

THE
BEAUTY OF KINDNESS

BY

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"IN PERFECT PEACE," ETC.

*"Sweet words of kindness
Fall,—we know not where or when,
Like the fragrance of the roses,
Reaching far beyond our ken."*

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NOTHING else we can do is more worth while than kindness. There is nothing that the world needs more, and nothing else that leaves more real and far-reaching good in human lives. Some day we shall learn that the little deeds of love wrought unconsciously, as we pass on our way, are greater in their helpfulness, and will shine more brightly at the last, than the deeds of renown which we think of as alone making a life great.

J. R. M.

PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.

*I asked for alms !
He flung a coin at me
Contemptuously.
Not without sense of shame
I stooped and picked it up.
Does this fulfil
The Master's will
To give a cup
Of water in his name ?*

*I asked for bread !
He handed out to me
Indifferently
A ticket for some food.
It answered to my need.
Was this the way
On that great day
Christ stopped to feed
The hungry multitude ?*

*When we shall wait,
After this mortal strife,
And to his presence go
As suppliant indeed,
Will it be thus
He will on us
In our great need
His priceless gift bestow ?*

— THE OUTLOOK.

THE BEAUTY OF KINDNESS.

KINDNESS has been called the small coin of love. The word is generally used to designate the little deeds of thoughtfulness and gentleness which make no noise and attract no notice, rather than large and conspicuous acts which all men applaud. One may live many years and never have the opportunity of doing anything great, anything which calls attention to itself, yet one may, through all one's years, be kind, filling every day with gentle thoughtfulnesses, helpful ministries, little services of interest, obligingness, sympathy, and small amenities and courtesies. Wordsworth speaks of such things as

“ That best portion of a good man's life, —
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.”

Kindness is beautiful. It is beautiful in its simplicity. It usually springs out of the heart spontaneously. The larger things men do are purposed, planned for, and are done consciously, with

intention and preparation. Kindness as a rule is done unconsciously, without preparation. This enhances its beauty. There is no self-seeking in it, no doing something for effect, no desire for recognition or praise, no thought of reward of any kind. It is done in simplicity, prompted by love, and is most pleasing to Christ.

Lowell in one of his poems draws a winsome picture of one whose life was sweet and beautiful with simple kindness.

- “In herself she dwelleth not,
 Although no home were half so fair ;
No simplest duty is forgot ;
Life hath no dim and lowly spot
 That doth not in her sunshine share.
- “She doeth little kindnesses
 Which most leave undone or despise ;
For naught that sets our hearts at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
 Is low esteeméd in her eyes.
- “She hath no scorn of common things,
 And though she seems of other birth,
Round us her heart entwines and clings,
And patiently she folds her wings
 To tread the humble paths of earth.
- “Blessing she is. God made her so,
 And deeds of week-day holiness
Fall from her noiseless as the snow ;
Nor hath she ever chanced to know
 That aught were easier than to bless.”

The world does not know how much it owes to the common kindnesses which so abound everywhere. There had been a death in a happy home, and one evening soon after the funeral the family were talking with a friend, who had dropped in, about the wonderful manifestation of sympathy which their sorrow had called out. The father said he had never dreamed there was so much love in people's hearts as had been shown to his family by friends and neighbors. The kindness had come from all classes of people, from many from whom it was altogether unexpected, even from entire strangers. Neighbors with whom his family had never exchanged calls had sent some token of sympathy. "It makes me ashamed of myself," said the good man, "that I have so undervalued the good-will of those about me. I am ashamed also that I have so failed myself in showing sympathy and kindness to others about me in their sorrow and suffering."

No doubt it takes trouble or sorrow to draw out the love there is in people's hearts. We all feel gently even toward a stranger who is in some affliction. Crape on the door of a neighbor we do not know at all makes us walk by the house more quietly as we think of those within, in their grief. It may require trouble in many cases to call out the kindly feeling, but the feeling is there

all the time. No doubt there is unlovingness in some human hearts, but sorrow makes us all kin. The majority of people have in them a chord of sympathy which does not fail to respond when another's grief touches it.

It has been noted that among the poor there is even more neighborliness shown than among the rich. The absence of conventionality makes the life very simple. The poor mingle together more closely and familiarly in their neighborhood life. They nurse each other in sickness and sit with each other in time of sorrow. Their mutual kindnesses do much to lessen their hardships and to give zest and happiness to their lives.

