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### Doing Good.

Acts 10: 38—"Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil, for God was with him."

"Who went about doing good." How complimentary would be such words recorded in the memoir of some departed worthy, or upon the tomb of some deceased friend. Suppose, in passing through a cemetery, we should find this epitaph, "Who went about doing good," &c.? What reflections would be awakened in our minds! What kindness and reverence we would entertain for the memory of such an one! We would instinctively call to mind deeds of self-denial and unselfishness—of compassion, tenderness and sympathy. We would be constrained to say, here lies the friend of the orphan and the widow, the poor and the afflicted. We should feel like doing homage to one of such noble record. Possibly our thoughts might revert to a Howard visiting the filthy prisons of Europe in the interests of fallen and suffering humanity. We might think of the many benefactors of our race who devoted their lives to the good of mankind. We need not help thinking of such self-denying men as Brainerd, Martyn and Judson, who consecrated their lives to preaching the gospel to the perishing. But after we had thought of all these and a Paul besides, our minds would turn to him who surpassed all them, "who went about doing good," who never did anything but good, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.

To do good should be the highest aim of every intelligent being, and is worthy of God himself. In its noblest, purest sense, it is a desire begotten of God. Hence, Jesus could say that he came from heaven not to do his own will but the will of him who sent him. While it should be the aim of all men to do the greatest possible amount of good, yet the vast majority of mankind hate good, love evil, and pursue after it. Oh, the pains, the sorrows, the wretchedness flesh is heir to, because man drinketh iniquity as the ox drinketh water—rolls sin under his tongue as a sweet morsel. What misery the drunkard has heaped upon a family left in poverty and shame! What moral blight are infidels and the vendors of pernicious literature of to-day inflicting upon society! Think of Paine, a Voltaire, an Ingels, and the novelists of the times. These stand at the fountain-head and poison the streams from which our youth quench their thirst. How shocked we would be to see their epitaphs written "who went about doing good"! What mockery to inscribe such words upon the tombs of Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, who deluged the world in blood and caused one general wail from the bleeding hearts of millions to ascend to heaven. Upon their tombs might be appropriately inscribed "But one sinner destroyeth much good."

Our subject to day is

### DOING GOOD.

And the most perfect illustration of it is Jesus who spent his entire life in doing good to men. He was wholly absorbed in this object and it was the constant end and aim of his ministry on earth. He came to destroy the works of the Devil and to save the souls of men. His mission was to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind.

Christianity is aggressive. It is not content to have a place and a name in the world. It has a divine mission. "Go," said Jesus, "into all the world." The disciples understood by this command that they were not to remain always at Jerusalem. Its mission is not to sit still and wait for chances or opportunities, but to make them. Its disciples have no plea for idleness by saying "No man hath hired us." "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." See the example of Jesus. He did not sit still and wait for something to turn up—did not wait for the lame, blind and diseased to come to him, but sought them out.

Matthew tells us he went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sicknesses, &c. Such was his manner that great multitudes followed him from

Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Decapolis and other places, and he healed them all. He was thronged by crowds who cast the lame, the blind and the palsied at his feet. The life of Jesus was a busy one, so that often he had not time so much as to eat. So you see Jesus was constantly engaged in doing good. He was not fitful and spasmodic. His zeal knew no abatement, hence he could say "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Souls were perishing, hence he must be about his Father's business. Now he is at Jerusalem, now in Perea, then in Galilee, then in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. In Luke 9: 10-17, we see the amount of good he did in one day. The six days before his death occupy nearly one-half of John and about a third of the other gospels. He was always abounding in the work of the Lord. He felt that a necessity was laid upon him: "I must work while it is called to-day." And how much he did no tongue can tell. John says the world could not contain the books that might be written of him. Who can estimate the good he did? He sowed beside all waters and gave a portion to seven and to eight.

