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The man of poverty is a man in want; but his desires are, so far as he knows, quite limited. The avaricious man of property is a man of want also, but his desires are practically unlimited. The poor man wants to be warm in cold weather, to eat when he is hungry; the avaricious man wants "more," without regard to the demands of bodily sustenance and comfort. His is therefore the most pitiful case of want, because he never gets any nearer to having his want satisfied.

Who shall measure the difference between the great and the small? Who, indeed, can say surely what is great, and what is small? The difference between an ocean and a tear-drop, or between a thunder-peal and a heart-throb, is evident to all; but differences in magnitude do not indicate the differences in value and power. Life is more to the world than sound and substance, and heart-throbs and tear-drops transcend oceans and thunder-peals in their influence over life. It is easy to recognize the prominence of

great things in comparison with little things; but it is not so easy to recognize the greatness of little things. Yet it is only by seeing the great in the little, that one is enabled to measure and to use his life-power aright.

"Indulgence of the habit of command" is an indulgence into which it is easy to fall, quite unconsciously to ourselves. We are likely to think that the opportunity to command is one that comes to us by right, and the opportunity to exercise the right arises out of the circumstances of the moment. Very often it is so. Many a time we have a right to command when we have just as good a right to refrain from it. Three boys sat quietly and orderly in a church pew; one boy turned innocently toward the others. The Argus-eyed father in the pew behind them punched the boy in the shoulder and "looked daggers" at him. Why? Because the boy had done anything wrong? No. Because the father thought it was time to perform his duty; that is, to indulge his habit of command. The boy acquiesced by turning squarely again, and doubtless wondered, as the spectator did, what wrong he had done. The father, however, did not sit squarely, lolled in the corner, turned and looked up at the organ, and listened inconstantly to the sermon. No one punched him in the back.

The attempt has been made to resolve the human conscience into a reflex of the demands society makes upon us with a view to its own preservation. Thus, it is said, as quarrels and strife imperil social unity, society discourages them by its disapproval, and gives to quarreling the character of a vice. If conscience went no farther than to stamp its disapproval on things which are found injurious to the social order, this reasoning might not be detected as a fallacy. But since an enlightened conscience goes far beyond the needs of the social order, and demands that men shall not only keep their hands off their enemies, but shall actually love them, and shall forgive their offenses, this shows that the truest ethics transcend mere social needs, and therefore cannot be traced to those needs as their source. And so of purity of mind and other qualities which conscience demands of us. Society is not dependent on their existence; but we cannot do without them, for the reason that we are beings of a spiritual nature, and live in a spiritual world, of which these are the laws. This is not to say that we come to a knowledge of these laws from a study of our own natures; for conscience needs the enlightenment of a divine law, and often makes sad work of its efforts to discharge its function without that light.

Railroad life is a busy life, and it is a life of fearful responsibilities. The engine-driver must be always on the alert, to note the signals and to heed them along his course, and to have his engine in hand for speeding or for staying. On his watchfulness and skill and courage depend the lives of his passengers, and the lives of others; and the strain upon his nerve forces and sympathies is constant and severe. The switchman's place seems humbler, and his work is less complex; but he also must be keen-eyed, cool-headed, prompt, and resolute, or he will fail of heed-

ing a signal or of meeting an emergency, and a disaster will be sure to follow. In the signal-tower of the train-starter, however, stands a man who has responsibilities for switchman and for engine-driver, and above them both. Not one train but all trains, not one track but all tracks, must be in his eye and on his mind; and a moment's misthought or failure on his part may bring ruin in a dozen directions. What a strain is on him hour by hour and day by day! And on his fidelity how many must depend for their personal safety! Are only railroad men in positions of fearful responsibility? Shall railroad men alone be vigilant and faithful at their posts of duty? What of the parent, the teacher, the pastor, the friend? A wrong turn of the switch, the showing of the wrong light, the failure to give a danger signal or to heed one, and disaster comes to young lives that are dependent on the wisdom and fidelity of those whom they trust implicitly as prompters and guides. Character-roads are quite as important as railroads.

