

Pastor and People.

THE COMING OF HIS FEET.

In the crimson of the morning, in the whiteness
of the noon,
In the amber of the day's retreat,
In the midnight, robed in darkness, or the gleam-
ing of the moon,
I listen for the coming of His feet.

I heard His weary footsteps on the sands of
Galilee,
On the temple's marble pavement, on the
street,
Worn with weight of sorrow, faltering up the
slopes of Calvary,
The sorrow of the coming of His feet.

Down the minster-aisles of splendor, from be-
twixt the cherubim,
Through the wondering throng, with motion
strong and fleet,
Sounds His victor tread, approaching with a
music far and dim—
The music of the coming of His feet.

Sandled with sheen of silver, girded not with
woven gold,
Weighted not with shimmering gems and odors
sweet,
But white-winged and shod with glory in the
Tabor-light of old—
The glory of the coming of His feet.

He is coming, O my spirit! with His everlasting
peace,
With His blessedness immortal and complete.
He is coming, O my spirit! and His coming
brings release,
I listen for the coming of His feet.

—Julia Ward Howe.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

SUFFER THE CHILDREN

BY REV JOHN BURTON B.D.

The simple record of Mark x. 15, 16, with the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke, may be called Childhood's Magna Charter in the kingdom of heaven. It is the extension of the gospels invitation "Come," not merely to the wise, the thinking, the mature, but also to babes who must needs be carried into the presence of Him who became a child.

It may be well for a moment to view this incident from the more sombre background of law and custom as then prevailing. No doubt exaggerated statements as to the depravity of the heathen or pagan world are frequent among certain classes of Christian apologists, who are apt to have thereby their eyes taken off from evils to be found nearer home and call for the exercise of Christian self-denial; this, however, should not lead us to the folly of forgetting the mighty influence for good the gospel has wrought, is working now among the nations of the earth. To us, childhood has charms of which no traces can be found in classic art or unchristian philosophy. In our illustrated magazines, prize pictures, art galleries, incidents of child-life form no insignificant part. Who does not dwell with delight on the chubby face with its varied expressions of trust, indignation, hope, anticipation? Ancient art presents no such pictures. In law-abiding Rome the exposure of children was not uncommon; if the child was deformed exposure could quote law in justification; and should any one take pity upon an exposed child, that child was by right a slave, absolutely at the finder's disposal. Even in the history of Israel the practice was not unknown of causing the children to pass through fire, a sacrifice to some deity. The scene presented in the narrative we are looking at has familiarized us with the children as gathered in the Redeemer's arms; let us not forget that largely to that Redeemer we are indebted for the place childhood holds in the social and religious life of the day. Nor are children to be left in ignorance of the debt they owe of grateful love to Him who above all others is the children's friend. It was a revelation indeed: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." There are few spots on earth's pilgrim way over which the love of Jesus sheds a brighter or more sympathetic glow than that of merry childhood. May none of our children stray therefrom.

At the time the children were brought to Jesus, He was on His way out from Perea

to Jerusalem, consciously to meet with His rejection, betrayal and death. He was to enter the Holy City in triumph as a king, to leave it for Calvary and its cross, a victim. He had come to His own, they received Him not; with such bitterness did they destroy Him that they challenged His blood upon both themselves and their children. He had been teaching His disciples this, to them most disappointing truth, that the cross must come before the crown, and that the crown in His kingdom was not of this world. Whether they who brought the children had heard any of that teaching so contrary to general expectation cannot be told; but they had heard words such as never before man spake of the heavenly Father's love and forgiveness; messages of hope to the despairing outcast; and words that were as showers upon the thirsty land; they had seen the sympathetic touch that cleansed the leper; listened to the compassionate command which gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and caused the tongue of the dumb to sing. Would not that voice bless their children, those loving hands enfold their babies?

"There is a day in spring
When under all the earth the secret germs
Begin to stir and glow before they bud!"

So in these young lives were the budding promise of the life that with the coming generation was hastening on. What wonders might be bestowed, blessing secured, by the expressed sympathy of the prophet of Nazareth.

