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"They Asked Him Privately."

THESE are questions which should be considered with closed doors. When the nine disciples failed to heal the lunatic child, they sought an early opportunity to find the secret of their failure and asked Christ about it. It was creditable both to their honesty and discretion. They were willing to know what would not be flattering or pleasing to them. It is not every one who seeks to find out the real cause of his failures. "Why could not we cast it out?" They say "we," for they were mutually involved, and one cast no blame on the other, as is often done in our churches. When failure overtakes a church, the first thing that many do is to cast stones at one another. It is no sign of a coming revival when one begins to blame another for non-success. True penitence and humility say "we," and emphasize our own responsibility and not another's.

Then these disciples had the power to heal and put out demons once. They had had great success in this, but now it had gone from them. They could not repeat what they had privately done, and like Samson aforesaid, they woke up to know their strength was gone. This experience is a very common one. We discover that we have lost the power of God. The endowment of power does not remain with us ever the same. Yesterday we were strong, and to-day we are weak. One of the sources of the Christian life is the varying measures of strength and hope we possess. Changes enter our lives, perhaps imperceptibly and insidiously. Through disappointment, or doubt or subtle sin, the soul loses its grasp on God and stands nerveless before the foe.

The environments of the nine disciples had something to do in producing their weakness. The scribes were asking flippant questions, the people were not in sympathy with them—the atmosphere about them poisoned their faith. A strong faith often succumbs in the pretence of hostility. A Christian living much in the world, reading books full of skeptical innuendo, in a home where the atmosphere is irreligious, will find the effect of these things in his own life and power. A separateness from scenes and associations that are antagonistic to the spiritual life is both a duty and a necessity. The power of God abides only with those who abide with Him and who hold an aloofness from many of the prevailing customs of the world. One of the greatest dangers of the present day is that our faith will be frosted by dwelling too much in the atmosphere of intellectual skepticism. The questionings of scribes take away from us the power to heal.

Jesus explained the failure by saying it came from their "little faith." Perhaps that seems a too easy solution. But if we understood what Christ meant by "faith" we would see how true an answer He gave. We think of this word faith as Tennyson thought of the flower in the cranny of the wall. He thought if he could only understand that little thing of beauty hiding among the stones, he would understand everything, even God himself. If we knew all about this divine condition of soul our Lord meant by faith, we should know all the secrets of spiritual life and power. It must be an attitude and energy of the whole soul, a power to realize and grasp the yowers of God,—a conviction that God is working for us and in us.

In every path of life, faith is a mountain-moving power. The man of faith is ever the man of power. It may be faith in himself, or to the cause he devotes himself unto, or in a great and vital principle that governs his life, or in some other thing. That faith makes for strength as nothing else can. Now, faith in God is the highest and mightiest faith of all. When we have faith in His word, and in the power of His spirit, and in His assured presence with us always and everywhere, then the soul rises out of weakness into strength, and is able to do all things—even the removing of mountains from our way.

The Survival of The Weakest.

THE strong should bear the infirmities of the weak; but the burden is often very heavy, so heavy that the strong can make no progress with their burden. The free intelligent conscience must sometimes consider the man with the weak conscience, but it is with a trial of soul, that does not always bring the grace of patience. The weaker brother is often tyrannous, and refuses to grow stronger or broaden his moral view of life; and sometimes he is very vigorous in the insistence that his conscience and judgment are the expressions of the highest ideal.

Thus men of broad and just judgment are led to yield to the weaker brother, and to permit his idea and ideal prevail, rather than make contention, because they try to apply the law of liberty of conscience. The principle of the Apostle Paul which calls for consideration for the weak conscience, certainly has some limit, or we shall have, in all things, the survival of the weakest elements of life and religion. If we are never to rise above the petty and narrow ideas of the weak, there can be no growth and development.

The effect of this seen in many of the organizations and undertakings of the church. It means that the narrowest conception of the Christian religion prevails against the conception which, philosophically and spiritually, is truer to the main truth, and at the same time, inclusive of those who differ on minor details. The strong and broad judgment is pushed out of sight, and the illiberal and narrow comes to represent, not simply the churches, but the fundamental idea and truth of the denomination; with the result that a great truth is presented, always on its smallest side, and broad minds reject it in total. The service and the work of the churches are frequently an appeal to the weakest elements of life; which, therefore, having no sort of sympathy from the strong, fail to touch many hearts.

