

WELL PUT.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

"My friend, I had hoped that before this you would have taken your stand for Christ." "So, I would," replied the man, frankly, "if I were not a coward." That foolish fear of facing the stare or the laugh of his companions held him back. Mr. Finney once had an awakened sinner kneeling by his side, and as he repeated over the various surrenders to be made, he came to this one, "O God, I will serve thee in my business." The man was silent; and when Mr. Finney asked him why he hesitated at this point, the poor man stammered out, "I'm in the liquor trade." He was not willing to give up the profits of dealing out death by the dram, and rising from his knees he went away, quenching the Holy Spirit. All our congregations contain more or less persons who have at some time set their faces towards a better life, but have struck against some obstacle that has driven them back. Or else they have been held by one or more favorite and darling sins from which they were not willing to cut loose. Like the wife of Lot, they looked back, and soon fell into a more hardened indifference than before. This is a dangerous process; it may be repeated once too often. Every unconverted person who listens to a faithful pulpit appeal goes home the better or the worse. He or she has cast another vote either for or against Christ. Every time you decide against Christ diminishes your chance of salvation.

"No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." The Greek word signifies "well put." It means firmly set; with a determined purpose. "Well put" with the face set like a flint towards the Lord Jesus Christ. Bunyan's pilgrim, when he stopped his ears and ran towards the wicket gate, was well put for the way towards the Celestial City. "I went to my room," said my old friend Malcolm, "and fastened the door, determining to remain till I had obtained the pardon of my sins and reconciliation to God." He made what he calls the "honest effort," and God took him at his word. He found peace, and on the next evening he rose and told his fellow-students (of Brown University) (what a rich blessing Jesus had given to his soul. Other students were moved, and they too set their faces Christward. Malcolm was well put for the kingdom of God when he locked that door and determined that he would never retreat until God had given him the victory.

Perhaps some reader of this paragraph may wonder why he or she makes no progress towards a better life. You often think about it, often make good resolutions, and perhaps some earnest prayers. Yet all the time you are holding fast to your sins, unwilling to cut loose from them. I have seen a steamer at the wharf start its engine, and while the propeller was churning the water at the stern the vessel did not move. A stout hawser held it to the pier; as soon as the rope was "cast off" the steamer started. That vessel was not "well put" for its voyage until it was detached from the wharf, and could use its motive power unhindered. I do not care what be the sin that holds you back, so that it keeps your soul from a full, honest surrender to Jesus Christ, cost what it may, make a clean breast of it in confession to God, and clean work of it in re-

nouncing the sin. You cannot cling to your sins and cling to your Saviour too. Up to this time you have failed, and you will continue to fail as long as you try to "serve two masters." At the very point where the Holy Spirit is pressing your soul up to a duty, there you must yield. When Jesus pressed close on the young ruler with the demand to sell his estate and come and follow him, the young man *drew back*. "Sorrowful" he may have been, but he would not cut loose from his selfishness. That poor, rich youth was not "well put" for the noble career of discipleship which Jesus held out to him. Compare him with Matthew the publican, who quitted his toll-booth, and found afterwards his place of immortal honor in the fore-front of the New Testament.

Sometimes a single passage of God's Word comes as a heaven-sent message for the emergency. Here is a text for you, "For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; *therefore have I set my face like a flint*, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." As soon as you set your face towards Christ, you are a converted soul; as long as you keep it in that direction, you are climbing heavenward. Let your hand be "well put" into his hand; let every footstep be "well put" in obedience to his commandments.—*New York Evangelist*.

A MOMENT.

But for a moment! How the thought helps over hard places? No matter how sharp the pain, how keen the trial, how utterly the clouds that enfold us, it is but for a moment and will vanish away. How foolish, then, for us to sit down and mourn over the ills of life, the discomforts and annoyances that fall to our lot, the toils and privations, or even the sharp agony of bereavement, that sometimes take from us the last hopes and comfort of life.

How worse than foolish to lay to heart the cruel wrongs sometimes inflicted upon us, the unmerited blame, the unjust suspicions, even though we be cast out and forsaken by all but our Father, when it is but for a moment, and is to work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

"Our light afflictions!" Oh, how light when our eyes are opened to see them as they are to understand God's choicest mercies—angels that draw us closer to the loving heart of our blessed Lord.

If we have fellowship with his sufferings we are to be partakers of his glory! Courage, faint heart, bending and breaking under the gentle stroke of a Father's hand; it is but for a moment. Look up through thy tears, and you will see shining through the darkest cloud this bow of promise; "As thy day, so shall thy strength be."

Only a moment, compared with the vast cycles of eternity; and can we not bear all things, endure all things, when we remember who it is that orders every event of our lives, who it is that says, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Only a moment of sorrow or anguish cheerfully met, patiently endured, clinging fast to the Mighty One when the billows sweep over us, and the eternal weight of glory will dawn upon our sight.—*Advance*.