The ministry of kindness is unceasing. It keeps no Sabbaths — it makes every day a Sabbath. It fills all the days and all the nights. In the true home it begins with the first waking moments in the morning, in pleasant greetings, in cheerful good wishes, and then it goes on all day in sweet courtesies, in thoughtful attentions, in patience, in quiet self-denials, in obligingness and helpfulness. Out in the world, it goes everywhere with happy cordiality, its gladness of heart, its uplift for those who are discouraged, its strengthening words for those who are weary, its sympathy with sorrow, its interest in lives that are burdened and lonely.

Some of us, if we were to try to sum up the total of our usefulness would name a few large things we have done,—the giving of money to some benevolent object, the starting of some good work which has grown into strength, the writing of a book which has made us widely known, the winning of honor in some service to our community or to our country. But in every worthy life that which has really left the greatest measure of good has been its ministry of kindness. No record of it has been kept. People have not talked about it. It has never been mentioned in the newspapers. But where we have gone, day after day, if we have simply been kind to every one, we have left blessings in the world which in their sum far exceed the good wrought, the help imparted, and the cheer given, by the few large, conspicuous things we have done, of which we think and speak with pride.

“ A friendly smile, and love’s embering spark
Leaps into flame and illumines the dark ;
A whispered ‘ Be brave,’ to our fellow-men,
And they pick up the thread of hope again.
Thus never an act, or word, or thought,
But that with unguessed importance is fraught ;
For small things build up eternity,
And blazon the way for a destiny.”

It is remarkable that our Divine Master, in telling us of the coming judgment, makes the final destiny of all men to depend upon whether in this

world they have exercised or have not exercised the grace of kindness. For we are not done with life as we live it. We shall meet it all again, not only the great things we do but the little things. Even our lightest words take their place among the fixed things of life and will be recalled in the judgment. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." He does not say every wrong or evil word, but every useless, purposeless, or frivolous word. The meaning is that the smallest things in life, both the evil and the good, will be taken account of in the judgment.

In the great separation that will take place on that Day of days, the dividing line will be the attitude of men to Christ, how they have regarded him, how they have treated him in this world. But the revealing of this relation of men to Christ, it will be seen in that day, is not made by their creeds, by what they say about Christ, but by their lives, by what they do, by the spirit they show.

To those who are on his right hand, the King says, "I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." That is, the King had once been in need — hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or

sick — and these had shown him kindness. Thus they had proved themselves the King's friends.

To those on the left hand, the King says, "I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; . . . sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." That is, when the King was suffering, or in need, or sick, they had neglected him. They had not treated him cruelly or roughly, had done nothing to harm him or injure him; they had simply failed to show him the kindness which he needed. Neglecting love's duties is a sin quite as serious and as far-reaching in its consequences as the direct doing of things that are wrong in themselves.

The meaning of all this is that always and everywhere Christ is the touchstone of human lives. Wherever he goes, men are infallibly divided by him into two classes. Wherever he appears, separation always follows. There are those who are attracted to him, drawn about him, and become his friends and companions. Then there are others who are repelled and driven from him, sent away by the mere power of holiness in him. Their thought of Christ, their feeling toward him, divides men in this world.

The question, "What think ye of Christ? How do you regard him?" tells instantly where each one belongs. The final separation will be no hap-

hazard one. A painting in Italy represents Solomon as rising on the morning of the Resurrection and looking bewildered and confused, not knowing where he belonged, whether among the saved or the lost. But there will really be no such uncertainty, in any case, among those who arise from their graves. The deciding of the question of future destiny will not be deferred so late. It is settled in this world — we are settling it as we go on, these plain, common, uneventful days. Our treatment of Christ as he comes to our doors and asks for our love, our obedience and service, is fixing our destiny. The final separation of the people of all nations will not be an arbitrary dividing. Each man will go to his own place, the place he has chosen for himself, and for which his own life has prepared him. Every day is a day of judgment for us.

The righteous were surprised when the King told them of the kindness he had received from them. They did not remember ever having seen him or having had the opportunity of doing for him any of the kindnesses he said he had received from them. "When saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

For one thing, those who love their fellow-men

and are genuinely interested in them are not themselves conscious of the one-thousandth part of the ministries of kindness they perform. Like their Master they continually go about doing good. They are always helping somebody. Every one they meet carries away from them some cheer, some encouragement, some new inspiration for brave and beautiful living. Other people note the value of their lives and speak of their great usefulness. But they themselves are unaware of the beneficence of their ministry. It is said in Revelation of the redeemed in heaven who serve Christ and see his face, that "his name shall be on their foreheads." Dr. Henry G. Weston has called attention to the fact that, being on the forehead, the shining of the divine glory is visible to all who look on them, but will be unseen by themselves. No man sees his own face. The suggestion is very beautiful. The unconsciousness of the radiance on the face is part of the splendor—being aware of it would dim the brightness. When one is aware of the beauty or refinement marked on his face much of the beauty or refinement is gone. Self-consciousness also mars spiritual loveliness. When a man knows that he is humble, he is no longer humble. When a Christian becomes aware that he is kind and useful, much of the charm of his kindness and usefulness is gone.

