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Religious Miscellany.

Talents.

"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."—Matt. xxv. 30.

Have you read the servant who hid in the earth the talent his master had given. When, by diligent use, to redouble its worth, he ought to have faithfully striven? My child, you have talents,—God gave them to you. And will surely require them again. Take care not to waste them; if ever so few. Let them not have been given in vain.

You have speech; then remember to watch your words well. And let them be gentle and kind; it may seem a small matter, but no one can tell the comfort a word leaves behind.

You have time; every minute and hour of the day is lent by your Father in heaven; Make haste to improve, ere it passes away. This talent so graciously given.

You have influence, too, though it seems very small. Yet, in greater or lesser degree, You affect the improvement and comfort of all With whom you may happen to be.

And the child who in earnest endeavors to live As an heir of eternity ought. By his silent example a lesson may give, Which by words he could never have taught.

Then consider the talents intrusted to you, And may they be duly improved; Let your services be ready and free, as is due From children so graciously beloved.—*From "Thoughts in Verse."*

The Laborer's Hire.

In the Norwegian mines a singular and striking custom is observed in paying the weekly wages of the men there employed. They all present themselves on the Saturday evening to the inspector who hears from each man the number of hours he has worked on the successive days of the week past, compares the total given with his own notes on the subject, and having settled the account calls the miner, bids him turn round, and writes in white chalk upon his black back the sum due him. This mysterious number, the man has to go to the cashier who also turns him round to look at the figure, and pays him without his having a word to say. The method is an expeditious one—two or three strokes of chalk settle the matter; it is prudent, for the miner has no chance of altering a figure in his own account; and, for the cashier, it saves him the trouble of writing, and the same black jacket is ready for the next Saturday.

And now form to yourself an idea of the feelings of the laborer thus bearing his unknown sentence on his back. Willingly would he glance at it, or perhaps he would not; but there is no seeing behind one. Accordingly, one man goes over the account in his mind, adds up the hours of work, subtracts the hours of rest, and collects that he made a holiday of Monday, and that there will be no wages for that day—say, that on this very Saturday he had half a work at noon, and therefore must have but half a day's pay. True, on Thursday he worked hard from morning to evening; but then on Friday having risen late, he arrived late in the mines, began work late, and if the inspector happened to be on the look-out that morning, no doubt an hour would be found struck off. As to the number of hours that he really worked, there is no making them count double, but what you will be after all, only doing that which was his duty to do always; and taking all things together, he must feel that he shall find himself mulcted to a considerable extent.

This manner of paying the Norwegian miners strikes me as a very curious one; it is the first settlement of the great inspector of the human race. Laborers as we are during the work of life, we shall have to present ourselves on the last day to be paid our hire. Doubtless the Judge will question us as to the use made of our hours, but this will be to carry ourselves, not our own hearts, not to procure himself information as to the exact truth, for which he will surely refer to his own infallible notes. There will be no discussion, no advocate, no jury, no witnesses. There will be only the Judge, the Judge who, being omniscient, knows the whole case better than all the witnesses, and all the counsel together. God alone, without appeal, without dispute, will settle our accounts, pronounce our sentence, and inscribe it on our forehead. But what will he have to inscribe? Let us go over the case.

The first week-day how many young people have turned into a holiday, thinking only of amusing themselves, and crying one to another, "This is Monday, let us eat, drink, and be merry, without thought of to-morrow! Care will come soon enough!" One has gone off to the tavern, another to the ball; this to the gambling-table, that on a peaching expedition. One has told a lie in sport, another has blasphemed in his passion; but all were very young; it was but Monday, and that was the reason that they were all at the present day, at this very moment for the giving in our account, how different everything appears! At the close of life, when the various offenses change their character, reveal themselves as drunkenness, immorality, lying, injustice, forgetfulness, and contempt of the great Master, God.

Again, maturity, when self-indulgent habits have been already formed, when experience had been gained of a cunning, impure, ungrateful world, how did we reason? "Fool! we said; we must learn to do as others do; unless we were to behave like the rest we should soon have been others as well as they. We had been pillaged of all. Besides, is only a holiday for an Oliver; we shall not easily do as much as others as others have done to us. And so arguing, we resolved to take things easily; we were not so very particular about truth, justice, temperance; that is to say, we daily fall little lower in all these respects."

Oh! if indeed the inspector of our labor watches over the way in which our evening hour is

spent, what deficits, what reductions there will be? Maturity is no better than youth. As it was on Monday so it was on Thursday.

And in that old age superior? It learns to be silent about others through prudence, not charity; it runs no more through necessity, not blood runs cold. It is discreet from necessity. And besides, if it diminish former riotous excesses, does it not too often double its covetousness? Ceasing to be prodigal, has it not become avaricious? True, it may preach now, as if you were it was preached to; but give old age the activity and energy of youth, and you would often see it run where it prohibits you going. Alas! the Friday has been no better employed than the previous days.

