

it pleasing. It was an old hymn, and he had heard it, in his younger days, scores of times, yet, until this morning it had been a meaningless jingle of words to him.

Jack's mother had been a sincere follower of Christ. But she had slept under the willows for six long years, and Mr. Wilton, although a member of the church, gave little proof, in his daily walk, that he possessed the vital life which marks the true Christian.

It is little wonder that Jack had gradually wandered from his early habit of church attendance. To-day, for the first time in three years, found him inside the house of God.

Perhaps the very novelty of the position made him eager to take in all that was to be heard. At any rate, he found himself much annoyed by his sister's restlessness, and by her mute endeavors to divert his attention to certain persons whom she evidently desired him to notice.

'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

As Dr. Gordon repeated these words, as the truth about which his remarks were to cluster, Jack felt a strange thrill pass through his heart.

Not one word of the sermon did he miss. Dr. Gordon's style was simple. There was no art of the trained elocutionist about him. But a subtle power, a peculiar 'something,' which Jack had never felt, marked his discourse.

Even Nora lost her inattentive manner, after a time, and seemed to listen. Possibly the rapt attention with which Jack followed every word the preacher uttered, filled her with curiosity, and moved her with a desire to know the secret of his deep interest in the sermon.

Toward the close of the discourse the minister asked:

'Is the visible church to-day loyal to the risen Christ? Is his blessed resurrection life so filling her, that she is confusing and scattering the allied hosts of darkness, in her onward march to victory? Listen. Our country is said to stand at the front of Christian nations. She expends annually six hundred million dollars for tobacco. How much to send the gospel of our glorious Lord to those nations sitting under the shadow of eternal death? Less than six millions. One hundred dollars for tobacco for every dollar for foreign missions. Is this startling? Pause and think. How many within the sound of my voice contribute ten dollars for the cause of foreign missions, and spend one hundred for tobacco? Does this appal you? Possibly you have never before looked at this subject from my standpoint.

'There are more startling figures still before us than those just given: Mark them! Christian America spends nine hundred millions yearly for intoxicating liquors—How much for the cause of home missions? A larger amount than for foreign missions, and yet one dollar for every hundred dollars spent for liquor. And the total amount for both foreign and home is so meagre, that it is a disgrace to the church, and ought to make every Christian blush.

'Let each one before me who bears the name of the risen Christ carefully note the exact amount he or she spends for useless trifles, needless luxuries, injurious stimulants. Then, against this amount, place every dollar given to advance the kingdom of the One who not only said: "I am the resurrection and the life," but who also said: "Behold, I come quickly," and of whom it is written: "His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'"

Then followed such burning words that

Jack half expected to hear a divine voice saying: 'I never knew you. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.'

Nora's voice jarred upon him, as, when passing out of the church, she said in a whisper:

'Notice that girl just going down the steps. She is beautiful, yet she goes to China, in June, as a missionary. She surely must be crazy.'

'I am not surprised at her going, if Dr. Gordon preaches usually as he did to-day.' Jack quickly responded. 'I almost feel as though I myself wanted to go to China, or to Africa, or somewhere, to prove that I am not numbered among the chaff and the workers of iniquity!'

Nora looked into his face and was greatly surprised to note upon it traces of deep agitation.

'And did you enjoy the sermon?' she asked. 'I thought it was dreadful. I had to listen, although I tried not to. But it made me shiver. I wish they would get another minister. I don't like Dr. Gordon.

Jack gazed intently into her face, and found himself wondering if the frivolous and aimless life she was leading was not choking out from her heart all that was best and noblest in her nature.

After dinner Mr. Wilton took a cigar, and carelessly pushed the box containing them towards Jack. The young man selected one, and having lighted it, puffed away silently for a while. All at once he arose and flung the weed into the grate.

'What is the matter?' his father inquired, in surprise.

'Father, I want to ask you something. You won't think me impertinent, will you?' was Jack's counter question.

'Go ahead,' the elder man responded, with curiosity in both face and voice.

'How much do you contribute yearly to the cause of foreign missions?'

Mr. Wilton elevated his brows as he said: 'Exactly ten dollars. This is more than I felt I ought to give, but Dr. Gordon pressed me so hard that I had to make it that.

