

## A MEDITATION.

By George Matheson, D.D., L.L.D.

"The Lord rested the seventh day."  
—Exodus 20: 11.

"Jesus answered, my Father worketh hitherto."—John 5: 17.

Does the Lord mean to contradict the statement of the Book of Exodus? Exodus says, "God rested the seventh day"; Christ says, "Up to this present day my Father has never ceased from labor." Does Jesus mean to deny this primitive record? No. What he meant is that rest is not the opposite of work, but the opposite of friction. And I think our experience must confirm this. Is it not true even of physical rest? It is not motion that tries us; it is the interference with motion. It is not work that makes us weary; it is the impeding of work. If there were no friction in the air, or in surrounding objects, you and I would find in the longest and swiftest locomotion a sense of absolute rest. Why does a little bird grow weary on the wing? Because of motion? No. Because of motion interrupted. It is because all things are calling to the bird, "Lie down." It is because the pressure of the atmosphere is every moment stopping its progress, and saying, "You shall not pass here." If the bird had less friction it would do more work, and at the same time find more rest. When God rested he rested not from work, but from the friction that impeded work. Are you startled that the working of God should have been impeded by friction? I am quite sure it was till the birth of a human soul. Do you think that the selfish struggle for survival among the beasts of the field was favorable to the movement of his love? No. It restrained the beauties of his wings. It was not the environment for your Father. It was a foreign atmosphere in his own world. It broke the nuptial ring wherewith he sought to surround all things.

Lord, it is thy rest in man that has accelerated thy work. The movement of thy spirit is faster than of yore. There are fewer obstacles on the line—love's line. The friction has been lifted from thy path. Thy rest is not rest from thy flight, but rest in the flight. The Sabbath broke not thy wing, but the impediments to thy wing. The day of thy rest has been a day of new travel. Thy message has flashed quicker since the birth of man. The swiftest of all telegraphs has been raised by the rest which my heart has given to thine—the telegraph of prayer. Between these points of peace—my heart and thy heart—there is established a rapid communion. It is quicker than the wing of an eagle, quicker than the sweep of the wind, quicker than the words of a man, quicker than the thought of a soul, quicker than the feelings of a heart, quicker than the aspirations of a spirit. I have no time-measure which can express the rapidity of thy response to prayer. And it is a rapidness borne of rest, a swiftness wrought by sympathy, a flight made fleetest because friction dies. Thy Sabbath morning is thy working day.

## LONG-DISTANCE HEROISM.

It calls for more real heroism to be true to Christ and His standards in our ordinary, everyday life, than to stand the test of physical martyrdom for Christ in a foreign field. To be confronted with the opportunity of dying for our faith, and that is what seems to us the commonplace, uninteresting circumstances of a humdrum home or business life, year after year with no great change in prospect, does not seem like a challenge to heroism at all. For this very reason it is the more of a challenge. Endurance is more heroic than a spirit; it takes endurance to live the Christ-life for thirty, forty, sixty years of uneventful service. Such a life honors Christ and he honors such a life, as the most convincing evidence of the power of Christ that the world can know.

## A NOTABLE HARVEST IN FRENCH CANADA.\*

(By Rev. J. Prevost.)

It would require more than a volume to tell the forbearance, the fortitude and the zeal of many of the French Canadian converts. The missionaries had their sufferings, but the families who accepted the blessed message had, also, to pass through the furnace and to drink the bitter cup their Master drank. Most of them followed Christ their Guide with courage and faithfulness. Let us take, as an illustration, the Piche family.

The great grandfather of this family, by the name of Basile, was born in 1778 at Cap Sante. After his marriage he came to settle at St. Scholastique. He was the father of seventeen children.

About the year of 1849, M. Louis Marie, a French colporteur, stopped at his house, offering the gospel. He met, there, with the usual reception given to missionaries at this early period. Madame Piche took the broom and struck the evangelist with violence.

A few months later, Mons. D. Amaran, passing through St. Scholastique, visited the honest but fanatical Basile. He spoke to him with calmness and affection. The word of God went through his heart as a sword. He accepted the Bible as the supreme authority, and, when Mons. Marie returned to the village, Madame Piche ran to him, saying, "Come to our house! Oh, come now—I will not abuse or strike you. We have the gospel!" The courageous woman burst out crying, and asked the colporteur to pardon and forgive.

