the right kind is a thing of which no man can have too much.

Convictions of the right sort, as to both quality and degree, are the work of the Holy Spirit in the souls of men. Mere argument will not induce the proper sort of beliefs in the minds of any whose hearts are wholly untouched by the enlightening influence of the Spirit of God. While the church mourns over the unbelief and moral apathy of multitudes about it, prayer should most earnestly be made by its members and that the Lord Almighty will send upon men in large measure the gift of wisdom and the grace of saving and energizing faith.—New York Observer.

The Demon of Discouragement.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYDER, D. D.

A hinge is a very small part of a door, yet it is a very important part; for on it turns the question whether the door be opened or shut. So the little word "but" is a very important hinge in that Bible text which tells us that David was greatly distressed, but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." On the hinge of that word turns a door of hope to God's people in the darkest hour of trouble. David was not the only good man who was distressed; his experience has been a universal one. Our heavenly Father has never promised to the best man or woman that their voyage of life shall be over smooth seas without a "capful" of head winds. He so orders it that the precious things shall be costly things, and that the noblest life shall be one of conflicts, oppositions, trials and often of severe discipline.

Observe that there is a mighty difference between being distressed and being discouraged. The King of Israel had good reason to be distressed; for a band of marauding Amalekites had attacked and burned down his town of Ziklag and had carried off his wife Abigail as a captive. He goes right to God and asks what he shall do; and the prompt answer is to "pursue them." Whereupon he musters his gallant six hundred, pushes a ter the enemy and routs them and recovers his wife and all his plundered good. Disaster did not discourage him; it drove him to God. Such experiences in the Psalmist's life taught him to ring out the words of good cheer, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? hope thou in God! Trust in God and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart."

Just in proportion as any life is a thoroughly conscientious Christian life must it encounter enemies without and within. There is no lack of "Amalekites" in any track we may take, and some of them start up in our own hearts. Conversion does not end the battle with besetting sins; it rather intensifies the conflict. Paul might have had a more quiet time if he had let the old Adam have his way, instead of that he claims, "So fight I, not as one that beareth the air; but I keep my body under and bring it into subjection." One of the best men I ever knew has a constant fight with a naturally unruly temper, and there is more than one good woman who has hard work to restrain an unruly tongue. There is enough animal lust in the constitution of some Christians to keep them watching as travelers in Africa watch for tigers in the jungles. Pride is the besetting sin of Brother A—, and love of popularity is the snare of Brother—B, and a pinching, covetousness makes it no easy thing for Brother C—to open his purse wide when the collection basket comes along. The Master's constant command is, "I say unto you all, watch!" The Christian who gives up fighting his Amalekites, and tries to find peace by surrendering to them, is disgraced in the sight of God; such discouragement means death to all healthy and happy religion.

Another demand of our Lord is, "Keep thy heart with all diligence." Heart keeping is very much like housekeeping. There must be a continual sweeping out of dirt and clearing out of rubbish—a daily washing of dishes and a perpetual washing of dishes and a perpetual battle with all sorts of vermin. If heart clearing could be done up once for all, then the Christian might disgrace all his graces, and have an easy time of it. And just because the assaults of subtle temptations are so constant, and the uprising of sinful passions are so frequent, and the task of keeping the inward man what it ought to be is so difficult, many a one who begins a religious life gets discouraged, and makes a wretched failure. The question with every Christian is, "Shall these accursed Amalekites of temptation burn up all my spiritual possessions, and overrun my soul? Shall outward assaults or inward weaknesses drive me to discouragement, and disgrace me before my Master and before the world? Or shall they drive me to Jesus Christ, who will give me the victory?"

Another frequent temptation to discouragement arises from the apparent failure of our best efforts and undertakings. How often we ministers prepare a Gospel message, and season the sermon with prayer, and we persuade ourselves that such truths must convert some sinners, and must convert some hard hearts! No echo seems to follow our strokes; no response is made to our appeals; sermons seem to rebound like shot flung against the wall of adamant. Satan whispers in our ears the taunt, "Where is thy God?" The demon of discouragement lays his icy

paw on us, and sneers in our faces, "Didn't I tell you so? Under such circumstances discouragement is just what a bottle of brandy is to an inebriate, or what a roulette table is to a gambler—it is an assailing sin. When thus assaulted, we must encourage ourselves in God, as David did; we must remember that it was his message we were uttering, and his children we were preaching to, for his honor and glory. We were using his weapons, and he is responsible for results. All that you and I are responsible for is doing our whole duty. Ours is the seeding, and God alone holds the end of what is shown. How do we know how much good we accomplish, when we do any good thing, or utter any timely truth in love? Our measuring lines do not reach into distant years—much less into the other world. Eternity may have many surprises for us. Wait and see.—Exchange.

Betraying Christ in Silence.

There are many ways of betraying Christ. Judas betrayed him with a kiss. A kiss is a token of tender affection. What extreme wickedness to use this token of love as a means of betraying a friend! The best Friend has of ten been betrayed in this way. Many have put forth the hand against Christ while extolling him with the lips. Peter denied Christ with an oath. Many use the most violent expressions to set forth their hatred of our Lord or their want of interest in his kingdom. We may not go so far. We may not speak one word against him nor put forth the hand to tear down his cause. Yet we may be disloyal to him.

Some men are careful not to show the slightest sign of disloyalty to Jesus Christ and his cause, while at the same time they are doing much to undermine his work among men, perhaps unconsciously and intentionally. Silence is a token. Silence may speak louder than words under certain circumstances. When ten lepers were cleansed by our Lord one of them returned to give glory to God. He was so filled with gratitude that he was not able to contain his feelings. With a loud voice he gave thanks. But the nine were silent, and Jesus was grieved. So deeply grieved was he that he made mention of it in tones of sadness, and the omission had been recorded as an everlasting condemnation of disloyal silence.

In this world, where so many speak against Christ and lift up the hand against his kingdom, shall we be altogether silent? Listen to what they say. They tell men that Jesus is a myth, that he was nothing more than a man, that he has no more power to forgive sins and cleanse the heart than other men, that salvation is not found in Him, and some go so far as to say that he is a deceiver who ought to be denounced and silenced. And shall we allow these things to go unchallenged? "Shall we whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high" have nothing to say in this contest? Has He pardoned thy sin? Has he conquered thine enemy? Has he set thee free? Has He cleansed thy heart? Has he given thee strength and comfort peace and hope! Then how canst thou be silent? Silence is disloyalty. Neutrality is wickedness.

Who would not defend a friend if his reputation or his interests were assailed? Can you stand still and hear your best friend defamed and injured? Could you hold your peace while evil minded men were trying to tarnish his reputation and destroy his influence and hinder his prosperity? The spirit of friendship, the spirit of loyalty, the spirit of justice would compel you to open your mouth in his defense. How much more are you bound to speak for Jesus? He died for you. Without him you are forever undone. The world hates him. You are his witness. It may be difficult to speak for him. You may feel unworthy. But shall we not undertake some difficult thing for such a Friend? Let the task be never so hard and the cross never so heavy, it may not be avoided without great guilt and shame. Let no one betray God by silence.—N. Y. Advocate.

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