Then I notice that Jesus was not easily discouraged in doing good. He paid no attention to croakers and grumblers. He did not cater to popular tastes—did not seek popularity nor the applause of men. He did not swerve from the path of duty to avoid the censure of men. He did not even seek to please men. When denounced by scribes and Pharisees, he did not cease his labors. If his ministry was not successful in one place, he went to another. When persecuted in one city, he traveled to another. He did not aim to attract attention by making a noise or raising a sensation. He did not blow a trumpet when he performed a cure or preached a sermon, nor did he advertise his subjects. He did not stop by the way to dispute about anise and cummin, and tithes. He had no stereotyped way of doing good. Some must read their prayers, wear a gown, preach in a consecrated pulpit, and be buried in a consecrated cemetery. Some waste time over the shibboleths of parties. Nor was he one of the kid-glove gentlemen. He sought out the publicans and harlots.

The mission of Christianity in the world is to do it good. It has originated all those agencies which have blessed mankind. Asylums for the insane, the orphan and the afflicted have sprung up through the agency of the gospel. Institutions for the deaf and dumb and the blind, homes for the aged and infirm and the needy had no existence prior to the Christian dispensation. Bible societies, Sunday schools and missionary organizations for sending the gospel to the heathen had their origin among Christian nations. Our anti-mission brethren have opposed all these agencies, but in doing so they have been found fighting against God, and the seal of his disapprobation seems to rest upon them. All who bear the name of Christ have a work to do in building up his cause in the earth. There is no retreat for the church except in disaster. She must go forth with victorious banners. She must go from conquering to conquer. There is a great conflict to be engaged in, and each soldier is expected to do his duty.

As voluntary and accountable agents, we can choose our sphere of doing good. No one has a right to censure his brother in this liberty.

There is no monopoly in doing good. All classes may enjoy this privilege. All grades of talent may find employment. There is ample scope for all, for the field is the world. We can teach in the Sunday-school, or give as the Lord has blessed us to sustain the gospel at home or send it abroad. We can visit the poor and the afflicted. We can rejoice with them who rejoice or weep with them who weep. We can hold up the hands of some fainting pilgrim. We may cheer some discouraged soul. We may give a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. We can place a wreath on some forgotten grave. We can lift some burden or make some soul happy. The word of cheer and encouragement may stimulate some timid soul to press on. We may carry the gospel from house to house and distribute religious tracts. The work of colportage furnishes efficient means of accomplishing good. By this agency the gospel may be carried to the lowly and the destitute. A colporteur sold an old book to Richard Baxter's father. Baxter, reading it, was converted, and wrote the "Saint's Rest," which was the means of Philip Doddridge's conversion. Doddridge wrote the "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," which was the means of bringing to Christ Leigh Richmond, the author of the "Dairyman's Daughter." This book was the means of Wilberforce's conversion and thousands of others. And Wilberforce was the author of a work which was instrumental in the conversion of the distinguished Dr. Chalmers. True it is, "There shall be a handful of corn upon the tops of the mountains, the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon." Colportage is necessary in this age of vile trash and vicious books. The press is teeming with yellow-covered novels and books arrayed against religion and morals. This is an age of reading, and men will read something either good or bad. The vendors of polluted literature may be found at all our busy thoroughfares, at the railroad station and on the train. Now the colporteur must meet those with the Bible and with good books and tracts.

In addition to this, we must in self-defense disseminate our denominational literature. Each denomination is actively engaged in disseminating its own literature. In this work Rome is not behind the rest. Unitarianism, Swedenborgianism, as well as every form of skepticism and infidelity, are

busy at work, endeavoring to subvert the doctrines of the Christian religion and to overthrow the very pillars of Christianity.