“The best men, doing their best,
Know peradventure least of what they do.”

We can think, therefore, of the righteous as in their lowliness and humility not being conscious of the splendor and worthiness of the service they had rendered. They even thought there must be some mistake in what the King said to them, for they were not aware that they had ever done anything so noble and beautiful as that,—they could not remember ever having been kind to the King. But there was no mistake. The King has eyes to see in lowly deeds of kindness a beauty which no other eyes can see. He sees the heart, the motive, the spirit that animates the deeds, and therefore he beholds in the most commonplace acts a divine splendor. There are self-denials and sacrifices that love makes for the sake of others which shine with the glory of heaven as the Master sees them, and yet have no splendor in them to other eyes, they are so common.

Many of the achievements of men which are now regarded as great, when they were wrought in life's common ways did not appear to have anything remarkable in them. Their authors did not themselves dream of the far-reaching importance of what they had done, or of the fame which in after ages would gather about their names. Many discoverers and inventors would be bewildered if they

were to come back to earth to-day and find their names perpetuated in halls of fame and see how large a place the things they did now fill in the world's life. A poet suggests to us that Michael Angelo did not dream what grandeur he was building when he did the great work on St. Peter's which all the world now honors.

“The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And grained the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity ;
Himself from God he could not free ;
He builded better than he knew ;
The conscious stone to beauty grew.”

Many of those to whom the world owes the most wrought obscurely, in poverty, oftentimes, sacrificing themselves, toiling, struggling, suffering, in order to perfect their invention or complete their discovery. They saw nothing great or splendid in what they were doing. In many cases, their lives seemed failures, for they were only pioneers and achieved nothing themselves. Others came after them and carried to perfection what they had striven in vain to accomplish. To-day the things they dreamed of but never realized are among the world's finest achievements, its most useful inventions. If they are told in the judgment that these great things were wrought by them they will answer that they never saw them. It will be true, too, for

what they saw were only the merest beginnings, the first rude attempts, from which the finished product came only after years of experimenting. No wonder they cannot recognize in the splendid results the little that their hands actually wrought. Yet all this is really their work, was born in their brain, and made possible only through their dream and self-denying devotion.

So it is of the deeds of kindness that good people do. Those who do them never think of them as worthy of commendation, much less of record. They are plain people, with only commonplace gifts, with no aspiration for fame, with no thought that anything they do is of any special importance, or will ever be heard of again. Yet in many of these lowly ministries Christ sees the beginning of something that will shine at length in heavenly splendor. A simple word of cheer puts hope into a discouraged heart, saves a life from despair, and starts it on a career of worthy service.

A sailor boy brought home a fuchsia to his mother from some foreign cruise. She put it in a window-box and it grew, and by its beauty drew attention to itself. Soon there were fuchsias in other neighboring windows and in countless gardens. Thus the one little plant which the boy brought over seas multiplied itself and spread everywhere. If on the judgment day the Master

shows this boy fuchsias growing in gardens, in window-boxes, in conservatories in many lands, and says, "You planted all these; all this beauty is from your hand," the boy will be overwhelmed with surprise. He never saw these thousands of blooming plants. "Lord, when did I plant all these?" But we understand it. His hand brought one little plant, in love, from a foreign land, and the one has multiplied into all this vast harvest of loveliness.

So it is also with the little kindnesses we do. They may be very small in themselves, but they are the beginnings of long successions of good or beautiful things. No one can tell what the end will be of any least act of love, any smallest good thing done in the name of Christ. It will be an astonishment to many a lowly believer in Christ when at the end of time he is shown the full and final results of all that he did during his life. He will not recognize the splendid records of good deeds for which he receives commendation and reward, as truly his. "When did I do these fine and great things?" he will say. Yet all this wide-spread good is really the harvest from his sowing. If he had not done the one little thing, none of this would ever have had existence.

