

experience of loneliness, you know what it is to be enisled upon the sea of life. You know what it is to be alone, when nobody seems to understand you, and nobody seems to sympathize with you. You know what it is,—to change the figure—to plow a lonely furrow, with no one before, none to follow, no one on the right hand, none on the left. "I have trodden the winepress alone",—that is one text you need none to expound for you.

But "I was in the Spirit",—have you an experience which unlocks that text? A gloomy island, a solitary sea, a few unfriendly soldiers,—but John knew little of it all. A celestial universe unfolded about him, and the isle was filled with strange music, peopled with angelic shapes, and lighted with celestial glory. And in that blessed mood the weary weight of all this unintelligible world was lightened. He was not lonely any more: he was not separated any more: his pains were over and his isolation was done. He was in the Spirit, and he that is in the Spirit is at home with God.

The point is, that a man's apparent environment is not necessarily his real environment. He may be walking by faith, not by sight. Look at Stephen. He is surrounded by an infuriated mob, "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Think of Bunyan. He dwelt within the coarse confines of Bedford gaol; but his spiritual imagination made him live in a country where it was summer the year round: he dwelt in the Palace Beautiful, climbed the Hill Beulah, heard golden trumpets, saw the city lighted with the glory of God. Consider the man of whom a Glasgow minister tells. He was an inmate of one of the poorhouses,—a man of spirituality and true refinement. "I don't know how you can live in Stobs Hill", said a friend who visited him one day, "I am not living in Stobs Hill", was the gentle but dignified reply, "I am living in God."

We have the power of making our own scenery. That is the fundamental distinction between nature and man. Nature accepts conditions; man creates conditions. Nature proceeds by conformity to environment; man proceeds by conquest of environment. If a man is banished to the island,

he can lift himself into the Spirit. He does not need to live in Stobs Hill; he can live in God.

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### Omissions

By Rev. J. H. Turnbull, B.A.

Life suffers, doubtless, from its omissions. In fact we are probably justified in believing that the "omissions" of an ordinary life constitute a greater weight of judgment than the "commissions".

But there is another side to this. From the beginning of human history it has been recognized that life demands restrictions and prohibitions. In the midst of the garden of Eden stood one tree which our earliest parents were forbidden to touch, and ever since then man has found himself in the midst of a beautiful and opulent world, but always with something in it that he must not do or take. To meddle with this would be to spoil his life plan, and eventually to shut him out from the best things. We are daily set at the meeting place of countless ways. We are busy every day rejecting as well as choosing. We are passing constantly through an immense storehouse of things good, bad and indifferent. Some of these we lay on this hand, some on that. Alas, that so often we should select for pursuit and allegiance such trivial things, and should cast into the heap of rejected things the real pearls and jewels!

The very bounty of life makes omission imperative. We are here to improve our talents, but not all our talents. We are like the operator set down before a marvelous organ, with an almost endless equipment of keys and stops and combinations. Some of these are better than others; none are quite worthless. We must choose. To attempt to employ all would ensure the most dismal failure. Something must be sacrificed always for excellence. The secret of the highest result is a sometimes stern lopping off of possibilities. Narrowness is one of the first conditions of power.

Not only are omissions necessary, but they are also determinative. They inevitably throw the life in a quite definite direc-

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