And when Saturday morning is really come, what efforts are made to keep up self-delusion. It is only Friday, you keep saying; courage, let us not about working! Alas, no! It is too surely Saturday. You are old, the evening has come, the account has to be settled. Draw near, and God will inscribe it on your forehead—what is it He has inscribed? I know not exactly, but at all events it is nothing favorable! My work has been from well filled. Say that I did work well on certain days, it was only my duty that I did. I could not work two hours in one! And how many hours I spent in doing nothing, spent in doing evil. O, if God be extreme to mark all, what an account will there be to render!

But what day is this for, you readers—for me? Perhaps Saturday, perhaps Saturday night, for all works of life do not number six days! But at least the last hour has not yet struck. What, then, shall we do? Begin life anew! Impossible. One grows old, but there is no growing young again. Shall we work to make up for lost time? Impossible also. Even were it morning instead of evening, we have the day's work before us. How accomplish the work of yesterday, still less that of the whole week, in twelve hours? What shall we do? Men and brethren, O what shall we do?

N. ROUSSEL.

God's Way of Holiness.

Holiness is likeness to God; to Him who is the Holy One of Israel; to Him whose titles are "Holy, holy, holy." (Isa. vi. 3.) It is likeness to Christ; to "that holy Thing" which was born of the Virgin; to Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. vii. 26.) It is not only disjunction from evil, and from an evil world; but it is separation unto God and His service. It is a positive separation, for positively service. Its distinctiveness such as that which marked the tabernacle and all its vessels; separation from every common use; separation by blood, "the blood of the everlasting covenant," this blood (or that which it signifies; viz. death) being inseparably between us and all common things, and that we are dead to sin, but alive unto God, alive to righteousness, having died and risen in Him whose blood has made us what we are—*sinners, holy ones.*

This holiness or consecration extends to every part of our persons; fills up our being, spreads over our life, influences everything we are, do, or think, or speak or plan, small or great, outward or inward, negative or positive, our loving, our hating, our sorrowing, our rejoicing, our recreations, our business, our friendships, our relations, our silence, our speech, our reading, our writing, our going out and our coming in; our whole man in the every movement of spirit, soul, and body. In the house of the sanctuary, the chamber, the market, the shop, the desk, the highway, it must be seen that ours is a consecrated life.

In one aspect, sanctification is an act, a thing done at once, like justification. The moment the blood touches us—that is, as soon as we have God's testimony to the blood—*"we are clean."* (John x. 3.) "sanctified set apart for God." It is in this ceremonial or priestly sense that the word is used in the Epistle to the Hebrews; for as that to the Romans takes into the *honor*, and deals with our *legal* standing; so that to the Hebrews takes us into the temple and deals with our *priestly* standing. As the vessels of the sanctuary were of once separated to God and His service, the moment the blood touched them, so are we. This did not imply that these vessels required no daily ablution afterwards; so neither does our consecration imply that we need no daily sanctifying; no incessant process for getting rid of sin. The initiatory consecration through the blood is one thing, and the continual sanctifying by the power of the Holy Ghost is another. The former is the first step, the introduction to the latter; may, absolutely indispensable to any progress in the latter; yet it does not supersede it, but makes it rather a greater necessity. To this very end are we consecrated by the blood, that we may be purified inwardly by the Holy Ghost; and that he would take the completeness of the former as a substitute for the latter process, or a reason for neglecting the latter, would be an extension of mercy; what is the import of the blood which consecrates, and for what end were we chosen in Christ and called by His grace. (Eph. i. 4.)

The thing which man calls sin may be easily obliterated or toned down into goodness. It deserved no expulsion from Paradise, no deluge, no Sodom-fire; it is a thing which the flames of Sinai greatly expiate, and of which Israel's history presents an exceptional picture. It is one of the misdeeds of humanity, the enormity of which has been quite misreckoned by theologians, and the history of which, in Scripture, appears with a boldness and due allowances for the Oriental coloring. It is not a thing for the Oriental; but for the physician; not a thing for the judge, but for pity. It deserves no hell, no Divine wrath, no legal sentence; it needs no atonement, no blood, no cross, no substitution of life for life; more incarnation, as the expression of Divine love to the sinners of God, all-comprehending in the sinners of God's all-comprehending Fatherhood, and of Adam's blood which with God, will be sufficient. But that which with God, will be sufficient. But that which with God, will be sufficient. But that which with God, will be sufficient.

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This holiness or consecration extends to every part of our persons; fills up our being, spreads over our life, influences everything we are, do, or think, or speak or plan, small or great, outward or inward, negative or positive, our loving, our hating, our sorrowing, our rejoicing, our recreations, our business, our friendships, our relations, our silence, our speech, our reading, our writing, our going out and our coming in; our whole man in the every movement of spirit, soul, and body. In the house of the sanctuary, the chamber, the market, the shop, the desk, the highway, it must be seen that ours is a consecrated life.

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And when Saturday morning is really come, what efforts are made to keep up self-delusion. It is only Friday, you keep saying; courage, let us not about working! Alas, no! It is too surely Saturday. You are old, the evening has come, the account has to be settled. Draw near, and God will inscribe it on your forehead—what is it He has inscribed? I know not exactly, but at all events it is nothing favorable! My work has been from well filled. Say that I did work well on certain days, it was only my duty that I did. I could not work two hours in one! And how many hours I spent in doing nothing, spent in doing evil. O, if God be extreme to mark all, what an account will there be to render!

