

The Home Mission Journal.

A record of Missionary, Sunday School and Temperance work, and a reporter of church and ministerial activities, and general religious literature. Published semi-monthly. All communications, except money remittances, are to be addressed to

THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL,
14 Canterbury Street, St. John, N. B.
All money letters should be addressed to
REV. J. H. HUGHES,
Carleton, St. John.

Terms, - - - 50 Cents a Year

Railroading With Christ.

BY REV. CHARLES A. S. DWIGHT.

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CHAPTER VI.

ENDING TEMPTATION.

NOT long after Joe Benton's sudden discharge from the employ of the railroad company, it happened that he was passing down a by-street of the city on an errand, when, chancing to look ahead of him a little way, he noticed a man who, as he hurried along, was nervously trying to replace in his pocket two or three articles he had been holding in his hand. While Joe's eyes were still upon the man, he observed a small black object fall from his hand to the sidewalk. Entirely unconscious of his loss, the man hurried on, and quickly disappeared around a corner.

Upon reaching the spot, Joe discovered that the object that had been dropped was a wallet. Picking it up, Joe instinctively hurried after the owner. But all his efforts to find the man were unavailing, as he had been quickly lost to sight in the gathering dusk. No one around apparently had noticed the loss of the pocketbook, or had paid any attention either to the passer-by or to Joe.

Shortly afterward, Joe Benton returned home; but there followed him within its usually bright precincts the darkening form of a severe temptation. Money were exceedingly scarce. He himself was sadly in want of shoes, to say nothing of his lack of a warm overcoat, and his long-felt desire to buy a few much-coveted books. And then the dear mother! How quickly and sweetly the thought of her came to his mind! It would cancel that grocery bill of which Mr. Hardist so constantly reminded her, and would buy her the new dress which she so badly needed. A part of the sum also Joe might give as a contribution to the mission work of the church he attended. Probably the man who lost the money would never miss it. Then, too, Joe had really made an effort to find him; why should he further concern himself to hunt up the owner?

The struggle was a severe one. Somehow Joe did not feel sharing this particular trouble with his mother, who could not notice that her son, usually so bright, seemed that evening quite uneasy and disturbed in mind.

Supper over, Joe conducted prayers in a somewhat nervous fashion, and then ran up stairs to his own room, thinking as he went of a verse that had met his eye during the Scripture reading. Falling on his knees, he listed up a fervent prayer for grace. As he rose from his knees, his mind was made up. He might find the owner of the pocket-book, he knew, if he made an earnest effort to do so, and he was resolved honestly to try.

So before going to bed that night, Joe went to several newspaper offices and inserted advertisements, which duly appeared the next morning. Thus it happened that, during that very forenoon, a loudly dressed man of florid visage was ushered by Mrs. Benton into the little parlor of her humble home, who proceeded to give Joe such a detailed description of a pocketbook he claimed to have lost as to leave no doubt he was really the owner of the wallet. Joe accordingly delivered it to the flashily dressed stranger, wistfully eyeing it as the latter stuffed it into his pocket, and wondering if he himself would ever have such an amount of money at any one time.

Probably the stranger noticed this wistful look of Joe's; for, sitting down, he tried to talk with him pleasantly for awhile. Some of his questions, however, were rather shrewd, decidedly pointed. But their purpose was revealed, when the visitor, apparently well satisfied, surprised Joe by offering him a clerkship.

Joe's pulses quickened with joyous hope. Here, he thought, had been provided a speedy reward for his conscientious and honorable dealing.

Mr. Jenkins (for that was the visitor's name) then went on to explain in general terms the duties of the position, and presently mentioned the salary attached to it, which was nearly three times as much as Joe Benton had ever received when in the employ of the railroad. His face brightened instantly, for now, at last, things would go easily for his good mother and himself. How bright at that instant seemed Joe Benton's hopes!

