

## A NOBLE TESTIMONY.

BY REV. JOHN S. GRASTY, FINCASTLE.

“And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and she broke the box and poured it upon his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves and said, why was this waste of the ointment made, for it ought to have been sold for more than three hundred pence and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.— And Jesus said, let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. *She hath done what she could.*” There was the highest praise. But, surely, what grace has done for one it can do for another. It is certainly folly in any man to complain until he has done what he could. In one view we admit, yea, even argue, the sinner’s inability, but still it is true that no man ever perished who did what he could. What! says one! can I repent? can I believe?— We answer, no! Well, can I be saved

without repentance, without faith? Our answer once more, is no! But look at that man who is drowning yonder, can he save himself? No. Suppose, however, that a life boat is near, and he perversely refuses to call it, is he not guilty of death? Can he excuse any one but himself? What more then does God demand? Does He say that *you can repent?* does He say that *you can save yourself?* No! But He does say come unto *me* all ye that labor and are heavy laden and *I will give* you rest! ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. What hinders your asking? Did any man ever use the means *as prescribed* and fail? *Never.* But if God gives repentance and faith when asked aright and any perish for lack of these, *it is because they have not done what they could!*

2. You would like to do this or that, but hav'nt the time! How is this? Have you time for other things? Is a good bargain offered have you time to close it? If appetite is clamorous, do you stop to gratify it? If pleasure invites do you turn aside to enjoy it? If you are cold or hungry or naked, do you find time for these physical calls? To grow rich or get honor, is there any season too hot or too cold, too wet or

too dry? If the case is urgent cannot sleep or even food be dispensed with for a season? Is there not time enough for everything secular. Does the merchant put aside the good customer with the plea no time. Does the lawyer so dispose of profitable clients. Does the farmer so act when golden days are upon him. No, reader, the lack is not in time, but in heart. *Ye will not have Christ to reign over you.*

3. Talents! A man will be judged according to his abilities. It will not do to say that your talent has been carefully wrapped in a napkin. The Lord's money must bring interest. Activity is the gospel rule. Whosoever is not for me is against me. The command is, go into my vineyard and *work*. If your talents are small at the beginning, only go to trading with them and they will increase. To him that hath shall be given. Despise not the day of small things. Do what you *can*, even if it be but a cup of cold water—cast thy bread upon the waters, whether it be a loaf or a crumb. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Mind you, it is *bread* that we are to cast upon the waters—the staff of life—no refuse trash—but that



which makes up the blood and bones of men. Many labor and fail, because they either do not sow *precious* seed, or else sow them at the wrong season and in ground unprepared. We must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. A right word spoken at the right time, how good it is.—Have we here, as elsewhere, *done what we could?*

4 Knowledge. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. A man's piety, therefore, never rises above his knowledge. Faith must have an object, and how can we believe on Him of whom we have not heard. Ignorance, therefore, is sin. Knowledge is power—it is so to the lawyer, it is so to the physician, it is so to the farmer and tradesman, it is particularly so to the christian. Morality demands it of us that we *study* our profession or calling. Ignorance murders both soul and body. The truly good man will not consent to stand still. He remembers the injunction, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, &c. He has been taught that the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The Bible is his constant companion, and from this ever present storehouse he draws out the inexhaustible treas-

ures of wisdom and instruction. That is a poor church member indeed, who can tell us all of politics and of battles, and yet knows little of Zion, her prosperity and her conflicts, who is ignorant of the great policy of good men for sending forth the gospel to perishing souls. Have you done what you could to get knowledge.

5. Do you grow in grace. Well, why not. What hinders. Is it astrangement from a brother. Have you done what you could to remove it. Have you done what you could to draw nigh to Christ. Have you prayed fervently in secret, in your family, in the prayer meeting. Has your attendance been uniform, attentive and solemn, upon the stated ordinances of God's house. Have you borne up the hands of your Pastor. Have you been ready to make *sacrifices* for Christ. For Zion's sake can you give up any and every cherished sin. Do you faithfully consecrate a portion of your worldly substance *according as God prospers you*. Love and gifts go together. The alabaster box of ointment of spikenard was broken and poured upon the master head by the hand of affection, *because it was "very precious."* She did what she could. She probably exhausted her means in order to procure a costly offering for her

Lord. The deed was approved by the divine lips, and wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world this that she hath done shall be spoken of as a memorial of her.

Did any man ever die with remorse in his heart who had done what he could. Is there a lost soul in hell who can ever say, *it did what it could.*

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#### LOOK TO YOUR EXAMPLE.

Every one ought to ask, "What is the influence of my example? Do I by my conduct lead others to respect and obey the commandments of God?" The late Dr. Lockhart of Glasgow, while traveling in England, stopped over the Sabbath at an inn. On entering the public room, just before going to church, he found two gentlemen amusing themselves with a game of chess. "Gentlemen," said he, "have you locked your portmanteaus carefully?" "No," was the reply—"why, are thieves about?" "I did not say that," said he, "only I was thinking, that if the servants come in, and find you making free with the *fourth* commandment, they might be led by your example to make free with the *eighth*." "There is something in that," said the persons thus addressed, and so laid aside their game.



## SECRET PRAYER.

Men never take so firm a hold of God as in secret. Remember Jacob. Thou shouldst pray alone, for thou hast sinned alone, and thou art to die alone, and to be judged alone. Alone thou wilt have to appear before the judgment seat. Why not get alone to the mercy seat? In the great transaction between thee and God, thou canst have no human helper. You are not going to tell him any secret. You may be sure he will not betray your confidence.

Whatever reasons there may be for any species of devotion, there are more and stronger reasons for secret devotion. Nothing is more embarrassing and disturbing in secret prayer than unpropitious circumstances. Great attention ought always to be paid to this point. "Enter into thy closet," says Christ. He says not *a* closet, nor *the* closet, but *thy* closet. The habit of secret communion is supposed to be formed. The man is supposed to have a closet—some place in which he is accustomed to retire for prayer—some spot consecrated by many a meeting there with God—some place that has often been to him a Bethel. The Saviour uses the word to mean any place where, with no embarrassment either from the fear or pride of observation, we can freely pour out our hearts in prayer to God. No matter what are the dimensions of the place, what its flooring or canopy. Christ's closet was a mountain, Isaac's a field, Peter's the house-top.

*Nevins.*

## LIFE. A CONFLICT.

The battle-field is everywhere,  
 Our foes lie close about our way;  
 Temptation, riches, want or care,  
 Renew the contest day by day,  
 And he who in the deathly fight  
 Maintains his courage firm and strong,  
 Who keeps his armor pure and bright,  
 Shall win the victor's crown ere long.

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## "SONGS IN THE NIGHT."

When, courting slumber,  
 The hours I number,  
 And sad cares cumber  
 My wearied mind,  
 This thought shall cheer me,  
 That Thou art near me,  
 Whose ear to hear me  
 Is still inclined.

My soul Thou keepest,  
 Who never sleepest;  
 Mid gloom the deepest  
 There's light above.  
 Thine eyes behold me,  
 Thine arms enfold me;  
 Thy word has told me  
 That God is love.