

BEARING AND DOING.

It is a fine thing to be active. This is not a great cross to most young people. Something to do is what they want. Something to bear is not coveted at all.

"John is the busiest fellow anywhere about," say his companions; "he is always doing something, and he is willing to lend a hand too, but there are some things he can't endure. He can't bear contradiction; if anybody differs from him, he can't stand it, and he won't bear it. He can never bear to wait, either; when he was sick awhile ago, he raged like a caged animal because he couldn't be doing something all the time."

Doing shows only part of what one really is. "What can he bear?" is an important question. It often takes more courage to stand still and wait than to rush forward and do. It takes more patience to bear with those who are clumsy in helping and awkward in doing than to do all the work one's self; but there are things to be borne quietly, as well as others to be done briskly, in this world. If one of these is harder than the other, more help from above must be gotten for it; and the help never fails, if it is sought.

BE OF GOOD COURAGE.

What is there to be afraid of, in this world? Just one thing, and that is sin. A good conscience will make good courage.

Everybody wants to be strong and brave, but every one is not willing to use the means. An obedient soldier is a brave soldier, but one who does not trust and obey his commander will get into all sorts of trouble and may well be afraid of what will follow.

It is just as much a duty to be of good courage as to be honest and truthful, for God tells us to be all of these. There is no need to fear that any dreadful thing will happen which will not be good for us, for there is the promise that all things shall work together for good. There is no reason to be afraid of starving, for daily bread is promised. There is no danger of being forgotten, for our Father never forgets. No foes will be too strong for those who trust in Jesus, for He will fight for them, and he always wins the battle. Why, then, is any one ever cowardly and afraid? Because he does not trust, that is all. Sin is at the bottom of it. Fear and doubting go together, only the doubting comes first. Don't be afraid that the loving Jesus will allow any real harm to come near, but be afraid always of doing wrong.

PRAYER.

When we find in our experience that prayer really does open the gates through which we are admitted to the secret chambers of the Ruler of this universe, the marvel is that we so often forget our privilege. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," is true. If not, then every other Bible statement is false. Admit one Divine word to be unreliable, henceforth, on just principles, nothing promised in the Bible may be trusted.

And so, if Jesus stooped to our condition that He might, among other benefits, show us the path of prayer, is it possible that we can neglect it? Who can think of it otherwise than as wonderful condescension or unspeakable privilege? His torn and bleeding feet bore Him along this way for us. Shall we not follow Him? He ascended the mountain slopes of Galilee, not to view the Judean landscape, but to pray; He rose "a great while before day" to engage in holy communion with the Father; He sanctified the closing moments of His earthly life in this exalted exercise. And when Gethsemane was His bitter portion, the crown of thorns and

Calvary His supreme agony, closer still He drew Himself into the Father's presence. So it should ever be with us. Sorrow shall then speedily open into sunlight, into life without a pang, and into glory without a cloud.

GIVEN FREELY.

The best things of life have to be given freely, not from a sense of duty. You never can measure out friendship; you never can tell how much a man ought to do for his country; you never can tell what he should do for God. There is always that overflow, that abundance, which is chiefly valuable for us and is valuable to God as it comes as the free-will offering of our hearts. You say of a certain person that he is just, implying you don't quite like him. You say of another person that he is generous, meaning that you do like him. It is because of that which he does beyond what he is obliged to do.

If there is any life where this applies with the utmost force, it is to the religious life. Your piety must make the cup overflow. If you do exactly your duty, and nothing else, your life is no comfort to you and little help to anyone else. You want something of joyousness and freedom in it, and then it tells.

HE KNOWS BEST.

Let those who are restless and dissatisfied, those who are longing for a larger sphere, those who feel that their lives are not what they would have them be, read these helpful words from Norman McLeod:—

"My life," he wrote, "is not what I would have chosen. I often long for quiet, for reading and for thought. It seems to me to be a very paradise to be able to read, to think, to go deep into things, gather the glorious riches of intellectual culture. God has forbidden it in His providence. I must engage in public work on everything; employ my life on what seems uncongenial, vanishing, temporal waste. Yet God knows me better than I know myself. He knows my gifts, my powers, my failings, and my weaknesses; what I can do and what not do. So I desire to be led, and not to lead; to follow Him. And I am quite sure that He has thus enabled me to do a great deal more in ways which seemed to me almost a waste of life, in advancing His kingdom, than I would have done any other way. I am sure of that."

