

Selected.

DON'T STOP MY PAPER.

Don't stop my paper, printer;
Don't strike my name off yet;
You know the times are stringent,
And dollars hard to get;
But tug a little harder,
Is what I mean to do,
And scrape the dimes together—
Enough for me and you.

I can't afford to drop it;
I find it doesn't pay
To do without a paper,
However others may.
I hate to ask my neighbours
To give me theirs on loan,
They don't just say, but mean it—
"Why don't you have your own?"

You can't tell how we miss it,
If it, by any fate,
Should happen not to reach us,
Or come a little late.
Then all is in a hubbub,
And things go all awry,
And—printer if you're married,
You'll know the reason why!

The children want their stories,
And wife is anxious too,
At first to glance it over,
And then to read it through;
And I to read the leaders,
And con the book reviews,
And scan the correspondence
And every bit of news.

I can not do without it;
It is no use to try;
The other people take it,
And, printer, so must I.
I, too, must keep me posted
And know what's going on,
Or feel and be accounted
A fogy simpleton.

Then take it kindly, printer,
If pay is somewhat slow,
For cash is not so plenty,
And wants not few, you know;
But I must have the paper,
Cost what it may to me;
I'd rather dock my sugar,
And do without my tea.

So printer, don't you stop it,
Unless you want my frown,
For here's the year's subscription,
And credit it right down,
And send the paper promptly
And regularly on,
And let it bring us weekly
Its welcome benison.

WHAT IS CHARITY?

The Rev. J. Freeman Clarke uttered a timely thought when he said: "Charity does not mean indifference to truth and error. * * * In the great religious questions which divide the world, there is an essential truth on one side or the other. One essentially right and the other wrong. We ought, if we can, to see which is right and say so. We ought not to be neutral. We ought to select our flag and to stand by it. It is not necessary to be sectarian because we like one side better than the other. It is not necessary to be bigoted because we have a distinct and fixed opinion. Make up your mind and then stand ready to be convinced if you are wrong. Take your stand, and if you see reason utter it; but take your stand somewhere. For, says Lord Bacon, 'In this great theatre of life it is permitted to God and the angels to be spectators, but all men must be actors.'"

And again he says. "Young people grow up in all our churches who have no opinions of any kind concerning God, Christ, sin, salvation, the foundations of morals, the grounds of belief in the Creator, in duty or in immortality. Instead of being educated

by doctrine they are fed on sentiment. Instead of truth they get love. The consequence is that they drift easily into any church, creed or opinions which happen to attract them. They easily become either Roman Catholics or Free Religionists, as accident determines. If they meet a Jesuit, they joyfully accept the Pope; if they encounter a disciple of Huxley or Spencer, with equal contentment they reject God. And all this in the interest of liberality and toleration! But know this. That it is impossible to tolerate the opinions of others until you have some of your own. You can not be charitable to those who differ from you unless you first differ from them. What sort of toleration does the chip floating in the stream exercise towards the current which sweeps it along? I have heard the story of a young lady brought up in one of our Unitarian parishes in Boston, which seems to be somewhat characteristic. She was visiting some poor Irish families to help them, and she encountered their priest. 'You may not think,' she said, 'that I wish to convert them to my opinions.' 'What are your opinions?' asked the Roman Catholic. Then it appeared that she had none. But he had; so in a short time he had converted her to his views; and she has remained a Roman Catholic ever since."

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

WHAT DOES IT TEACH?

In a conversation recently with a scholarly, devout Calvinist, and an intelligent man of the world, I quoted from the "Parable of the Sower" to show that the Word of God, proclaimed by His faithful servants, was all that was necessary to convict and convert those who were willing to hear it and accept its teachings. My worthy friend facetiously remarked that I had made quite a blunder in mentioning that parable, for it certainly taught that there were four classes of ground that would receive the seed differently, according to their conditions; that the ground had no more power to change its conditions than the "vessel to dishonor" could help being as it was; that the "potter had no power over the clay," and if the "clay" was "wayside," or "stony," or "thorny," it might be its misfortune; but it certainly could not be other than it was, and, being such, it could not bring forth fruit. To all this my Calvinistic friend smilingly assented.

