

The Young Man and His Problem.

BY REV. JAMES L. GORDON.

Pluck versus Luck.

We have no faith in luck. We have infinite faith in pluck. Labor is luck if joined with pluck and steady aim brings down the game. Lucky days, lucky numbers, lucky cards, lucky people and lucky circumstance all belong to the science of Foolology. There is a reason for everything. Cause and effect are universal in their application. Only weak men believe in luck. All men believe in pluck. The man who worships luck worships a laughing god. As Sir Frederick Treves once said to the students at the Aberdeen University: "The man who is content to wait for a stroke of good fortune will probably wait until he has a stroke of paralysis."

Keep your Mind Young.

Edward Everett Hale has just passed over the line into the invisible at eighty-seven. Theo. L. Cuyler, dear old soul, passed away at eighty-eight. General Booth of the Salvation Army has passed the eightieth milestone and is doing the best work of his life. Soon we will hear of our great men living to be one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty. Everything depends on a clean life and a youthful mind. Keep your mind young. The "Brethren Evangelist" remarks:—

"Susah B. Anthony died some years ago at the age of eighty-six. While not agreeing with all she advocated, yet for sixty years this 'splendid old maid' fought with fiercest energy for the rights and privileges of her sex, forever putting at rest the saying that old maids are out of place in our civilization."

"But the lesson of her life, aside from her public work, is the care she took of her bodily health and the hopeful spirit she carried to her grave. Up to a time within a year of her death she never walked upstairs. She always ran upstairs. This is the testimony of her relatives and friends. To do that at her age meant a strong body and youthful mind. Miss Anthony gave attention to her health, but above all else she was careful to keep her mind young. And herein is the secret of happy old age."

Rubs, Drubs and Snubs.

Never imagine that you are an exception. There are nights when the King cannot sleep. There are days when the President cannot toil. There are days when the millionaire wishes that money had never been created. There are moments when the famous man wishes that human recognition were an impossibility. "Rubs, Snubs and Drubs" enter into the experience of all. No man is trouble proof. No man is care-free. No man is an exception. A writer for the "Christian Intelligencer" says:—

"Rubs and drubs and snubs make the man." We have to learn obedience by the things which we suffer, as even Jesus did. "No mill no meal, no sweat no sweet, no pain no palm, no thorn no throne, no cross no crown." Perspiration goes with aspiration. Everything depends on the handle by which we take our tribulations. It is very easy to get worse under the rod. The same sun that softens the wax hardens the clay; the same heat that draws perfume from the flower brings foul odor from the dung-hill. Affliction may be looked on as "the shadow of God's wings," wings that brood over us in tenderest affection, or as the shadow of a thunder cloud laden with destruction."

One by One.

The days come—one by one. Visitors drop in—one by one. Duties present themselves—one by one. Emergencies arise—one by one. Opportunities arrive—one by one. You are not held responsible for the conduct of the universe. What you are responsible for is expressed in the old proverb, "Do the Next Thing." You may not be able to visit all your friends and neighbors—but how do you treat those who visit you. Just a little kindness crowded into every day means a glorious reputation for you, by and by, and a memory sweet with the richest perfume. An English writer says concerning the grand old man, William E. Gladstone: "When prime minister for the last time he brought an old coachman up to London for medical treatment, and, having found suitable quarters, charged his physician to send him word should a crisis come. The end came at an hour when Mr. Gladstone was in an important discussion with Sir William Harcourt. In that hour the premier dropped everything, and, hurrying to an-

other part of the city, lent his old servant comfort as he passed down into the dark valley, and even while the prime minister of England was praying to that God who is Lord of death and life alike, the aged servant passed on into realms of happiness and immortal peace."

Social Attention.

Don't spend your time worrying about "social recognition." That's a bubble which isn't worth breaking—a shell which isn't worth cracking. Recognize yourself and your neighbors and you are two-thirds of the way across the bridge. Do not concern yourself about the people who are above you. They have no particular need of your thought or consideration. But look well to the people who are below you. Look down to the people who are looking up to you. There are more people below you than there are above you. Look down and lift up!

In Booker T. Washington's biography of Frederick Douglass may be found these words: "An incident occurred at this meeting which showed the President's strong and almost affectionate regard for Frederick Douglass. What these were are best told by Douglass himself. He says: 'While in conversation with him, his secretary twice announced Governor Buckingham of Connecticut, one of the noblest and most patriotic of the loyal governors. Mr. Lincoln said: 'Tell Governor Buckingham to wait, for I want to have a long talk with my friend, Frederick Douglass.' I interposed and begged him to see the governor at once, as I could wait, but no, he persisted that he wanted to talk with me and that Governor Buckingham could wait. . . . In his company I was never in any way reminded of my humble origin, or of my unpopular color."

Get Ready.