THE DIVINE HOLIDAY.

The Sabbath and the family are the two institutions that antedate sin in the world. The Sabbath is a permanent part of the constitution of things here. Arranged for by God, while man was in his innocence, it is still a little part of heaven kept for us, undimmed, from the pristine beatitude of Eden, when man was accustomed to hear the voice of the Lord God in the garden in the cool of the day, before man hid himself among the trees of the garden. The Sabbath preserves for us the springtime breath of the early purity of the earth. It is Coleridge who says, "I feel as if God, by the gift of the Sabbath, had given fifty-two springtimes in the year."

The Sabbath, as our Lord expressly says, was made for man. It is as much adapted to his nature, physical and spiritual, as is the air or the sunlight to his body, or as divine truth is to his soul. God, having made man, makes for him a day with an atmosphere and a light surpassing that of other days,—a day which comes with an especial sense of God's presence and of divine things, and ministers to his spiritual nature as no other arrangement and gift can do.

To be without the Sabbath is to suffer an indefinable and incommensurable loss, since it is one of the original environments of the soul, necessary to man's highest development, and an element from which it was meant that he should draw spiritual support. The great natural adaptations of God's prescribed and blessed ways for us we are apt to overlook. But in the consecrating of one-seventh of our time to himself, God, as in every other thought of his for us, tenderly considers the mortal part of our nature, and leads us up to the spiritual through a wise use of material helps.

But few spirit-taught Christians will need to have the fact that one day in seven is set apart for sacred purposes insisted upon. Yet it is possible, in these days of discussion upon the Sabbath question on the part of many,—of indifference on the part of others, and of the ever-constant need of instructing the rising generation, that even those who accept and honor the Lord's Day, the new seventh of consecrated time since the new Sun of Righteousness arose upon the

world, would do well to clarify their thoughts in regard to it. May not the use and privilege of the day be summed up under these three heads: Rest, Worship, Service?

Rest.—A Sabbath without rest is not a true Sabbath. Rest is that head under which self must and should be considered. True Sabbath rest includes rest for our whole complex being,—body, mind, and soul. Even in these days of "making and of getting and of laying waste our powers," that mysterious law still holds, that true spiritual rest does also renew and revive the body. Rest, ministered to the soul, pours its life-giving tides through the physical nature. Poise and equilibrium come from rest. Poise at the center, poise and rest of soul, extends to the physical members. The thought of God is the resting-place for the hovering, wing-weary spirit, whence, refreshed and strengthened, it again finds true flight. The nerves are calmed, the whole nature soothed and fortified, by the rest which God meant us to have on his holy day. It is indeed a holiday in a royal sense, if we apprehend it as it lies for us in the thought of God.

This soul-rest is found by looking again at that which is the foundation of all peace of soul. It is comfort and rest which comes from the acceptance of Christ's work for us. If the soul has something which it is sure God will accept, if for Christ's sake His favor floods the soul like sunlight, how can we do otherwise than rest? Return unto thy rest, O my soul! even to the finished work of thy Lord. Sabbath rest is seeing anew, in more deeply etched lines, the image of our Lord. Rest will come with new visions of Jesus as Saviour. A Lord's Day which gives us stronger, clearer, more loving, conceptions of the risen One, has not failed to give us rest.

Worship.—Processions of spiritual beings pause in endless ranks, and bow before the throne of God. All holy natures worship as naturally as they exist. Worship is adoration paid to God, not for what he has done for us, but for what he is in himself, independent of his gifts. Oh, how good it is for the soul to worship and bow down, to kneel before the Lord its Maker! We may forget care, and even sin, and, with vast companies of seraphs and unsullied spirits, share in the ardor and brightness of the heavenly worship. Religious systems that dispense with worship in personal devotion, or as a part of public service, tend to destroy the right attitude of mind toward the almighty, ever-blessed One. Worship, high yet humble, holy yet fervent, spiritual yet the tribute of mortal men, is due from us, and on the Lord's Day we may join in the pulsating, rhythmic, endless hymn of the universe ascribing glory to our God:

"Holy, holy, holy Lord!
All our soul adoring cries.
So on earth we sound the chord
Seraphs swell in Paradise."