But they were quickly and rudely dashed to the ground, as Mr. Jenkins proceeded, quite casually and incidentally, to remark that he was a wholesale liquor dealer; and then, noticing how Joe's face fell, and guessing the cause, added, testily: "Why, what difference does that make?"

"All the difference in the world to me, sir?" Joe managed to reply. His voice trembled as he spoke, but that was only from disappointment, and not from indecision, since on these questions Joe Benton, with his father's earlier career before his eyes, had strong and clear convictions. "I do not believe in your business, and I would rather die poor than to make myself rich in your way!"

"You're a fool, young man!" cried Mr. Jenkins, angrily jumping up.

"That may be, sir, in regard to some things, but not with respect to this matter!"

"Do you realize what a good business chance you are throwing away?" continued Mr. Jenkins, recovering his temper partially, and really pleased with Joe's manly bearing. "There are few young men in this city to whom I would so quickly and unreservedly make such an offer. But I was struck with your manly ways, and grateful for your kindness and honesty in returning to me a wallet which contains some things far more valuable to me than any dollar bills. Are you not inclined to change your mind on second thoughts?"

"I cannot, sir, however great the temptation to accept your offer—since this is with me a matter not of business and profit, but of principle and duty!"

"Well, here, then, take ten dollars for your trouble!" rejoined the liquor-dealer, roughly, ashamed to leave without evidencing his gratitude in some way.

But Joe Benton drew himself up to his full height as he replied, with a dignity which surprised his visitor yet more: "No, sir! You

have called me a fool, and derided my Christian principles, whereas my language to you, you will admit, was courteous, even if you did not fancy its meaning, and I will not take a cent of your money! After all that has passed, I would rather have you under obligation to me than to be under obligation to you—though I would do you any favor I could, if the chance offered again."

"As you like!" growled Mr. Jenkins, rushing from the room and down the front steps. As he stepped into his stylish carriage his face was redder than usual, for he felt rebuked by the manliness of the young man who had shown such courageous frankness.

Joe wearily closed the front door, and turned back into the parlor, where his mother met him, her face wet with fresh tears. She held out toward Joe a letter from one of their creditors in which the writer stated with brutal directness that he would take immediate legal steps to collect the amount due him, if he did not receive it within two weeks.

Joe could say nothing then—he felt too badly, but, drawing his mother to the sofa, they knelt down there in the parlor, where so often his father had led in prayer, and which was so associated with his presence and personality, and fervently petitioned the kind heavenly Father that he would provide some way by which they might meet their obligations without sacrificing the little home they so loved.

And when they rose from their knees, Joe Benton told his mother freely the full story of his struggle with temptation in the matter of the wallet, of his brief exultation in view of Mr. Jenkins' offer, and of the speedy destruction of his hopes when he learned the character of the employment offered him.

"You did just right, my dear boy!" said his mother. "I am proud of you!"

And the look that Mary Benton then gave her son was worth more to him than could possibly have been all the blood-coined shekels in the safe of Mr. Jenkins, his would-be employer.

(To be Continued.)

We begin the publication of a sermon by Rev. D. W. Hulburt of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, as it appeared in "The Wisconsin Baptist."

His explanation of the rock on which Christ says he will build his church is exactly what we have given on the text when preaching from it. Christ did not refer to himself as the foundation, but as the builder of the church on the foundation of revealed truth, and the essence of revealed truth consisted in the fact that he was the Son of God. God the Father had revealed this fact to Peter, and now that Peter confesses it Christ tells him he is blessed and that on this revelation of the Father to men, that he, Christ, is the Son of God, he will build his church. It is a discovery made to the human soul, not by the wisdom of man, nor by the philosophy of the schools, but by the direct revelation of God. The church is a divine institution, built on a divine foundation. But this sermon has much valuable and stimulative thoughts in it, and it will pay any one who loves gospel truth to read it over more than once. It will be continued through four issues of this paper.

THE MANAGER.

The Church and Its Goal.

BY D. W. HULBURT, WAUWATOSA, WIS.

PART I.

"Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16: 18.

This is the first mention of the church in the