Every young man desires to be a public speaker, and there is not one man in a hundred who would not make an effective speaker if he cared enough about it to prepare himself. All a man needs in order to succeed on the platform is, absolute sincerity, a natural manner, a conversational style, a knowledge of the main facts concerning the subject chosen, a head full of clear convictions and a heart of fire. There you have an equipment which, well handled, will capture the dumbest audience. The secret of successful public speaking lies in self-preparation. Prepare yourself! Prepare yourself!! Prepare yourself!!! The author of "Making the Most of Ourselves" remarks:—

"Lincoln, while still a boy, familiarized himself with the questions of slavery and disunion by reading every newspaper and book he could get hold of that bore on these themes, and by listening to the talk of men around him, and by joining in discussions of these subjects on all occasions."

What is your Life?

"For what is your life?" asks an inspired writer. Let me answer for you. Your life—the gift of God. Your body—the gift of God. Your mind—the gift of God. Your will—the gift of God. Your personality—the gift of God. If thus you regard yourself, then you breathe a heavenly atmosphere. You are a child of the infinite. Every movement is jewelled with a divine responsibility and every movement crowned with a divine prophecy.

"In John Morley's Life of Gladstone he quotes these impressive words of the man about whom he is writing: 'Be inspired with the belief that life is a great and noble calling, not a mean and grovelling thing that we are to shuffle through as we can, but an elevated and lofty destiny.' We are not merely to get through with life, come to the end of it somehow, but to make the best of it within our personal possibilities and conditions."

Commonplace People.

"There was not one new idea in the sermon; not one"—So remarked my friend. The preacher was a "perfect gentleman." His discourse was "sound." His manner was "unobjectionable." His social intercourse with the people was "all that could be desired"—but his sermon was dull, commonplace and ordinary. There was not one sentiment in it which would make you "sit up." If he had only uttered a sentence which would have awakened doubt and suspicion as to his orthodoxy it would have been refreshing. Senator Hoare once remarked: "I know men, who have been in

public life more than a generation . . . who never said a foolish thing, and rarely ever when they had a chance failed to do a wise one, who are utterly commonplace. You could not read the story of their public career without going to sleep . . . I have a huge respect for them. I can never myself attain to their excellence."

Newspaper Men.

A western town of one thousand population, dust covered, dirt crowned and storm swept, does not always seem the divinest place in God's universe. A post-office—a railroad station—two hotels three churches—four grain elevators—a livery barn and—a newspaper. Keep your eye on that young journalistic establishment. Our future writers, authors, journalists and editors and penmen are hidden, many of them, in these prairie towns. A recent writer says concerning Rudyard Kipling:—

"Take a man like Kipling; he found himself while working as a boy on a newspaper in India. Nobody could tell that he was going to develop remarkable powers as a poet and story teller. He began at the bottom in newspaper work. The Englishmen on the papers in the various cities of India were in the habit of writing verses for their prints; these were copied in the other papers and imitated and added to and replied to."

He heard strange tales of the life in India, and saw much of it, and began to write these up for the press, in addition to his regular work as a reporter and as an assistant. He was constantly at work, was industrious beyond almost any of his companions; and thus he found himself, discovered his extraordinary genius for making verses and tales. He found that he was not made for an ordinary newspaper hack but for the making of imaginative literature."

The Main Thing.

The man who is successful in the main issue of his life may be pardoned if he indulge in a side issue or two. To one's vocation may be added an avocation. Change of work affords rest in effort. Gladstone had three sorts of books on his library table—books for the morning, books for the afternoon—and books for the evening. He found a change of books restful to his mind. But in spite of his love of literature he was strong as a statesman and fine grained politician. Watch the main issue. Have you read Gibbon's account of the Emperor Gallienus: "He was a master of several curious but useless sciences, a ready orator, an elegant poet, a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and a most contemptible prince."

Push Things.

Push things! See how much you can crowd in to a day—without crowding yourself. Be cool, but make it warm for your neighbors. Attack the difficult propositions. Get a reputation for doing the necessary work which other people are prone to avoid. As Emerson has said, "Do the thing you are afraid to do." Push things. Execution is better than a bundle of poor excuses. Franklin said that the man who could make an excuse could hardly make anything else worthy of a man. So push things! Work, as a rule, will not worry you, if you work at your work—and worry it through.

It is an old story—Sheridan said to Grant, "If things are pushed, I think Lee will surrender;" Grant replied, "Push things."

Early to Rise.

There is an old proverb which begins with the words "Early to rise—". Doubtless you can complete the couplet. I am not interested in a literal interpretation of the lines but simply wish to project a general principle, namely, that life's successes depend very largely on—a good start. "Preparation" is the word. Be ready! Take time by the forelock. Allow yourself a good margin on the right side. "Sam" Jones once remarked: "I am reminded of that little boy who ran to the train. Just as he reached the platform the train ran off and left him. He stood there panting and watching the train, now in the distance. A man said to him: 'You didn't run fast enough.' 'No,' said the boy, 'I ran with all my might, but I didn't make it because I didn't start soon enough.' Many a man will rush up and find the gates of Heaven closed, and say, like the boy, 'I didn't start soon enough.'"