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*"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."—Psalm 137, 4-5.*

### THE SUBLIMITY OF THE ORDINARY IN LIFE.

BY REV. A. J. B.

1. Corinthians, xiii., 8-13.

On a great occasion, recorded in the Gospels, Jesus Christ rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. The noble deed spoke to the heart of them in a marvellous power of eloquence. They wanted to assert their individual dignity. They couldn't stoop to the performance of a menial office, but Christ would; He of them all had dignity and fitness of soul sufficient to enable Him to do this small and unimportant work. His disciples wanted to be great, and Christ showed them true greatness in His relation: He showed them by a lofty example that He, the highest, truest, dearest, had penetrated without stooping, the humblest office man may fill. Every man's life is made up of a variety of things—things great and things small; things that look big and important and things that look small and unimportant. Some days are not all alike, nor is the level of any day a mere dead level. But you would know what man really is,—what is the precise force of his character. You must find how he looks upon what are the smaller duties of life, and how he deals with them. True greatness in any direction is shown by attention to

details. A great painter is not the man who by a few bold lines upon the canvas, and a few dashes of his brush, can outline some noble conception. The man who can do that may be a genius, but a genius without talent—without the power of taking almost infinite pains to fill in and finish the sketch—is not real greatness. Go over the list of the world's greatest soldiers, and you will find that the most successful of them were the men who had a supreme regard for the common-place details of warfare. Take our successful merchants—here and there you will find a man who grew rich in a day. He made one grand throw and drew a prize. But he is not a great merchant in any sense of the word. He is simply and only a bold speculator who by that throw stood to win a fortune or a prisoner's cell. It is the same in all matters of education. The general and ripe scholar is the man best fitted for the work of teaching. It is a grave error to imagine that the approximation needed between the mind of the teacher and of the taught is that of a common ignorance—or an abnormal growth of one particular faculty, instead of mutual sympathy. The same rule holds in the higher sphere of spiritual life and work. The man of highest and most constant communion is the man best fitted to perform the ordinary duties of life. Now, the first and great purpose of life is that a man shall be fitted for the work that comes to his hand—and as the work of life is made up, for the most part, of that which is ordinary, it is clear