But what day is this for, you readers—for me? Perhaps Saturday, perhaps Saturday night, for all works of life do not number six days! But at least the last hour has not yet struck. What, then, shall we do? Begin life anew! Impossible. One grows old, but there is no growing young again. Shall we work to make up for lost time? Impossible also. Even were it morning instead of evening, we have the day's work before us. How accomplish the work of yesterday, still less that of the whole week, in twelve hours? What shall we do? Men and brethren, O what shall we do?

N. ROUSSEL.

God's Way of Holiness.

Holiness is likeness to God; to Him who is the Holy One of Israel; to Him whose titles are "Holy, holy, holy." (Isa. vi. 3.) It is likeness to Christ; to "that holy Thing" which was born of the Virgin; to Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. vii. 26.) It is not only disjunction from evil, and from an evil world; but it is separation unto God and His service. It is a positive separation, for positively service. Its distinctiveness such as that which marked the tabernacle and all its vessels; separation from every common use; separation by blood, "the blood of the everlasting covenant," this blood (or that which it signifies; viz. death) being inseparably between us and all common things, and that we are dead to sin, but alive unto God, alive to righteousness, having died and risen in Him whose blood has made us what we are—*sinners, holy ones.*

This holiness or consecration extends to every part of our persons; fills up our being, spreads over our life, influences everything we are, do, or think, or speak or plan, small or great, outward or inward, negative or positive, our loving, our hating, our sorrowing, our rejoicing, our recreations, our business, our friendships, our relations, our silence, our speech, our reading, our writing, our going out and our coming in; our whole man in the every movement of spirit, soul, and body. In the house of the sanctuary, the chamber, the market, the shop, the desk, the highway, it must be seen that ours is a consecrated life.

In one aspect, sanctification is an act, a thing done at once, like justification. The moment the blood touches us—that is, as soon as we have God's testimony to the blood—*"we are clean."* (John x. 3.) "sanctified set apart for God." It is in this ceremonial or priestly sense that the word is used in the Epistle to the Hebrews; for as that to the Romans takes into the *honor*, and deals with our *legal* standing; so that to the Hebrews takes us into the temple and deals with our *priestly* standing. As the vessels of the sanctuary were of once separated to God and His service, the moment the blood touched them, so are we. This did not imply that these vessels required no daily ablution afterwards; so neither does our consecration imply that we need no daily sanctifying; no incessant process for getting rid of sin. The initiatory consecration through the blood is one thing, and the continual sanctifying by the power of the Holy Ghost is another. The former is the first step, the introduction to the latter; may, absolutely indispensable to any progress in the latter; yet it does not supersede it, but makes it rather a greater necessity. To this very end are we consecrated by the blood, that we may be purified inwardly by the Holy Ghost; and that he would take the completeness of the former as a substitute for the latter process, or a reason for neglecting the latter, would be an extension of mercy; what is the import of the blood which consecrates, and for what end were we chosen in Christ and called by His grace. (Eph. i. 4.)

The thing which man calls sin may be easily obliterated or toned down into goodness. It deserved no expulsion from Paradise, no deluge, no Sodom-fire; it is a thing which the flames of Sinai greatly expiate, and of which Israel's history presents an exceptional picture. It is one of the misdeeds of humanity, the enormity of which has been quite misreckoned by theologians, and the history of which, in Scripture, appears with a boldness and due allowances for the Oriental coloring. It is not a thing for the Oriental; but for the physician; not a thing for the judge, but for pity. It deserves no hell, no Divine wrath, no legal sentence; it needs no atonement, no blood, no cross, no substitution of life for life; more incarnation, as the expression of Divine love to the sinners of God, all-comprehending in the sinners of God's all-comprehending Fatherhood, and of Adam's blood which with God, will be sufficient. But that which with God, will be sufficient. But that which with God, will be sufficient.

Again, maturity, when self-indulgent habits have been already formed, when experience had been gained of a cunning, impure, ungrateful world, how did we reason? "Fool! we said; we must learn to do as others do; unless we were to behave like the rest we should soon have been others as well as they. We had been pillaged of all. Besides, is only a holiday for an Oliver; we shall not easily do as much as others as others have done to us. And so arguing, we resolved to take things easily; we were not so very particular about truth, justice, temperance; that is to say, we daily fall little lower in all these respects."

Oh! if indeed the inspector of our labor watches over the way in which our evening hour is

spent, what deficits, what reductions there will be? Maturity is no better than youth. As it was on Monday so it was on Thursday.

And in that old age superior? It learns to be silent about others through prudence, not charity; it runs no more through necessity, not blood runs cold. It is discreet from necessity. And besides, if it diminish former riotous excesses, does it not too often double its covetousness? Ceasing to be prodigal, has it not become avaricious? True, it may preach now, as if you were it was preached to; but give old age the activity and energy of youth, and you would often see it run where it prohibits you going. Alas! the Friday has been no better employed than the previous days.

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