There comes to all trustful and thoughtful persons a time when the wisdom of God's leading is borne in upon them so forcibly that they wonder they ever questioned His will or sought to turn from the life He gently guided them into.

How many of us are living the lives we would lead if we could choose for ourselves? How many of us are sure that the lives we are leading are such as may be made to blossom if we but choose careful guidance?

The writer knows a wonderfully sweet and beautiful old lady who has been for many years a mighty power for good in the world, although she has lived a very quiet and simple life in a small town. But every life that has touched hers has been helped by her beautiful spirit.

"Yes, she said only the other day, 'I had all sorts of lofty ambitions when I was a young girl, but they were not founded on any desire to do much for others. I wanted to be a great scholar. I wanted to travel. I wanted to see and hear and know much. I wanted to be a brilliant woman, a second Madame De Staël perhaps. But God ordered it otherwise. I am not a great scholar; I have never been out of the State in which I was born but once or twice; I know little about the world, and I am not in the least brilliant. And yet I feel and know that my life is richer, fuller and better than if every desire of my girlhood

had been gratified. God knew what was best for me. He knows what is best for every human soul."

He does know best, and they are happiest who trust lovingly to His shaping of their lives.

THE EMPTY GRAVE.

We must not look on the grave as a conqueror. We are tempted, I know, as we turn away from the fresh-filled grave, and leave our dear one's body sleeping there, to feel that the grave has vanquished us, that all the agonized prayers, and the careful nursing, and the clever doctors were of no avail, that the grave has gained the victory. But it is not so. Jesus, by His resurrection, has conquered death, and robbed the grave of its victory. As a preacher of the day tells us, He has left His grave-clothes in the tomb, like the torn flags which hang in our cathedrals, as tokens of victory. As it was impossible for the grave to hold the Son of God, so it will be impossible for it to hold any of God's people when the day of resurrection comes. As the humble tabernacle of the Jews was removed to give place to the glorious temple, so will the earthly tabernacle of our flesh be dissolved only to give place to the splendour of the resurrection body, the grander temple of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps some of us have been worshipping an earthly idol, and God has taken it from us, and we cry in our sorrow: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Our husband, or wife, or child, or money, or pleasure was our lord, our idol, and it is gone. Better gone, if it stood between us and God. Turn to-day, and see the risen Jesus standing in our midst, and cry with faith, "My Lord, and my God."

WALLED CITIES OF COREA.

All the cities in Corea are walled, the gates being opened at sunrise and closed at sunset. Seoul, the capital city, has a battlemented stone wall, six miles in length, and from twenty-five to forty feet high. There are eight gates; and these are opened and closed at the stroke of the great bell, said to be the third largest in the world, which hangs in a roofed pavilion, behind bars, in the heart of the city; an inscription on it relating that it was first rung in 1468. Seoul is one of the great cities of the East, with a population of 300,000, of which 1,000 are Japanese, as many more Chinese, and about 100 Europeans and Americans. With its numberless tiny thatched houses huddled together along narrow alleys, it must present a curious appearance. Three magnificent avenues, fifty yards wide, mark the capital city; one leading directly to the palace gates at the north is at right angles with another which crosses the city from east to west, while the third extends from thence to the south; but even these highways are encroached upon by the squalid little hovels of the poorer classes, who build their huts in a double row along the middle. Very temporary homes, however, for when the King, two or three times a year, is driven out through the palace gates into the city, his pathway must be clear, and the homes of his subjects are sacrificed with royal prodigality. Seoul being situated in a low basin between hills, and there being absolutely no system of drainage, it is a malodorous spot. The foreigners have taken advantage of the few land elevations within the walls and have put up their buildings on them. The British, Russian, and Japanese Legations and the French Roman Catholic Establishments, so placed, are the most conspicuous objects in the city.

"Emotion can never take the place of devotion."