To do good God must be with us. The measure of our obligation to do good is the measure of our ability. "She hath done what she could." While this is true, our labors are in vain without the divine favor and blessing. The text tells us that God was with Jesus and assigns this as a reason for his success. Hence, he could say, "I can of mine own self do nothing." And he said to his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." Hence, he commanded his Apostles to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Spiritual power is needed. We must go forth armed in the panoply of heaven. Wealth, talents, genius, rank, influence and numbers are of little avail unless God be with us. Let us, then, seek the divine blessing. Let us be assured of the divine presence, for Jesus himself has promised it, "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." R. W. Farnham, Va.

### The Call to the Ministry.

Brother Editor:—As there has been a great deal said in the RECORDER about the call to the ministry, I would like to express my views, if you will let an old farmer scribble do so.

I think that Bro. White and Bro. Taylor stand flat-footed with both feet on God's word—that God calls every one of his followers to preach his word to the best of his or her ability—that he implants this desire at conversion. God holds each and every one responsible for the culture of this desire just as he does the culture of the talents and gifts with which he has endowed them.

I believe that God has left the calling of men to the bishopric to the churches, and why? because he has given them the qualifications that they might not err. God has founded his church on true republican principles. He gives each one of his followers a fair showing in the race set before them, spiritual and temporal. He has founded his kingdom upon justice and equity, that each one of his followers should have a fair showing in the great race of life. I don't believe any man has a right to be "whining" around that "God has called me to be a bishop," but that he should wait for some church to discover his fitness and call for his ordination, so he could serve them. I am opposed to ordaining men until their services are needed; it is contrary to the plain teachings of the Scripture. It was not so in the beginning when the Apostles went out and planted or organized the churches. They had no bishops or elders, but they were self-contained and had a holy self-sufficiency, each one exercising his gifts and doing his own preaching. How long this state of pastorless churches prevailed cannot be ascertained; but I presume that when the fires of Calvary began to grow dim, the "Devil slipped in the churches, and began to puff up men with self aspirations," each one thinking that he was the greatest preacher and that he ought to lead the service. This state of things brought about confusion, and Paul conceived the idea of ordaining bishops or elders to have the oversight of this matter in order to prevent confusion, and that those who were set apart for this work might give themselves fully to it, cultivate their talents, gifts and holy desires to their highest susceptibility, and consecrate themselves fully to the work and take the place of their absent Lord as under-shepherds. Not that they were to do all the preaching, but that they were to lead the services and designate who should preach to prevent confusion, and that they might cultivate the talents and develop the gifts of their flock in imitation of the Great Shepherd, so that each church might become a live, active, consecrated and successful body of believers, with their talents, gifts and desires cultivated and developed to the highest point.

I don't believe in any superstitious call. It is contrary to the plain teachings of God's word and also of reason, because God never does foolish things. We very often hear men say God called them to be ministers, and when the churches educated them, they proved complete failures. In other cases, they were physically unable to preach. But God don't make mistakes. A few years ago a young brother thought God had called him to the foreign field, but he died before he had finished the necessary preparations.

God don't force men into his service, or into the ministry, but he has opened the way wide and invites all to come to his service and implants a desire in every breast to be useful and to win others to his service. I say again that he leaves to the churches the duty of calling men to the full work of the ministry, and that no man ought to be ordained unless some church needs him and calls for his ordination, or unless his services are needed in a destitute and foreign field.

I believe that there has been too much stress laid on the call to the ministry, and that its tendency is evil and that continually. I believe that the most gifted and the most competent are often kept out of the ministry by this great stress that has been laid on the call to the ministry. On the other hand, it opens wide the door for the "superstitious" to enter; for more than a quarter of a century Western North Carolina has furnished the most of the young men who have been educated and set apart to the full work of the ministry. I am glad that Western North Carolina is becoming

enlightened, and that the D. D.'s are teaching true theology, and that the great mass of the followers of Christ will have a fair showing in the great race, and that they shall soon be educated and fully developed.

