

Christian Life and Work.

TRIFLES.

BY REV. STEPHEN MERRITT.

Small things, little incidents, trifles, go to making up our lives. Carelessness as to trifles leads to grievous falls; attention to trifles make us developed men or women. It is the little things, the minor duties that are constantly occurring that form our characters and augment our powers. If we despise the small, we shall fall by the small, but if we are faithful in little, we shall be faithful in much. Never measure things as great and small, they are one in the Holy Ghost. Trifles become great under His touch, and simple trifles tell. "Faithful in a few things, I will make you ruler over many." A word fitly spoken may seem a trifle, but it is full of joy and blessing; a trifling hand shake may be a benediction; a cup of cold water shall not lose its reward. Little things are used of Him; trifles tell. Accomplish the wee things well. Do your best; simply, sweetly, quietly and quickly; do it not for self, but to the Lord. Strive, struggle not after great things; that is harmful, not helpful; that may be of self-love and a desire for applause, and it is not pleasing to Him. The less you are the better. It is really to be nothing, to wish for nothing, to choose nothing, but to sink into the will of the Holy Ghost, so that without Him you stir not a single step. Give yourself fully to Him, trust Him in trifles as well as in everything else, listen to His voice, rest in His love, and let Him lead you in all things small as well as great, and nothing shall offend you, and you will be an offence to none.—*ScL*

THE IDEAL DENIAL OF SELF

BY THE REV. OWEN JAMES.

WHAT is denial of self? It is not a denial of anything to self, such as pleasure, ease, luxury, wealth, or power. It is a denial of the very self. This is a radical and profound distinction. One might deny many indulgences to self for self's own sake.

It is not a denial of any part of self for the sake of any other part of self,—of the lower self for the sake of the higher and better self. It is not a suppression of the carnal for the sake of the spiritual. It is not the subordination of appetite and passion to reason and conscience. It is a denial of the entire self.

It is, moreover, ethical, and not metaphysical. It does not mean a denial of one's entity or personality,—a destruction or annihilation of one's physical or psychical being. It operates in the moral realm. It appertains to character. It means the formation of a character, from all the elements of which self is excluded.

Every moral character has three constituent

elements on which its quality depends. These are purpose, motive, and law,—the end for which, the force by which, and the rule according to which, one lives. Before every man are several possible goals, any one of which, but only one of which, is for him attainable. He must choose one, and he can choose but one, of them. The one that he does choose becomes for him his supreme end, and it is the purpose of his life to reach this end. All else is made subordinate and subservient to this purpose. If the end thus chosen have reference to self in any manner or form, the character is so far forth selfish. But if it have no reference to self, and be entirely outside of self, then the character will be so far forth unselfish.

The same is true of motives, or the moving forces of character. Every man finds several of these acting upon him and offering to sway him. He must choose to yield to one of them, and refuse to yield to all the others. He can yield to but one; all the others must be rejected. The one to which he chooses to yield, and does yield, becomes to him the urging power of his life. If the force to which he chooses to yield arises from self, so far forth again the character is selfish. But if the motive comes from a source outside of self, then is the character unselfish.

The third determining element of character is the rule or the law which one chooses for his guidance in the pursuit of his end. If the law is evolved out of his own observation, opinion, and generalization, if it is the product of his own reason or his own conceit, then again so far forth is he selfish. But if it be a law received from the hand of another, and adopted by him for his guidance without questioning and without misgiving, the character in this particular is again unselfish.

Thus now we see the difference between a selfish and an unselfish character,—a character in which self is asserted, and one in which self is denied. If, in choosing an end,—a motive and a law for one's life,—one has had no reference to self, but has gone entirely outside of self in all its parts, then we can say that self has been utterly denied,—that one has taken up his cross, and has decided to lose his life for some one's or some thing's sake. We find a perfect illustration of this denial of self in Jesus Christ. And we become full followers of Christ only as we choose the end that he chose, yield to the motive that actuated him and submit to the law that he obeyed.

Let us inquire, then, 1; What was the end, the purpose, of Jesus' life? Listen to him: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." "He that speaketh from himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." "But I seek not