Service.—Rest is God's gift to us, worship is our offering to God, service is our ministry to man in the name of the Master. The day in which we are refreshed by rest and uplifted by worship is the day when we go forth armed with rare and heavenly powers, to carry tidings of God's love to those who know him not, or "to serve the hidden life of the brethren." The mighty Victor gains marvelous triumphs on the day of his rising power; but he gains them all through the faithful service of the loyal and bold-hearted. Accessions to the kingdom are ten-fold—yes, a hundred fold—on these days of the Son of man. Even the revelation of the good done and the souls saved on one Sabbath would no doubt astonish and overwhelm even the most sanguine Christian. An invisible army of "wage-workers" are reaping down untold harvests for God. "He that reapeth receiveth wages." Great spiritual forces attend upon every act of service done for God to our fellow-men. They walk beside the earnest teacher of children and youth. They intensify each word spoken for Jesus. All minute and tender service, all the modes of kindness in which Christ would walk were he in our

place, will suggest themselves to us if we are in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

Surely we must run upon the King's errands on his own day. It is a remarkable fact that so many of the Lord's own deeds of loving-kindness, help, and healing were done upon the Sabbath. It was his Sabbath offices of love, of unbinding the heavy burdens, that brought upon him the fierce accusations of formalists. We are keeping the Sabbath in the holiest sense when we follow him in any good work. The soul's voice to God on his day is this:

"Rest, worship, service! Rest divine
O'erflows and floods this day of thine.
I trust thy finished work alone,
And rest in what my Lord has done.

"Worship, rest, service! Worship high
Is thine, to whom the angels cry.
With burning seraphs I will sing
Thy glory only, God, my King.

"Service, rest, worship! Service sweet
I would lay, Master, at thy feet;
In lowly ministry to men
Would tread thy holy steps again.

"Rest, worship, service! Saints in light,
Rest, worship, serve with ardor bright!
Our holy day, our Lord's Day blest,
Be bright with worship, service, rest!"

NOTES ON OPEN LETTERS.

Readers of The Sunday School Times are to be found all the world over. It has its subscribers and its correspondents at the principal missionary stations in every land. One of its interested readers from Dindigul, India, a veteran missionary physician, writing of the warm sympathy with him and his work evidenced in a church in Philadelphia that is peculiarly efficient in its home field, says, in a recent letter:

I am more and more satisfied that no church and congregation will have steady and successful growth where the pastor and church-members fail to feel a warm interest in foreign missions. I am writing this letter at Kodai Kanal, our mission sanitarium on the Pulney Hills, but return to Dindigul in two days more, after a month's stay here. In the months of April and May the heat is so great on the plains that it is not safe for us to be out in the tent, to visit our congregations and village schools; and we are forced, in these months, to give vacation in our schools. There is much very encouraging in our mission work here in our Madura district, and I think I enjoy it more and more every year. We have a fine Sunday-school connected with our Valne Church in Dindigul town. We have twenty-three teachers, and a total attendance of two hundred and twenty-five and more. We have Christian men, women, boys, and girls, and also Hindu and Muhammadan boys and girls. The boys and girls of our two boarding-schools sing very nicely. We have translated into Tamil many of the hymns from Moody and Sankey's "Gospel Hymns," and these our Christian children sing to the same tunes given in the "Gospel Hymns." They also sing many very pretty Tamil lyrics to native tunes. Our Dindigul Sunday-school is conducted very much like your Sunday-schools in Philadelphia. I have been superintendent of it for more than twenty-five years. But I am also a teacher.

