

THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

VOLUME V, No. 18

ST. JOHN, N. B., SEPTEMBER 24, 1903.

WHOLE No. 122

The White Stone

By Rev. Francis Edward Marsten, D. D.

The Church of Pergamos had done well. It had also very grave faults. Our Lord, praising where praise is due and blaming where blame lies at the door. For the false thoughts and false ways of some among them the Master utters his condemnation. He follows with a call to repentance: fairly lured with the forecast of coming doom for the unrepentant. The Master never forgets, never fails to include his whole in praise for those whom he loves. Praise and blame fall with impartial exactness. Then he pours in the wine and oil of promise and consolation. "To him that overcometh," he says, "I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."

Thus the Master gives unto the faithful the promise of divine sustenance and enduring friendship. Let the second hold our contemplation.

The white stone is the symbol of a quietude the judge gave to the accused when he found no fault in him. He who had it could boast that he was free from the shadow and condemnation of the law. "See," he cries, "I have the white stone—the judge finds no fault in me." It was also the symbol of victory and honor. The conquering soldier returning from the battle of his country was given the white stone by his admiring countrymen. Within it were crystallized the victor's deed, the plaudits of the crowd, and the honors of years to come.

But there was still another use to which the white stone was put among the ancients. It was the symbol of friendship. It spoke to him who held it of the undying affection, devotion and loyalty of his absent friend. The single stone was cleft in twain. On the one half one friend wrote his name, on the other half the other inscribed his. Then they exchanged these pledges of their esteem and love. Years might pass. Wide spaces of land and ocean might separate the friends. They might lose sight of and forget even each other's appearance, but if by any chance they met these half stones would reveal identity and rennate the severed threads of friendship. And when they died, to the sons of these men descended the precious heirlooms. Should they meet even in distant lands and unexpected places, these half stones indicative of their father's friendship made them friends as well, and the pledge was renewed in the second generation.

So the Master says to his beloved, "I will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written." That stone to the Christian is the symbol of acquittal, of victory and eternal friendship. That friendship is ever present and unbroken. No matter how hard the days, or how dark and desolate the nights, the pledge remains. Jesus is a friend ever ready to prove his friendship.

He is ever present and ever watchful of the interests of his own. What strength it puts into life to have such a friend, to lean upon his strong arm, to know that he is near and ready and willing to assert his friendship. The very knowledge that he is present and able and willing to exert himself in behalf of his own is comforting and tranquilizing in the extremest need. His is a protecting friendship. A little child awoke in the night. Restless and nervous he called for a drink. The father ministered to his need. But sleep did not come again. So the child called to the father: "Papa, can I sing myself to sleep, as you sing me to sleep?" "I suppose so," said the father, "if you cannot sleep you might try." So the child sang. But now the problem arose as to how anybody else in the house could sleep, and still the child sang on. So the father was obliged to tell him to stop his song and try quietly to sleep. But the darkness and nervous fear oppressed the child, and he called again to his father: "Papa, are you there?" "Yes, my child, I am here." "Papa," again called the child from his crib, "Papa, is your face turned

toward mine?" The father answering said, "Yes, my child, my face is turned towards yours." Because his father's face was turned towards him in the night the child's fears were hushed and he sank into slumber.

Such is the friendship of Christ; his face is ever turned towards his disciple. There is no night so dark that the face of the Master is not shining towards the face of his beloved. What confidence and repose he gives the restless troubled spirit to have the assurance of his presence and to know that his face is ever near and ever sure. The Master's face is turned in friendship towards his own. "And I will give unto him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written."

It is the friendship of communion. The friend gives his life to his friend. His best thoughts, his wisdom, his counsel, his rarest affection is reserved unreservedly for his friend.

And it is the friendship of acknowledgment. That white stone, pledge of service, claims recognition at the court of heaven. When the adventurous King James gave his ring to the Highland lass, she little knew the power to sever her that lay within the grasp of the donor. But in her need and peril that signet ring revealed to her the source of her country's power and the august majesty of him whom she had served and whose promise was her ample protection. The Divine King, when he makes promise and gives pledge, does not hide his sceptre or his throne from the soul that trusts him. It is heaven's King that gives his pledge of friendship, and on whom the soul may rely to redeem to the utmost the fulness and glory of his promise. The white stone and he who bears it shall have full recognition at the King's court amid universal triumph.