Then the churches will receive such an impetus as never before. Ignorance makes men moral cowards. What would intelligent and cultivated Greece have thought of Julius Caesar if he had started to conquer the world with a trained and well developed set of officers and had neglected to teach his private soldiers how to use their weapons of warfare? They would have thought that he was crazy. Caesar knew that his success depended upon the culture and the training of his private soldiers as it did upon his officers. The tendency of Christianity at the present day is to conquer the world for Christ with a trained ministry to the neglect of the masses. I hope the time will soon come in this enlightened age when young men will be ashamed to be "whining" around, exclaiming that God had called them to the ministry, and Jacob like, stealing the bishopric of others, but they will remember that God calls every man to preach—that he has given each one a talent, and holds each individual responsible for the care and development of the talent that he has committed to their care and keeping. It is contrary to good government in church or state for aspirants to be "whining" around seeking positions. I don't believe that God ever intended any such thing in his church, but that the church should seek the man who best fills the place.

The Scriptures teach us plainly that God reveals the secret of men's fitness to fill the office of bishop or pastor to the churches—not in a superstitious way, but that he has given them the capacity to discern the fitness of men to fill this high position. When Titus went around to ordain bishops, he didn't tell the churches to look up aspirants for this exalted position, but he told them to select one of their own number. God never intended for his church to be cursed with aspirants for office, but that his people should select them by their own voice, on true republican principles, from their own number, and that they were to devote all their time to that church individually and should be their shepherd. No man is capable of being shepherd of but one flock. Spurgeon with his giant intellect fully developed was never capable of being the shepherd of but one flock.

W. C. ROGERS.

Oak Hill, N. C.

### Two Extremes.

Years ago our Baptist people were perhaps rather on the extreme in so frequently and persistently thrusting a discussion of their distinctive views on other people. Then our views were deemed so important that they were advocated in nearly every sermon preached. It may be that some of our views were given rather undue prominence, to the neglect of other important matters. But if this extreme resulted in some harm, it also did much good. It stirred up people to an examination of Bible teachings; and when persons became Baptists, they believed something, and could give a reason for it.

From the time of Christ and the Apostles to the present time, Baptists have stood alone in the advocacy of a regenerated church membership, of believers alone as proper subjects for baptism, of immersion as Bible baptism, and of immersion as a prerequisite to the Lord's supper. Formerly, these fundamental Bible teachings were kept more prominently before the people than they are now. Finding these teachings in the Bible, and believing them, made Baptists that stood for something. They had some religious backbone. In those times Baptists believed these principles to be so important that rather than give them up they would go to prisons, whipping-posts, and the stake.

But now we have drifted to the opposite extreme. Now our preachers but seldom preach our distinctive views; and if they do, they almost apologize for holding them. They have so much to say in praise of Christian charity and liberality as to leave the impression on people that distinctive Baptist doctrines are ugly, troublesome things that need to be palliated and apologized for.

If Baptists are made at all under such teaching, they are as a rule weak and wavering, ready to be carried about with every wind of doctrine. These are the wishy-washy Baptists who, if something is done in their church they do not like, can go and join a Pedobaptist church where much is taught and practiced they believe to be unscriptural. These are the kind of Baptists who deem it more important to follow a relative or friend into a Pedobaptist church than it is to follow Christ in the example he set and the truth he taught.

But these people say, "I believe in immersion. I have been immersed. I could not join a Pedobaptist church and be sprinkled. I do not believe sprinkling is baptism at all. I do not believe in sprinkling babies."

If you believe in immersion as the only Bible baptism; if you do not believe in sprinkling, then it is utterly inconsistent for you to join a church where you will give your life, your influence, and your money to uphold a church that practices what you believe is unscriptural. If Christ was immersed, and taught immersion as baptism, then it is positive disobedience and disloyalty to practice, or in any way support, sprinkling or pouring for baptism. And yet

we have fallen on times of such extreme looseness and indifference to Bible truth, that many persons are guilty of this glaring inconsistency.