Bible words are worth studying; for, whatever may be our view of inspiration, we all admit that the choice of words by an inspired writer is a well-considered choice. Hence a letter of inquiry like the following, concerning the meaning of various similar words in the Book of Proverbs, from a Pennsylvania teacher of languages, is sure of attention in these columns:

Will you please explain, in your Notes on Open Letters, the meanings of the words "wisdom," "knowledge," "instruction," "understanding," and "prudence," as used in the Book of Proverbs? They may not always be used in the same sense, and the same word may represent different words in the original, and vice versa. What I would like to know is whether the words are used as synonyms, or whether there are distinctive ideas connected with each word. Any light you may be able to shed on this topic will be gratefully received.

There are five Hebrew words that correspond with the five English ones above mentioned; and although the distinction between these is not uniformly observed in their translation in the Book of Proverbs, there is such a difference in their root meanings as to make them capable of differentiation. *Da'ath*, or "knowledge," is from a root meaning to perceive by outside impression, as by sight or hearing. Thus we include in the term "knowledge" an accumulation of observed facts, apart from any question as to the use made of them. *Teboonah*, or "understanding," is from a root meaning "to separate," or "to discriminate;" therefore "to have insight"

into the facts of knowledge. Thus we recognize the truth that to have an understanding of a subject is more than to have knowledge about it. *Moosar*, or "instruction," is from a root the meaning of which is in dispute; but Hupfeld seems to be correct in supposing it to mean "to keep straight," or "to restrain;" and therefore to be a means of guidance and direction. This also is in our use of the term "instruction," as an advance on both "knowledge" and "understanding." A man can know without understanding, and he can understand without having power to impart instruction to the extent of his understanding. *Chokmah*, or "wisdom," is from a root which means "to be compact," "to be able." It implies the power to make the best use of knowledge and understanding and instruction. Or, as it is sometimes said among us, "wisdom is the talent of using all other talents." *Ormah*, or "prudence," is from a root meaning "to be cunning," "to be crafty." And there is a touch of that meaning in our use of the term "prudence." So we see that the Hebrews had the idea that the knowledge of facts was a good thing to begin with; that an understanding of facts was an improvement on bare knowledge; that instruction in the nature and use of facts was a step farther in progress; that wisdom, in order to the right using of all knowledge, was desirable, especially if a measure of prudence was observed in the exercise of wisdom. And there is a lesson, for those who speak English, in this study of the Hebrew.

A SIGH.

BY M. WOOLSEY STRYKER.

Which, I wonder, is the book
In whose face I last shall look?
Which of all these friends of years,
Sharing with me smiles and tears,
Shall I touch, and turn and go
With no good-bys, and not know
That our friendly days are past,
And that now I must at last
Quit their large society,
Such a long while dear to me?
I shall set some place-mark then
I am not to find again,
All unconscious of the shade
By an unseen *Finis* made.
What shall be the last page read
Ere they say, "You've heard? He's dead?"
Standing there along the wall,
For the love I bear you all,
Goodly friends in gallant row,
I am glad I shall not know.

Chicago, Ill.

WHAT BECAME OF THE APOSTLES.

BY PROFESSOR ROBERT ELLIS THOMPSON, S.T.D.

The Acts of the Apostles close the story of Paul's labors about the year A. D. 61, or thirty-two years after the Ascension. Luke's narrative dismisses the other apostles with the adjournment of what is called the Council of Jerusalem, some ten years earlier. From the captivity of Paul in Rome to the date of the Apologies of Justin Martyr (A. D. 148), which may be taken as the beginning of a continuous Christian literature, there intervenes nearly a century of comparative obscurity. On the first decades of that century we get some light from (1) the New Testament. From Paul's pastoral epistles we infer his missionary activity after his release from his Roman captivity, and learn that he had the purpose to visit the countries of the West. He speaks of himself (Philemon 9) as "Paul the aged,"—an expression which indicates the lapse of years since that sea-voyage on which he showed the energy of full manhood. James's and Jude's epistles give us a glimpse of their mind, rather than of their life. The same is true of Peter, with an exception I shall note below; and of John's Epistles, while the Revelation tells us of his exile to Patmos, and shows him especially interested in a group of churches, of which Ephesus forms the center.