There is another and yet more wonderful interpretation of the value of kindness done in love for

Christ, in our Lord's answer to the astonishment of the righteous. They were surprised when they were told by the King that they had fed him when he was hungry, given drink to him when he was thirsty, and cared for him when he was sick and a stranger. "Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" To their wonder his answer was, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

One explanation of these words is that Christ's own are so dear to him that whatever kindness is done to any of them, even the least, he accepts as done to himself. This is the experience of all true friendship. If a friend of yours is in need anywhere, sick or a stranger far from you, and one cares for him, shows him hospitality, supplies his wants, delivers him in danger, you appreciate the sympathy and interest as if you yourself had received the help.

Then throughout the New Testament we are taught that Christ is represented in this world by his followers and friends. Even in the Old Testament we have hints of this identification of God with his people, as in the words, "In all their

affliction, he was afflicted." It is made still more clear in the New Testament after the Son of God had become flesh, thus entering into our humanity. He and his followers are one. They are members of his body. He that receiveth one of them receiveth him. Saul was engaged in a relentless persecution of the friends of Jesus, and the glorified One whom he met in the way asked him, "Why persecutest thou me?" And when the amazed persecutor asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" he said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." He who harms one of Christ's harms Christ himself. Likewise he who anywhere shows kindness to one who belongs to Christ shows the kindness to Christ himself. "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." He who warms and feeds a lonely, hungry heart warms and feeds Christ. As Browning says:—

"God who registers the cup
Of mere cold water for his sake
To a disciple rendered up,
Disdains not his own thirst to slake
At the poorest love was ever offered."

This teaching helps us to understand the words of the King to the righteous on the judgment day. In the hungry ones they had fed, in the thirsty to whom they had given cups of water, in the sick

and suffering to whom they had shown kindness, they had ministered to the King himself. These needy and suffering ones whom they had served in his name were his friends. They represented him. Those who received them received him. Those who relieved their distress relieved his, for in all their sufferings he suffers, and in their joy he rejoices.

The teaching of the New Testament is that the love of Christ is shown, shown unmistakably, in love of our fellow-men. Jesus himself gave as the test of discipleship, not love for himself in the abstract, not membership in the church, not the believing of a certain set of doctrines, but—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This love of men is essential. There is no such thing as love for God which does not also include love to man. St. John puts the truth in a very strong statement, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." We cannot love God apart from men. If we truly love Christ our hearts will be full also of love for others, and this love will show itself in ministries of kindness wherever there is need.

Some of the beautiful Christmas legends tell stories of children sent by the Christ in his place. To an orphanage door, one Christmas eve, says a German story, came a little boy, cold and hungry,

knocking for admission. The children were at their supper and according to their custom had set a chair at the table for Jesus. When this boy was brought in they gave him the empty chair. "Jesus could not come himself," they said, "so he sent this boy in his place." This was precisely true. Jesus could not come, for he was no longer a little child on the earth suffering from cold and hunger, needing human love and care. He did indeed send the boy in his place, asking for him just what would have been gladly done for himself, if he had been out in the storm that bitter winter night. In receiving the child, the children received Christ himself. If they had turned him away, it would have been the same as if they had turned the Master away.

H. Isabel Graham has written a beautiful story in the form of a legend of a monk who knelt continually in his cell and prayed to be fashioned into the likeness of the cross. He had made a vow that none should see his face until he had looked upon the face of Christ. So his devotions were unbroken. The birds sang by his cell window and the children played without, but the monk heeded not either the children or the birds. In the absorption of his soul in its passion for the Christ, he was oblivious to all earthly things. One morning he seemed to hear a spirit-voice saying that his prayer to see the Blessed One should be answered that day. He was very

glad and made special preparations for the coming of the vision. There was a gentle knocking at his door, by and by, and the voice of a child was heard pleading to be fed and taken in. Her feet were cold, her clothing was thin. But the monk was so intent on the coming of the vision that he could not pause to minister to any human needs. Evening drew on, the place became dreary, the tapers burned low. Why was the vision so long in appearing? Then, with bitter grief, the monk heard the answer that the vision had already come, had lingered at his door, and then, unwelcomed, had sobbed and turned away. Jesus had come in a little child, cold and hungry, had knocked, and called, and waited, and, grieved, had gone. The monk had been expecting some shining splendor, like the burning bush, or the transfiguration. The vision had come as a little child in need, seeking help, and he had not recognized it, and had refused to receive it.