Now, I wish to state briefly what I consider this parable to teach, and some things that it does not teach:

1. It does not teach that the Holy Spirit must first come and prepare the ground for the reception of the seed, for the "good ground," in its natural state, was already prepared to receive the seed without any antecedent external influence. As much had been done for the "wayside," the "stony," and the "thorny ground" as for the "good ground," and the same means used with each; and that they all did not produce fruit was not the fault of the sower's.

2. It teaches that "The Word" was all that the Saviour used to cause men to believe in Him and to induce them to be converted. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." "The gospel the power of God unto salvation unto everyone is that believeth," and this "power" may be exerted upon all alike with different results, because of the different manner in which it is received.

3. It teaches that the three classes that brought forth no fruit had made themselves such as they were, and were responsible for their respective conditions. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be

converted, and I should heal them." They resisted the power that was brought to bear upon them. They closed their eyes and their ears, which they could have opened. They gave themselves up to their blinding prejudices, and hardened their own hearts, and thus put it beyond the power even of the Son of God to convert them. If any of these were so blind to the perceptions of moral and spiritual truths that they could not see them if they should try, it relieves them of no responsibility, and makes their guilt none the less, for they had become so by giving themselves up to their evil impulses until they had lost the power of seeing clearly.

We realize that every man, to a great extent, makes himself what he is; that he who is animated by pure thoughts, noble purposes, and manly, generous actions, makes for himself a strong moral character; and that he who yields to the promptings of depraved appetite, gives loose reign to his passions, and harbors wicked thoughts and feelings in his breast, blunts and distorts his moral sensibilities and perceptions, and degrades his character to that of a brute.

As the stony soil is thickened by the successive accretions of the vegetable life that flourishes on its surface for a while, then pass away, leaving a fertilizing residuum, so the morally weak are strengthened by every thought, word, or deed that may, for a time, have lodged in or emanated from their hearts. Nothing is lost, and character is but the product of one's thoughts, feelings, impulses, motives, words and actions. Barren coral islands in the course of time become rich with soil and nourish on their fruitful blossoms the lofty date and palm.

The Apostle Peter, whose faith failed him as he attempted to walk on the sea, who profanely denied his Lord, and whom Satan had thought "to sift as wheat," became one of the strongest and boldest of men.

The "wayside" was doubtless as good soil as that which brought forth fruit, but it had become hardened by the tramp of brutish hoofs and grinding wheels. The hoofs of sensuality, pride and selfishness, and the wheels of traffic, the wheels of pleasure, had transformed it into its barren condition. The "thorny ground" could have produced fruit but for the weeds. Weeds grow rankest in the best soil, and must be pulled out.

So, from the preceding, I conclude that none of the three classes failed because of natural inability, but because of their own wilful obstinacy and perversion of their ability. The plan of salvation is so simple that "the wayfaring man, though a simpleton, need not err therein." The illiterate and ignorant could understand it and accept it when they would, and many such did. To assume that the three classes of failures could not change or improve their conditions, is to deny man's capacity for improvement. Then, away with all your educational and moral institutions! Let your children grow up as they will; if they are of the "good ground," they will bear fruit, and if they are not, neither you nor they can do anything to improve the "soil" in the least. This would be consistent, according to my thinking.—C. M. Arnold.

"SIT" OR "SET?"—A writer in the *Christian World* sends up this little rickety to shed light upon the confusion existing in the minds of many very well educated people in regard to the use of the two words "sit" and "set"—a confusion similar to that which seems to attend upon the choice of saying "will" or "shall": "A man, or woman either, can set a hen, although they can not sit her; neither can they set on her, although the old hen might sit on them by the hour if they would allow. A man can not set on the washboard; but he could set the basin on it, and neither the basin nor the gammarians would object. He could sit on a dog's tail if the dog were willing, or he might set his foot on it. But if he should set on the aforesaid tail, or sit his foot there, the gammarians as well as the dog would howl. And yet, strange as it may seem, the man might set the tail aside and then sit down, and neither be assailed by the dog nor the gammarians.—Wide Awake.