2. Our second source of information as to the early Church is outside writers: Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny. But these, with the exception of a passage in Josephus, whose genuineness is questioned, give us no light on the doings of the apostles.

3. A third source is the writings of Christians of the next generations. For our present purpose the fragments of Papias of Hierapolis (died A. D. 163) and Polycrates of Ephesus (thirty years later), which are quoted by Eusebius, are of most importance. Next to these are the notices in Irenæus of Lyons, at the close of the second century; Tertullian, at the opening of the

third; and Augustine, Lactantius, Jerome, and Eusebius, in the fourth century. The last, in his "Church History," has labored to supply all we need in the matter, but had not the critical acumen to distinguish early traditions from later accretions. Entirely untrustworthy is the "History of the Apostles" which passes under the name of Abdias of Babylon, and claims to belong to the apostolic age. It is not much older than the seventh century, and is based on the apocryphal and heretical "Circuits of the Apostles" (that is, of Peter, John, Andrew, Thomas, and Paul), which were published, under the name of Leucius Charinus, in the second century.

4. The fourth and last source of our knowledge is the most liable to suspicion, but it is that which tells us the most. The natural eagerness of the Church of the second and third centuries to know more fully the story of the first generations in the Church, led to the fabrication of false Acts of the Apostles, devoted to the labors of one or more of the group. More than a score of these spurious works are mentioned or quoted, and most of them still are accessible in whole or in part. Much of this literature was manufactured in the interest of heretical sects, such as the Ebionites, the Gnostics, and the Manichees; and part of it has been recast in their interest, although originally orthodox.

But it does not follow from the lack of authenticity which characterizes these documents that they are entirely destitute of historic truth. They (or many of them) were written at a time when the leading facts of the later careers of the apostles were still within the memory of men. Naturally, the authors of these fabrications would work into their narratives whatever was still commonly known. Especially when we find their statements confirming one another, and agreeing with what little the New Testament has to tell us, and also with the incidental notices of reigning princes, which we obtain from coins and other sources, we may presume that they represent traditions of a trustworthy character.

The apocryphal Acts generally start from the legend that the apostles divided the earth among them before setting out on their labors, as the apostles of the Catholic Apostolic Church did half a century ago. In one shape the story runs that just after our Lord's ascension they cast lots for the countries of the known world, and betook themselves to that which thus fell to them. There is a suggestion of fact in the statement that their fields of labor were assigned by the languages conferred on them on the day of Pentecost. There can be no doubt that Pentecost furnished the starting-point of the missionary labors of the original apostles, by bringing them into personal and spiritual contact with the Jews of the great Asiatic Dispersion,—the lost sheep of the House of Israel, whom their Master especially and primarily sought. The world-wide mission of the gospel was a truth to which they did not rise speedily, as Paul did by a pure reaction from the narrowness of his Jewish Pharisaism, as well as in accordance with his commission from Christ. James's Epistle is addressed to "the Twelve Tribes, which are of the Dispersion;" Peter's first "to the Elect which are of the Dispersion." It was therefore to the regions designated in Acts 2: 9-11, and especially to those first named as being the largest contributors to the assemblage, that the apostles, according to early tradition, betook themselves.

In those traditions we find three great fields of labor designated,—two inside and one outside the Roman empire.

1. The regions of the Roman empire around the Black Sea, from the Bosphorus to the Caucasus, were the scene of the labors of Peter and Andrew, Matthew and Bartholomew. It is true that Peter's first Epistle is written from Babylon, a city of the Parthian empire. But it evidently was written on the occasion of his temporary withdrawal from his field of labor, and is addressed to his flock "in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." It will be seen that he speaks from personal knowledge of their Christian life, and sends them the greetings from the church in Babylon. It has been suggested that "Babylon" here means Rome. That Peter ever was in Rome, we have no evidence from early tradition. That tradition locates Andrew at Sinope, the capital of Pontus, where his chair of white stone was long preserved.