After his conversion, Basile became a new man. He presented himself to the front, and gave joyfully a faithful testimony for Christ. Few men have been more devoted to duty and had more calls for toil and sacrifice. We may call him a vigilant watchman, guarding every point against the assaults of error. He lived a true Christian life. Basile was gifted with a penetrative intelligence, a vigorous conscience, with all the manners of a patriarch. At the age of seventy-five he was energetic enough to bend his old heart in submission to God. He died in 1872. The Rev. J. A. Vernon, who assisted him in his last struggle, wrote as follows:

"The memory of the just is blessed. Here is a French Canadian receiving the gospel at the age of seventy-five, and, for the twenty-two years following his conversion, trying, with all his heart and conscience, to put in practice the teaching of his Master." It is well to say that Basile lived long enough to see one hundred and ninety-one of his descendants. Forty-five of them, all Protestants, were present at his funeral.

It is impossible, in this short paper, to write the history of such a large family.

One son, by the name of Basile also, died in 1901, aged eighty-nine. He was a man of genial ability, an honest citizen, a noble character. Rev. Mons. Menard spoke of him as "a faithful husband, an affectionate father, a frank and loyal friend, goodness and joy imprinted on his face." To meet him was a great pleasure. His cordial handshake was full of Christian life. He knew how to make others happy. He raised his nine children in the evangelical faith.

Pierre, another child of the old block, died in 1892, at the age of seventy-five. He was employed as a colporteur for several years. Scrupulous and exact in business, he was also unflinching in the discharge of religious duty. For many years he acted as an elder of the evangelical church on Craig street, Montreal. Des Joliet, one of the members of the church, said to me one Sunday: "I don't know why, but every time I look at Pierre Piche, with his long and beautiful beard, his venerable appearance, it seems to me I see

Abraham." The truth is that Pierre, by his faith, his humility and his kindness, was the Abraham of the Craig street church. Eminently domestic in his habits, his home was the centre of all his joys and affection. He was loved by all honest people, as he was feared by evildoers. His influence in Montreal was deep and good. God blessed him with a large family—eight daughters and two sons. Though poor, he toiled hard to give his children a good education. One of the daughters Doritsee, was employed as a Bible woman in Montreal. Henriette has been a successful teacher for many years in the Pointe Aux Trembles School. Sara, another daughter, has done a good work as school teacher and missionary. Ephise married Mons. Jousse, a son of a minister.

Today the family is well represented in Montreal by Dr. Marcelin Piche, and in Canada and the United States by hundreds of faithful citizens. The fruit of missionary work is sweet only when ripe.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—Sowing Seed, Eccl. 11 : 1-6.  
Tues.—The Lord's House, Isa. 2 : 1-9.  
Wed.—Justification by Faith, Gal. 2 : 16-21.  
Thurs.—Arise and shine, Isa. 60 : 1-5.  
Fri.—A praying statesman, Dan. 6 : 4-10.  
Sat.—Reckless persecution, Acts 7 : 54-60.

## SYMPATHY IN THE PEW.

So much is said as to what the pulpit owes to the pew, that we are apt to overlook the responsibility in the other direction, and to ignore the fact that a lack of sympathy and interest on the part of the hearers is more than likely to have a reflex influence upon the preacher. Dr. Robertson Nicoll, in his recent biography of the late Rev. Dr. Watson (Ian MacLaren), has illustrated this very forcibly. He says that, in the early days of his ministry, Dr. Watson was not a remarkable preacher, but he persisted in refraining from the use of manuscript in the pulpit, and had merely a sheet of notes.

Sometimes his memory would fail. "Friends," he would say, "that is not very clear. It was clear in my study on Saturday, but now I will begin again." Those grand country people never showed impatience, and a quaint Highland elder came to him after service, and said, "When you are not remembering your sermon just give out a psalm, and we will be singing that while you are taking rest, for we are all loving you, and praying for you."

There is a beautiful touch of sympathetic nature in those homely phrases.

## "CONCESSION OF CONVICTION."

An esteemed correspondent remarking upon a recent note on the extent to which public teachers have conceded Biblical positions at the demand of unbelief, writes:—

Having lived on both sides of the Bible—the unbelieving one and the believing—I can testify strongly to the utter futility of attempting to gain adherents to a church by making concessions to sceptics in respect of the doctrines and statements of Scripture. The only way to win men to Christ, is by proclaiming persistently the Divine accuracy, authority and inspiration of the Word of God. But, in order to do this, one must himself have received the Word of God, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God."

This is our experience; and we shall not cease to contend that the Bible may be supported in a manner that satisfies the mind as well as the heart. The old Book stands; and those who make themselves acquainted with its contents before giving away their judgments to the newest critical theories will assuredly find themselves able to stand by the Book.

\*Y. P. S. Topic—French Evangelization—for August 29, 1909. Isa. 61:1-13.