So extreme is the looseness of these times, that we constantly hear it said, "It makes no difference what church you belong to, just so you are a Christian." This is the same as saying that error is as good as truth—that sprinkling is as good as Bible baptism—that babies are as much entitled to baptism as believers—that disobedience is as good as obedience—that a man-made church is as good as the one set up by Christ.

It is plain to every thinking mind that all the different churches cannot be right. Each one holds faith and practice differing from all the others. Each one claims to hold such important truth not held by others as to justify them in having a separate organization to support and teach their distinctive views. Each church believes all others to be wrong in many important particulars. It is, therefore, impossible for all to be right; and to say that one is as good as another is absurd and false. If one was as good as another, each would hold and practice the same Bible truth. If they did this, all would come into one church.

Here is another extreme. Baptist parents have become criminally indifferent in regard to the religious training of their children. If they teach them any thing in regard to their becoming Christians, it is a rare thing for them to teach them anything in regard to becoming Baptists. Recently a Baptist mother said: "I never said a word to my children in my life about churches. I let them grow up and choose for themselves." This negligence has become common among Baptists. It is all wrong. The difference between Pedobaptist denominations is really too unimportant to cause them to divide. They ought to unite. To choose between these denominations is a matter of little importance. But Baptists differ widely and fundamentally from all other denominations. To be a Baptist means something. You ought to have Bible reasons for being a Baptist; and you ought to teach these reasons to your children. A wise Catholic said: "Give me a child until he is seven years old, and I care not who takes him after that; he will be a Catholic." Baptist parents are failing to teach their children Bible truth in regard to churches, and their children are drifting off to other denominations. If any people have truth to teach, and ought to teach it, Baptists are the people. Let Baptist writers, teachers and preachers urge this duty on Baptist parents. J. A. STRADLEY.

### A Desire to Encourage.

The Bible tells us to exhort and admonish each other. We desire sympathy to encourage us in the service of our Lord, to our growth in grace into a closer relation with our Saviour. Is it not the desire of all our hearts, "Oh for a closer walk with God?" Why are we walking so far from him? He has so kindly asked us to take up the cross and follow him. Are we complying with this request? Not as fully as we should by any means. Let all of us who profess to be followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ take fresh courage and determination to follow nearer the cross, more earnestly obeying the teachings of our Saviour. Let us not do as Peter did—follow afar off, but like the humble servant that bowed at Jesus' feet. How can we afford to do so little for Christ, after he has done so much for us, unworthy creatures as we are? He has given his life for us, spilt his precious blood on Calvary's mount that we might have life eternal. After he has done so much for us and proven his love, we ought to say we love him because he first loved us. We have realized his love to some extent, and may prove our love to him by keeping his commands. He says "Take up the cross and follow me." He has shown us how to live and how to labor. Let us, in the first place, go to the throne of grace and ask God to give us the Holy Spirit to lead us in the path of righteousness. We all have a work to do for our Lord. To all idle servants he says, "Go work in my vineyard." Brother, the work you do for the Master, as well as the pay you get for it, will be very enjoyable. Try it. We are not all called to go to China or some other heathen land to preach the everlasting gospel in person, as some of our brothers and sisters are, yet we are to preach through them by helping them.

And then the work at home devolves upon us. Every one of us are under obligation to serve our Lord; so let us get at it. "Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation." Let us pray for each other and be united in every good word and work that tends to the advancement of our Lord's kingdom, and when it is done, we'll sit down on the banks of the river of life in the shade of the trees and talk it over with joy indescribable and full of glory.

ADDIE E. CROOK.

Globe, N. C.

Amidst the whirl of machinery, in the bustle of the street, even in the midst of conversation, we may be able mentally to disappear out of time, and stand for an instant in eternity face to face with God; and few prayers are more precious than the momentary ejaculations offered in the course of daily occupations. He who has acquired this habit has a strong tower into which he can retreat in every time of need.—James Stalker, D. D.