Through a confusion of the Sindians (who lived near the Caucasus, and were subjects of Polemo II., the reigning king of Pontus) with the Indians, later writers have transferred both Peter and Matthew to India; and Pantenus's testimony to finding Matthew's Gospel among the Sindians has been similarly misread. It shows the Jewish-Christian character of the Church of this region, that Matthew wrote in Hebrew.

2. The second field of apostolic labor was the great Iranian empire, at the time ruled by the Parthian dynasty of the Arsacids, as formerly by the Persian dynasty of the Achmaenids. Since the conquest of Syria and Armenia by the Romans, the Euphrates formed the boundary line, so that Mesopotamia belonged to the Parthians. "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia," in the assembly at Pentecost, came from beyond the boundary of the Roman empire, and were part of the great Dispersion of the Jews which still remained in the lands of the Captivity. Among them the apostles Thomas and Simon the Canaanite, and possibly Thaddeus, preached the gospel. Edessa, at this time a Parthian city, was headquarters for Thomas, and possibly Thaddeus, while Babylon is said to have been the point from which Simon the Canaanite preached, with all a zealot's energy, to the more southern part of the extensive empire. A later tradition transfers Thomas to India, and this is why the Nestorians of India call themselves "the Christians of St. Thomas." But the Indian king Gundaphorus, under whom he preached, is now discovered to be the Parthian prince Gondophares, reigning probably at Herat; and the transfer of prince and apostle to India is traced to the Parthians' calling the south-eastern part of their empire White India. As the Jewish dispersion had not passed beyond the Parthian boundary, Thomas had no errand to India.

It is questioned whether Thaddeus—or "Addai the Apostle," as the Syrians call him—ever labored in Edessa. Another tradition confines his labors to Syria, and represents him and Peter as martyred at Arad, in Phoenicia.

3. The apostles John and Philip are pretty well known to have labored in the Roman province of Asia,—Philip in the interior or Phrygian half of it, and John in the regions bordering the Ægean Sea. Early tradition identifies Philip with "Philip the Evangelist" of Acts 21: 9, and brings his "four daughters, virgins, who did prophesy," to his field of labor. His residence was Hierapolis, one of the most beautiful watering-places of Asia, and the birthplace of Epictetus. It lay near Colosse and Laodicea, all of them sites of churches founded by Paul, as we learn from his Epistle to the Colossians. As Papias, the friend of Polycarp, was bishop of Hierapolis in the first half of the second century, and took great interest in collecting the traditions of the labors of the apostles, we may regard these facts as authentic. At the close of that century, Polycrates of Ephesus writes to Bishop Victor of Rome that Philip and three of his daughters died and were buried in Hierapolis, and the fourth at Ephesus.

That John labored at Ephesus and the surrounding cities of Asia, is indicated very distinctly in the Revelation. The Latin fathers, Tertullian, Augustine, and Jerome, relate various circumstances of his life,—as his being thrown into a caldron of boiling oil under Nero, his drinking a dose of poison unharmed, his rescuing a robber chief from his sins, his addressing his people, in old age, with the words, "Children, love one another." Better authenticated is Irenæus's account of his rushing from the bath on finding that the heretic Cerinthus was present.

Two of the original apostles did not go out on missionary labors. James the Great, we know from Luke's narrative, fell by the sword of Herod. James the Less, Josephus tells us, was killed in a tumult in Jerusalem. Of Matthias, chosen to fill Iscariot's place, tradition is silent.