Sometimes our journals are tempted to make this appeal to weakness for the sake of the wider constituency. Of course the success of this depends upon the character of the constituency of the denomination to which the paper ministers; but even in the extreme, case there should be some effort to raise the standard, at the risk of offence to the weaker, simply for the sake of lifting the standard.

The result of the constant and ofttimes indiscriminate regard for the man with the weak conscience results everywhere in a lowering of the tone of Christian ideals and life. The projects of the church are kept on the narrowest and smallest basis, and represent the most limited and incomplete views of the truth for which the church stands. The weak side of the Christian religion is thus always to the front; and the strength of it is hidden in the desire to give no offence, to those who are weak in judgment and conscience.

The man of less judgment and weak conscience has a duty to be not forever weak, and narrow in view, and small in outlook; to let the stronger lift him up and strengthen him. His duty is to grow and broaden; and not require that the large-minded, and better equipped, shall lower their ideals either to his weakness, or his immaturity. There comes a time when the child must be weaned from a diet of milk, and taught to eat strong meat. He may hunger awhile and be faint; but he will soon learn to eat and grow into strong manhood. Many a church in many a community is powerless there, because it has followed a false application of a true principle; and become a survival of the weakest.

The Young Canadian soldier Mulloy, who lost his sight while serving in South Africa, will study for the ministry in the Baptist Church. He left College to enlist, and though seriously handicapped by the loss of sight, he is taking up his work cheerfully and with determination. He will, doubtless, succeed.

Is Your Husband a Christian?

A friend had prayed for her unbelieving husband for many years. As yet the answer did not come and her heart was bowed down; but she held fast to the promises of God and waited in hope. One evening at the church prayer-meeting, being more than usually burdened, she rose timidly, and with deep emotion said: "It is not usual for us ladies to speak in the meeting and I have feared to be intrusive, but my burden is too heavy to bear. For many years I have longed to ask you to help me pray for my husband. Will you do it now?" Every heart was melted and many eyes moistened while they joined in pleading prayer. Mr. H—was much loved in that community, and they prayed as one pleader for his own son. Just as Mrs. H—had made her request and sat down her husband came to the door to accompany her home, as was his custom. Seeing the service was not ended he took a seat near the door. On their way home, he said to his wife: "Who was the gentleman they were praying for?" "He is the husband of one of the members," replied his wife. As they ascended the steps of their house he said again: "Well, who was it they were praying for?" "The husband of one of the sisters, Charles." "Well, wife, replied he with much feeling, "that man will certainly be converted I never heard such prayers as those."

That night, awakening from sleep, she heard her husband in agitated voice cry: "Wife, wife, they were praying for me! God heard those prayers. I cannot sleep. Will you get up and pray for me?" There was joy in the presence of the angels that night, for the lost was found. What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? The prayer of faith still prevails.

A Lesson in this Rich Man's Life.

A millionaire in New York told the writer that, when he was a boy, he let himself out by verbal contract for five years, at seven dollars and fifty cents a week, in a large dry goods store in New York. At the end of three years, this young man had developed such skill in judging goods that another concern offered him three thousand dollars a year to go abroad as its buyer. He said that he did not mention this offer to his employers, nor even suggest the breaking of his agreement to work for seven and a half dollars a week, although verbal, until his time was up. Many people would say he was very foolish not to accept the offer mentioned, but the fact was that his firm, in which he ultimately became a partner, paid him ten thousand dollars a year at the expiration of his seven and half dollars contract. They saw that he was giving them many times the amount of his salary, and in the end he was the gainer. Suppose he had said to himself. They gave me only seven and a half dollars a week, and I will earn only seven and a half dollars a week; I am not going to earn fifty dollars a week when I am getting seven and a half! This is what many boys would have said, and when they would have wondered why they were not advanced.

Do Something.

EACH member of a Christian church should be a worker for Christ. Our Lord has never granted a dispensation to a single one of us; would any of us desire that He should! His vows are upon us all without exception. Are we each obedient to His word, Occupy till I come? Are we putting out our talents to interest? If we are not doing so, we can never enter into rest. Rest implies