New Brunswick Convention

The tenth annual session will be held with the Oak Bay church, Charlotte Co., beginning on Saturday, Sept. 26th, at 10 a. m. Delegates coming from St. John will take the N. B. Southern line, on Carleton side, at 7.50 a. m., arriving at Oak Bay, 1 p. m. Those coming from the west side of the province by C. P. R. will arrive in St. Stephen 11.30 a. m.; then taking the N. B. Southern for Oak Bay, five miles distant, will reach there at 2.30 p. m.

Delegates will please forward their names to pastor H. D. Worden, Oak Bay, for entertainment. At the close of Convention those who wish can attend the Young People's meetings to be held in St. John, Tuesday and Wednesday, 29th and 30th, on their return that way.

P. S.—Those attending the Convention at Oak Bay will observe the following conditions:

The Shore Line (N. B. Southern) will issue tickets at one fare for round trip; the Salisbury and Harvey Railway and steamer lines also give free return if ten or more have standard certificates over that line; those coming by C. P. R. should purchase usual return tickets, as their special conditions are of benefit to us. Persons coming should ask for standard certificates at starting point, stating they expect to attend the convention.

Arroostook Association, Me.

At the meeting held at Oakfield, Rev. J. A. Ford was chosen moderator, Rev. Wm. B. Chase clerk, Rev. A. W. Lorimer treasurer, and Dea. A. P. Daggett of Snyrna auditor. The annual sermon was by Rev. J. A. Ford of Houlton. The report on the State of religion by Rev. A. W. Lorimer of Presque Isle was encouraging and showed that the Baptist cause is growing in the county. Thirty-eight have been added by baptism, twenty-six by letter, five by experience, and three have been restored to membership in the churches. There is a net gain of twenty-four in the membership.

"Whiter Than Snow."

Once when I was paying parochial calls, and dropped in on a washer-woman who had just got out a line of clothes, I congratulated my friend because they looked so white. So, very much encouraged by her pastor's kind words, she asked him to have a cup of tea, and we sat down. Whilst we were taking the tea the sky clouded, and there was a snow storm; and as I came out the white snow lay everywhere, and I said to her:

"Your washing does not look quite so clean as it did."

"Ah," she said, "the washing is right enough; but what can stand against God Almighty's white?"

So you may think that you are clean, because you have never seen God. When you see God, your holiest day will seem imperfect; you will abhor yourself, and repent in dust and ashes, and you will need to say, "Forgive me my debts as I forgive my debtors."—Rev. F. D. Meyer

Withholding The Saff From Christ

Dr. T. L. Cuyler tells of calling on a rich merchant in New York one cold winter's evening. As he left his door, and the piercing gale swept in, he said, "What an awful night for the poor." The merchant went back, and bringing a roll of bank-bills, he said, "Please hand these for me to the poorest people you know." After a few days, Dr. Cuyler wrote to him, thanking him on behalf of the poor whom his bounty had relieved, and added, "How is it that a man so kind to his fellow-creatures has always been so unkind to his saviour as to refuse Him his heart." That sentence flashed conviction to his soul. He sent for the doctor to come and talk with him, and speedily gave himself to Christ. He has been a most useful Christian ever since. It was the first time the personal claims of Christ had been pressed upon him.

Rev. W. B. Hirson

This beloved pastor of the San Diego Church is in San Francisco. He has been invited twice and again to become pastor of the First Church. Twice he has reluctantly declined the call. As we write he is trying to settle the most serious problem of his life. Last Sunday the congregations that sought to hear him were phenomenally large. He preaches once more, at the mid-week evening services, and then returns to his San Diego home. In that city of 20,000 people he has baptized hundreds in the last three years, and has 500 members in the church. There is a strong conviction that if he comes to San Francisco, he would soon gather thousands into the church. And so the church is waiting hopefully that his final decision will be that he will undertake the hard work that is before a pastor here in this, the greatest city of the Pacific coast.

August 26, 1903.

Mrs. D. L. M. Curry bequeathed \$76,000 for a statue of Dr. Curry. She leaves \$5,000 for the publication of a memoir of his life and \$1,000 for the Baptist Home for Aged Women in Richmond.

Rev. Ralph E. Trotter has accepted the pastorate of the church in Aylmer, Ont., to succeed Rev. J. Vining, who becomes the representative of Northwest Missions in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces.

It is not with a rush and spring that we are to reach Christ's character and attain to perfect sainthood; but step by step, foot by foot, hand over hand, and we slowly and often painfully to mount the ladder that rests on earth and rises to heaven.

—Dr. Guthrie.