By what death did the other apostles die? That Peter was to die by martyrdom, John, writing after his death, says was intimated by our Lord (John 21: 19). But the later tradition of his death at Rome is discredited, and earlier tradition points to Syria as the region. Heracleon the Gnostic, writing in the end of the second century, specifies four of the apostles—Matthew, Philip, Thomas, and Lebbeus, or Thaddeus (whom he calls Levi)—as not having died a martyr's death. If this be authentic,—and we may add John to his list,—we find that Peter, Andrew, the two Jameses, Bartholomew, and Simon the Zealot are reported to have died for the confession of Christ's name. As to the manner of their death, nothing is known.

This review of what earliest tradition says of the labors of the apostles brings into clearer light than ever Paul's distinction as the apostle to the Gentiles. He is the only apostle that we have reason to suppose ever crossed over from Asia to Europe, or went to Gentiles who did not, like Cornelius to Peter, send for him. While Peter got so far as to admit that exceptional men, who feared God and wrought righteousness even without a knowledge of revelation, might be admitted into the Church, Paul addressed himself to the world of Gentile

sinners as that which Christ had come to gather into the unity of eternal life.

Philadelphia.

LITTLES.

BY O. G. LANGFORD.

Only a little sunbeam
Came shimmering on the wall,
But it made me glad, and it made me sing
Of Jesus, the Light of all.

Only a little shadow
That fell across my path,
But it made me sad, as it whispered low
Of sorrow and pain and death.

Only a little songlet
Fell lightly on my ear,
But it wakened a thousand love thoughts
Of many a bygone year.

Only a little tear-drop
In the eye of a loving friend,
But it stirred my soul with a deep desire
My little help to lend.

Only a little snowdrop
In the garden beside my bower,
But its pure white sweetness and modest mien
Make me wish I were a flower.

Only a little brooklet
Rippling along its way,
But its mirthful song and its dazzling light
Made me wish I were half as gay.

Away in eternal sunlight,
Away in the region of bliss,
'Mid the harps and the songs of the angels,
It may be I'll think of this.

And the glory will be the brighter,
And the music will be more sweet,
The memory of sorrow and shadow
Will make the bliss complete.

Grimby, Ontario, Canada.

PRESENT VERSUS POSTHUMOUS PRAISE.

BY J. MACDONALD OXLEY.

At a recent meeting of church officials to consult as to the affairs of the church, the venerable recording steward was absent for the first time in many years. The cause of his absence was well understood. While his heart was no doubt with his brethren, his body lay upon a bed of pain. Indeed, so severe was his illness, that fears were entertained lest it should prove a sickness unto death. With deep concern and sincere sympathy his associates spoke of him; but to only one occurred the happy thought of making that concern and sympathy known to their object, without waiting until perchance he should have passed beyond their reach. So he proposed that a formal resolution, expressive of their general feeling, should be passed, and communicated to the sufferer in due course, supporting his motion with the statement that, while the proceeding might seem a little unusual, yet he felt strongly that in too many cases such expressions, which could not fail to give great pleasure to their subjects, were all too often postponed until the one who called them forth was no more in the land of the living, and, instead of bringing welcome inspiration to the toiler, they were but tributes to the memory of him whose task was done.

Of course, the motion had the hearty approval of all present, and, happily, the official thus honored won his way back to his wonted health and vigor. Still, who can doubt that better than the physician's remedies was the unexpected evidence of the high place he held in the affections and respect of his coworkers in the Master's vineyard?

This incident well serves to bring before us the whole question of present, as opposed to posthumous, praise, in the discussion of which for a little I ask leave to hold a brief for the former, my contention being that our life would be richer and brighter, and its burdens more easily borne, if we were less chary of saying kind things to one another as the days go by.

In setting this forth, however, I must be permitted to guard against being misunderstood. It is real praise (that is, hearty, genuine appreciation of what is worthy in another), not flattery, for which we plead,—a distinction that is excellently illustrated in the anecdote of the pastor who, having outworn his welcome, was with much difficulty persuaded to agree to resign his charge. No sooner had he done this, than he was fairly overwhelmed with tokens and expressions of their regard from his grateful flock. On the Sunday when he was to preach his farewell sermon, a congregation large beyond precedent filled the church; and the consternation of the audience