

Dear Margaret E. Sangster,

If I died tomorrow, what would happen to me? Does it matter how many good things you do in life? Do they ever outweigh the bad? Is failing to perform a righteous deed the same as committing a sin? These were a few of the many questions making their way through my head as I read your poem “The Sin of Omission”.

I’ve always thought to myself, “Sure I’ll go to heaven, look at all the good deeds I have done!” But does that determine it? Does God sit up in heaven tallying the number of worthy and unworthy things I do; like a judge with a scale, putting a blocks on each side to see if good outweighs bad? Most likely not, but I’m sure it disheartens Him when an opportunity arises for me to perform an admirable deed, and I bypass it as though it is not even there.

I like your wording when you wrote, “The flowers you did not send, dear, are your haunting ghosts at night.” That is so true. How many times have I gone to bed feeling bitter about not helping the old lady cross the street, or not helping the nerd in the hallway pick up his books? Even if the answer were one, it would still be too many.

My father always told me, “If you can lie down at night, and feel good about yourself, you have probably done the right thing.” Maybe that’s what’s wrong with the world these days, a lack of conscience. Think about it. Would there be theft, adultery, and murder if everyone had a strong conscience? Sin quite obviously would not be eliminated entirely, but I’m sure it could be greatly reduced if every person around the world had a little voice inside their head that said, “NO! You know this is wrong! It’s not worth it!”

Do you ever wonder what the world would be like if every person lifted every stone out of a stranger's way? What a wonderful world that would be, if we all took a small amount of time to make an immense difference in someone else's life.

I would like to thank you for this wonderful poem. It has helped me to reconsider the way I am living my life, to wonder about a different world, full of helping instead of hurt, and to slow down in life to lend a hand to someone in need. You have taken your "chance to be an angel" as you said, by transforming me into a more thoughtful person. For "It isn't the thing you do, dear, It's the thing you left undone. That gives you a bit of heartache, At the setting of the sun." May these words stick with me in my days, months, and years to come.

Sincerely,

Tilyn Bell

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