

Buds and Blossoms

AND

Friendly Greetings.

"Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the world with fruit."

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"What Thou Doest, Do Quickly."



WHY? Because the time and tide of opportunity awaits no man's pleasure. "Be always displeased with what thou art," says Augustin, if thou desirest to attain to what thou art not, for when thou hast pleased thyself, there thou abidest. But if thou sayest, 'I have enough, thou perishest. Always add, always walk, always proceed. Neither stand still, nor go back, nor deviate.' Life is a battle. Watchfulness and prompt obedience is a needful lesson. The way of true advance is the way of uprightness. Many in their doing miscalculate their gains. Some Judas-like do quickly enough. But they alas do not count the cost in the light of the long and ever coming to-morrow which always is to be, but never is. Esau sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, he had this excuse, he was hungry. He had been diligently hunting and was faint with non success. Judas had no occasion for haste. He had fed to the full at his Master's table, carried the bag and was almoner. His position was an honorable and trusted one. His bag should have been holiness to the Lord. But Judas the thief found it to be a bag full of holes. The blood money for which he sold his master would not stay therein, and he in despair went and hanged himself, finding himself in the end of the bargaining with the world, the flesh and the devil, so poorly off and so meanly treated that none would find or spare him a decent piece of rope to hang himself with. The record tells how the rope broke and wrecked his poor body. To saint and sinner, we would say, make haste slowly to do evil. But in doing well, life's brief span demands earnestness and intensity. We often say, "time flies":

"It is not time that flies,
It is we are flying,
It is not time that dies,
It is we that are dying:
Time changes, but without decay,
It is we alone who pass away."

It is well to remember, to end well in our doing, and to continue in well doing, it is essential for us to obey the voice of that same Jesus, of whom Mary advised the servants, "whatsoever he saith unto you do it." To do quickly is not always to do well. Peter was prompt in using his sword, but he aimed a bad blow. Ill would have been the consequences had not Jesus the healer averted the attention of the armed band from the bungling swordsman. Before doing is commenced, there should be enlistment for service; a willingness to will and to do whatsoever the Master saith. Faith and submission must be

shown. The truly Pauline christian prayer, "what shall I do Lord," is suitable at all times. Men forget that without the grace of God and pardon through Christ's blood, mere carnal and moral diligence, which is of the flesh, fails to make an atonement for sin, or to meet the law's demand. Sin is like a boomerang, it returns and strikes the thrower. Retribution is as fixed a law as the law of gravitation. Some men blame God for their own mistakes, and curse Him when they gather the harvest of their own sowing. The eagerness of the worldly-wise should move the children of God to more unselfish diligence and endeavour. Time is short, and the King's business demands haste. Go and compel them to come in, shows the urgency of seeking to save the lost. Selfishness is spiritual suicide. The Scotch say—"Sel, sel," has half-filled hell." God has given to every one his work. And what shall it profit if the world be gained and no provision be made for the eternal future. A minister once remarked to a man who was carnal, selfish and penurious, "what will you do with your gold when you die, it will be no good to take with you, where you are going, for it will melt?"

Salvation is not of works, all of grace, without money, the price was the precious blood of Jesus. Nevertheless the worldlings are not the only ones who have their reward. Godliness is profitable for both worlds. Diligence for God maketh rich. The wages and dividend is sure, it pays to lay up treasures in heaven. To some it may be profitable to put the problem and account thus:

DR.	CR.
MY SOUL'S VALUE.	WHAT I AM SELLING IT FOR.

"The value of the soul is the precious blood of Christ. Put that down on the Dr. side. How shall we fill up the Cr. side? Gold! Bank stock! How much? Success—what is your aim in life? Pleasures—what are your darling objects? Set them down on the Cr. side. Oh! what a sorry exchange! Everlasting bliss let slip for a bag of gold—for a bubble of fame—for fleeting enjoyments!"

A conceited youth thus accented a certain popular divine: "Well, sir, I am an evolutionist, and I want to discuss the question with you. I am also an annihilationist. I believe that when I die that will be an end of me." The minister's reply was simply, "Thank God for that!"

There is danger in an alliance with the wicked, whether social, matrimonial, commercial or political.