We have a desire to see Christ. We long for visions of his beauty and glory. We wait in our place of prayer, hoping that he will reveal himself in some theophany. We sit at the Holy Supper and plead with him to show himself to us in some celestial brightness. We go apart into some sacred retreat, and pray and meditate, thinking he will come to meet with us there. But we are much

more likely to have him come to us in some human need to which we may minister, in some sorrow which we may comfort, or in some want which we can supply. "I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; . . . I was sick, and ye visited me. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

This suggests to us the splendor of even the lowliest ministries wrought in the name of Christ. We are serving Christ himself when we show kindness to one of his. There is a beautiful story of a soldier, who was afterwards known as St. Martin. One day in the depth of winter, a beggar, thinly clad, asked an alms for the love of God. A poet tells the story thus:—

"Famished he seems, and almost spent,
The rags that cover him worn and rent.
Crust nor coin can the soldier find;
Never his wallet with gold is lined;
But his soul is sad at the sight of pain;
The sufferer's pleading is not in vain.

"His mantle of fur is broad and warm,
Armor of proof against the storm!
He snatches it off without a word;
One downward pass of the gleaming sword,
And cleft in twain at his feet it lies,
And the storm-wind howls 'neath the frowning skies.

“ ‘Half for thee’ — and with tender art
He gathers the cloak round the beggar’s heart —
‘And half for me,’ and with jocund song
In the teeth of the tempest he strides along,
Daring the worst of the sleet and snow,
That brave young spirit, so long ago.

“ Lo, as he slept at midnight’s prime,
His tent had the glory of summer time ;
Shining out of a wondrous light,
The Lord Jesus beamed on his dazzled sight.
‘I was the beggar,’ the Lord Jesus said,
As he stood by the soldier’s lowly bed ;
‘Half of thy garment thou gavest me :
With the blessing of heaven I dower thee.’
And Martin rose from the hallowed tryst
Soldier and servant and knight of Christ.”

This is not fanciful. Thus indeed does the Master come to us in the suffering and needy ones whom we meet in our common days. “Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.” If Jesus came to us in his own person, as he used to come to the people of Galilee, and if we knew it to be he, how eager we would be to minister to him ! If he were hungry, we would share with him our last piece of bread. If he were thinly clad, we would take off our warm garments and put them on him. We shall not have the opportunity to minister to him in person, in these ways, just now, for he is no longer on the earth in need ; but in serving those

he sends to us to be relieved or comforted or helped, we will serve the Christ himself.

While we thus have a glimpse of the splendor of kindness done in the name of Christ, we see also the danger there is in turning away from any human need or suffering that may appeal to us. It may be the Christ we are passing by and neglecting. The King shall say to those on his left hand, "I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me."

It may seem a small matter to pass by a human need, to fail to show a kindness that we have opportunity of showing, to refuse to relieve a distress that appeals to us. We may say it is not our affair, but if it is brought to our attention in any way, it probably is our affair. We may say that the person is not worthy, but our Father makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. The Master himself did not confine his doing good to those who were worthy, and we are to continue his ministry in the world. In passing by any one who is in need, we may pass by the Christ.

This does not mean that we are to give indis-

criminally to all who ask us for alms. No Christian duty requires more care, more self-restraint, more wisdom, than that of relieving and helping others. No doubt money should be given only in rare cases. Thoughtful men and women soon learn that great harm is done by the over-helping of others. It may not be our duty to give any financial help even to those who ask for it, or to relieve directly the physical needs that make their appeal to us, but this we may be sure of, that every one who comes before us in need, in distress, in sorrow, or in any want or trouble, should be helped by us in some way.

So far as we know, Jesus never gave any money — he did not have money to give. Yet he was the most munificent giver that ever lived among men. There was no life that ever touched his that was not helped by him in some way. At the Beautiful Gate of the temple the lame man who asked alms of Peter and John did not receive what he sought. These men had no silver or gold to give. But the poor man was not left unhelped. “Silver and gold have I none,” said Peter, “but what I have that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Then he took him by the right hand, and raised him up. The man was helped in two ways. His lameness was healed by divine power. Then Peter gave him his hand, showing human sympathy and imparting strength.

We are very sure that Peter helped the lame beggar in a far wiser and better way than if he had put a coin into his hand. This, at the best, could only have supported his mendicancy a little longer, leaving him no better off in any way, no stronger, no less helpless, no more hopeful, than he was at the beginning. He would have had to return to his place at the gate to-morrow. But the help that Peter gave him made him able to take his place among men and care for himself. He did not need to be carried any longer to the temple morning by morning, to sit and beg all day. The truest help we can give to any one is to make him strong so that he will not need to be helped any more. It is better loving to make a man able to bear his own burdens, than it is to take his burden off his shoulder and bear it for him. We prove truer friend to a man when we encourage and inspire him to overcome his timidity and shrinking and become brave and strong, than if in gentle pity we nurse him along in his weakness. A man's best friend always is he who makes him do his very best.

