

ACCEPTANCE OF COMMON OPPORTUNITIES THE JUDGMENT TEST.

This is because our habit and manner of accepting them reveal character as nothing else does. The power to seize on exceptional occasion and, by nerving one's self temporarily for a tremendous effort, to do something brilliant and conspicuous, which wins wide admiration, is not to be underestimated. It is to be honored and desired. But it is only one of the elements which unite to compose one's character. From its nature it can only be exhibited now and then. The final inquiries concerning each of us are not to be—What has he done, what can he do, but what is he? The difference is plain.

It is the acceptance of common opportunities of service, when the ordinary wear and tear of life is being felt, when the romance of existence has given place, at any rate for a time, to prosaic duties and commonplace experiences, that shows our underlying character. We are not on dress parade then. We forget or do not care to pretend. If we are quick-tempered, fretful, suspicious, indolent or careless, we show it then. If we are cheery, patient, energetic, spiritually-minded, then it is that those who know us best thank God for us. The apostle has bidden us "Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." He might have added, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, ye cannot help showing whether ye do it to the glory of God or not."

This is fair to everybody. Nothing could be fairer. Most of us cannot do brilliant things. Few can accomplish acts of heroism often, if ever. But everybody can use common opportunities faithfully. And sometimes, in divine providence, the most uninviting openings prove to afford occasion for the most heartily recognized heroism. But the judgment test will not be whether we succeeded in being appreciated but whether we tried to be faithful.—*Congregationalist*.

THE SCOTCHMAN'S PERTINACITY

The Scotchman has as a trait the element of persistence. Upon his drumhead he never beats a retreat. It is liberty or death. This story illustrates how a Scotchman will hold on and follow what he considers to be his one line of duty.

It is told of a clergyman in the days when Knox was battling against the Roman hierarchy. His congregation brought a charge against him before the Presbytery that he never could preach a sermon without breaking a lance with the pope—i.e., his sermons were all the same thing: pope in the exordium, pope in the body of the sermon, and pope in the peroration or conclusion. Thus it was, fifty-two Sabbaths of the year. His preaching grew monotonous and the people grew weary.

The Presbytery said: "We will try him: we will give him a text to preach from; we shall hear his sermon, and we shall see if your charge be true—that it is popery and pope no matter what text he takes."

They gave him for a text three proper names: "Adam, Seth, Enos." When the Presbytery met, there was a great congregation there, and the minister felt that they needed sound doctrine and timely warning. He saw a great opportunity. Solemnly he took his place in the pulpit and announced his text: "Adam, Seth, Enos," and this was his first sentence: "My dear brethren, these men lived in a day when there was no pope nor popery, and consequently they had not to contend against the following evils," and he enumerated in full and without waste of time all the evils of Romanism.—Dr. David Gregg in *"Makers of the American Republic."*

FOR CHRISTIAN WIVES.

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." 1 Peter iii. 1-2.

Oh, Peter, have you not made a mistake in writing this, or perhaps several mistakes? Should not the Christian wife who has a worldly, irreligious, ungodly husband, one not obedient to the word, be instant, in season and out of season, in reproving, rebuking and exhorting? How else can she hope to win him to the word? If she fails in this does she not neglect her

Christian duty? If a woman now has a husband addicted to some bad habit—smoking, drinking, swearing, money worship, ought she not to make it hot for him till he quits? How else can she break him of it? And how can a Christian wife be subject to a heathen or ungodly husband? And how is it possible for her to "fear" or reverence such a man?

But perhaps there is some truth in the old heathen fable of the sun and the north wind. The sun made the traveller lay aside his cloak, the wind made him bring it closer. And perhaps Peter was right. The warmth of wifely love and respect and obedience may make the husband throw away the bad habit or may melt the heart of unbelief, much sooner than wifely reproofs and reproaches. And "conversation" in the text does not mean talking, much less reproving, but manner of life.

If the wife refuses to her husband the respect and the regard for his wishes which belong to him by the law of nature and the law of God, will she increase his disposition to obey the Word of God? And if she does this on the plea of religion, will not his dislike to religion be strengthened?

"Judge and ye shall be judged." If the wife is forever blaming her husband, shall she herself escape blame? And if she does it in the name of religion, will it escape? What Christian woman can stand the scrutiny of a husband who is unfriendly to the Gospel? And if she can not endure such hostile criticism she had better avoid it.

Yes, Peter, you were right, as usual. The best way to manage a bad husband is to be a good wife—*Christian Observer*.

"WHAT DOEST THOU HERE?"

How often is that question put still! When a Christian worker, sorely needed, deserts his post because of some unseen difficulty, or for some selfish gratification and ease, to that couch of indolence, or to that forest glade where soft breezes blow, the question comes, "What doest thou here?" When a child of God is found in the theatre, the dancing saloon, or the place of evil companionship, sitting in the seat of scorners, or walking in the way of the ungodly, again must the question come as a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, "What doest thou here?" When one endowed with great faculties digs a hole in the earth and buries the God-intrusted talent, standing idle all the day long among the loungers in the market place, again must the inquiry ring out, "What doest thou here?"

Life is the time for doing. The world is a great workshop in which there is no room for drones. God Himself worketh as the great Master builder. All creatures fulfil their needful functions, from the angel that hymns God's praise to the wasp that buries a corpse. There is plenty to do—evil to put down, good to build up, doubters to be directed, prodigals to be won back, sinners to be sought. What doest thou here? Up, Christians, leave your caves, and do! Do not do in order to be saved; but, being saved, Do!

THE BREVITY OF LIFE.

Life is very critical. Any word may be our last. Any farewell, even amid glee and merriment, may be forever. If this truth were but burned into our consciousness, and if it ruled as a deep conviction and real power into our lives, would it not give a new meaning to our human relationships? Would it not make us far more tender than we sometimes are? Would it not oftentimes put a rein upon our rash and impetuous speech? Would we carry in our hearts the miserable suspicions and jealousies that now so often embitter the fountains of our lives? Would we be so impatient of the faults of others? Would we allow trivial misunderstandings to build up a wall between us and those who ought to stand very close to us? Would we keep alive petty quarrels year after year which a manly word any day would compose? Would we pass old friends or neighbors in the street without recognition because of some real or fancied slight, some wounding of pride, or some ancient grudge? Or would we be so chary of kind words or commendations, our sympathy, our comfort, when weary hearts all about us are breaking for just such expressions of interest or appreciation as we have in our power to give.