'And how much to home missions?' Jack asked.

'Fifteen. I like to see where my money goes, so I give more to the home field than to the other,' was the response.

'And now will you pardon me, father, if I ask what your tobacco bill is a year?'

'What are you driving at, Jack?' his father replied, much astonished by this series of questions.

'I will tell you later. Please let me know, if you can, what you spend for tobacco, yes, and for wine, for you know we keep a moderate supply of the best wines on hand for extra occasions. I know I open a bottle once in a while just for fun, when I don't know what else to do.'

Mr. Wilton pondered a while, and then he said:

'I have never kept an accurate account of my expenditures, along this line. One hundred dollars will cover it, I judge. Possibly a hundred and fifty, for I am obliged to treat so many friends to cigars. I never offer wine. That is against my principles.'

'And now, one more question. What do you give towards Dr. Gordon's salary?'

'Twenty-five dollars,' was the prompt reply. 'And now will you please tell me why you have asked these strange questions?'

'Something in Dr. Gordon's sermon this morning prompted them,' and Jack proceeded to give an outline of the discourse. He ended with:

'I wish you had heard it, father. It was powerful. Why weren't you there?'

The elder man yawned as he said: 'Dr.

Gordon tires me. I like more style and brilliancy than he possesses. He is not up to the times, and is not suited to a fashionable congregation like ours.'

'Well,' Jack responded, slowly, 'what you say may be true. But that man has some strange power about him, that I believe is from God. His sermon went clear through me, and I can't get away from it either.'

There was a silence of some minutes, and then he added, in a deliberate tone:

'I have smoked my last cigar. I declare to you, father, that in the light of Dr. Gordon's words, I seem to see myself among those brutal men around the cross, hounding Christ on to his death. It is horrible. The money I have hitherto spent for cigars shall now go to the church. I cannot stand this feeling that I have had a hand in crucifying the Lord my mother loved and worshipped.'

Mr. Wilton was silent for some moments. His son's last words seemed to have touched him. Presently he, too, threw his cigar into the fire and said:

'I tried, years ago, to break away from tobacco. I knew it was injuring my health and that it was a distress to your mother for me to use it. But I was powerless. I gave it up for one week, but I suffered torture. It has too firm a grip on me, now, to break away. Besides, a man is free to use what he chooses, and whatever harm could be done to my health is now an accomplished fact. I can't see that it hurts me these days.'

'But how about the money expended, which could go towards carrying on church work?' Jack asked.

'Oh, I don't see but that I do my part. I give more than Gray or Bennett, yes, and more than Dobbs, who is reported to be worth half a million.'

Jack made no reply, but soon left the room.

One soul, at least, was led to Christ through the fearlessly uttered truths on that memorable Easter morning.

Jack Wilton knew no rest of soul until he had wholly yielded his heart and life to God.

While Nora felt no stirring of conscience under what had stricken her brother to the soul, his altered life impressed her strongly.

'How much do you spend on your dress?' Jack asked her, a few weeks after his first communion season in the chapel.

'Papa gives me three hundred dollars a year,' she replied. 'Why do you ask?'

'And how much of this do you give to the church?' he continued.

'I? Why girls are not expected to give anything. Papa gives enough for us all,' was the astonished answer.

'Does he?' her brother said, in a gentle but significant tone.—'Some day, Nora, when you and I stand before the presence of our glorious Lord, many things which we now accept as truth will fall away from us, and leave us, I fear, shivering beneath his searching eyes. Let us try and get just where he wants us, before it is too late.'

Dr. Gordon found in him such a loyal and fervent friend and supporter, that his half-formed plan of resigning his place and seeking another charge was abandoned. A wave of revival, at first small, but increasing in power, swept over the chapel, and at the end of a year a new spirit, even the spirit of Christ, seemed to possess a large portion of the worshippers.

Many, we regret to say, are still worldly, but Jack Wilton is leading a band of earnest Christian young men into a closer walk with his Lord and Master, day by day. When the older members 'fall asleep,' this loyal-hearted band will come to the front. The pastor hopes, if he lives until that day, to see a new era of righteousness in beautiful Blackmore chapel.