But what we are to remember is that we are never to turn away from us a human need that appeals to us. In our modern Christian civilization begging is in no case to be encouraged. Provision is made in other ways for those who are in

want. Yet nevertheless are we to treat the beggar in a Christian way, as Jesus would. We are not to look at him with contempt. We may not rudely slam our door in his face. We may not forget that he is a brother, a child of God, and that Christ died for him. He has human feelings which will be hurt by unkindness and would be wondrously comforted by courtesy and kindness.

Turgeneff in one of his little parables tells of meeting on the way a beggar, who held out his greasy hand for alms. Turgeneff searched all his pockets, but had no money, no food, nothing whatever, to give the man. He said to him, "I am sorry, brother, that I have nothing for thee." The beggar's face brightened, and he said, "That is enough. Thank you." To be called "brother" was better than any alms would have been. We may not give money to the mendicant on the street, but we may show him kindness, the spirit of brotherhood, and that will be worth more to him than the largest alms. It will gladden and cheer his heart, and bring to him a little of the warmth of the love of Christ.

There come to us continually those who are weak, unable to keep up in the march. They may be physically weak, or they may only be faint-hearted. There is a way of seeming to help them which will do them harm. There is a kind of sym-

pathy which only makes such persons less strong, less able to go on with life's duties and struggles. We enter into their weakness, but do not lift them up out of it to any new strength. We listen to their story of discouragement and express our sorrow at the things which make life so hard for them, and sympathize with them, but say not a word to hearten them. We sit down with those who are enduring grief, and condole with them, but give them no comfort, saying not a word to lighten their gloom or to turn their thoughts toward hope. The only true help in such experiences is that which puts courage into men's hearts, and lifts them out of themselves.

What the Master wants us to do for those he sends to us in need or distress is to give them strength. If they come to us hungry, we are to feed them, that they may continue on their way with vigor and zest. If they are sick, we are to visit them. But we need to be sure that our visits shall really do them good, cheer their loneliness, and leave songs in their hearts.' If they are strangers who come to us, we are to show them hospitality. All these acts of kindness suggest the imparting of joy and encouragement, so that those to whom we minister may overcome the hardness of the way, and become more than conquerors through him that loved them.

So we should seek to realize the meaning of our neglect to show kindness to any one who comes to us in need or in distress. We may be neglecting Christ himself. It will be sad if sometime we should hear the King say, "It was I who came to your door that day. I was heavy-hearted. I was weary and faint with my long journey and my heavy burden. I was yearning for sympathy, for love, for a word of encouragement. I came to you and ye did — nothing. You shut your door upon me. You looked at me with bitterness and sent me away unhelped." When we are about to close our door upon any one who needs help or craves love and cheer in Christ's name, let us beware lest we may turn away Christ himself.

This representation of the way the account for judgment day is made up shows us how full all life is of Christ. Even our smallest acts have reference to him. The kindnesses we do are done to him. When we neglect any one, it is Christ we neglect. We cannot get away from his presence, go where we may. Everywhere there is somebody who needs love, hospitality, a visit in a sick room, a cup of the cold water of kindness, or a word of encouragement. And it is Christ. He is always coming to us needing something. Twice Jesus asked for water — once at the well, when he said to the woman who was about to draw water,

“Give me drink,” and again on his cross, when he said, “I thirst.” But now every day he comes to us with like longings. Physical thirsts are not the only thirsts. Not all people about us are poor, hungry, or homeless, but there are few we meet any day who do not need something — cheer, hope, a brother’s hand, companionship, friendship, joy. In every one of these the King comes to us, saying, “Inasmuch as you show kindness to the least of these, ye show it unto me.” Let us never fail him so that he shall say, “I turned to you in my need, and you did nothing for me.”

This parable of the judgment shows us how full of splendor is the simplest, plainest life of the quietest, commonest days. The righteous thought there must have been some mistake — they could not remember having done such deeds of kindness to the King. But they had done these things to his friends, and he counted them as done to him.

We must not miss the significance of this — some of us think our lives dreary and commonplace, but here we see what splendor is veiled in the simplest kindnesses. In the light of the judgment day we shall see the tasks we fret over to-day, the serving of others, which sometimes grows irksome, blossoming into divine beauty and radiancy.