But serious business threatened, perplexities were worrying; who wants to be troubled with children at such seasons? The disciples rebuked those that brought them. What use in carrying babes to that Presence over which the shadows were fast thickening? They could not comprehend the great mystery of sacrifice; and even should the fresh smile of unburdened infancy meet the pensive look of the all-conscious man of sorrows as His face was steadily set to the sacrifice, those little ones could receive no spiritual influence. They were too young—Ab, stay! A gentle mother, does she not mould the forming character even as the babe rests on her breast? A harsh nurse, how early will she stir up the roots of bitterness. Has the grace of God no right to set its seal upon the infant brow, to touch the life within? Can any man forbid the water that these should not be baptized which have received the right of entry into the kingdom of heaven as well as we? Too young to be brought to Jesus! The indignation with children into His presence marks His sentiment which He viewed this forbidding of the ments, and the universality of His saving mission. Children die; yet He saves them. He shepherds the flock, and among them are the lambs whom, as the prophet declared, He carries in His arms and folds into His bosom. Who dare stand between Christ and His own? Heaven cannot want the children; even home is desolate without them.

One would dearly like to know something of the after lives of these children. Did that blessing shield them from the ills of life? or lead them under the bitter cross to the crown? Legend identifies one of the early martyr-bishops as one of those taken in the Saviour's arms. (Ignatius, called also Theophorus.) We cannot tell, but still the rhyme of childhood lingers:

"I wish that His hands had been placed on my
head,
That His arms had been thrown around me;
And that I might have seen His kind look when
He said,
Let the little ones come unto Me."

Surely in the future of some one of those little ones would the memory linger of that loving look and tender embrace; impressing more deeply the events that followed declaring that great fact, "I gave my life for thee." "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Too well we know how readily the seeds of evil find congenial soil in a child's life. How soon the ear is open to flattery, the appetites to lust. Many a parent in discouragement

cries, How hard to know what to do with children. But then the kingdom of heaven did not come down to this sin-laden earth to receive the sinless, the stainless the perfectly upright. Christ came to seek and to save the sinner, the lost; and children too must be embraced therein. Was not Christ a child? He redeems them. But the instinct of the child which causes it to cling to its mother as its eyes open upon a world from which it shrinks, is the spirit with which Christ would have us cling to Him from the evil which curses and kills.

As helpless as a child who clings
Fast to his father's arms,
And casts his weakness on the strength
That keeps him safe from harm.

So I, my Father, cling to Thee,
And thus I every hour,
Would link my earthly feebleness
To Thine almighty power.

Gravenhurst, Ont.

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"FAITHFULNESS IN SERVICE."

BY MARGARET A. KETCHEN

"With God there is no great or small,
Save as we yield him part or all;
All that we are His claim demands
Spirit and brain and heart and hands;
Then be our lot however poor,
Each dawn is as a welcome door,
Each humblest act the wondrous key
Of infinite opportunity."

The importance of being faithful in our work cannot be too highly estimated by us, and until we are following the Master, then, and not till then, will we fully realize the true import of rendering to Him who died for us, a loving, willing, joyous, and faithful service. We must study the Divine life, which dates from the Cross as its dawn, and climbs in glorious gradations towards the meridian of a day that can never be shadowed by night, for in it we will find all that is necessary to call forth faithful service in this life below.

The word faithful as a standard of moral requirement, implies in general the doing of all our work as well as we can. Our work, of course, includes our business, our trade, our household duties, all our daily task, as well as our praying, our Bible reading, and our obeying the moral laws. We must not make the mistake that there is no service in the way we do the common work of our trade, or household, or our work on the farm or in the mill or store. The faithfulness Christ requires and commands takes in all these things. Ofttimes, too, it would be easier to be faithful in some great trial, requiring great courage, than in the little duties of an ordinary day; but "faithful servant" will be the commendation on the judgment-day of those who have lived well on earth. Not great deeds will be commended, but faithfulness. The smallest ministries will rank with the most conspicuous, if they are all that the weak hands can do, for prominence is not the measure of the grandeur or importance of the work. Conspicuous service is by no means usual; we must be content to live common-place lives, for there are multitudes of lowly lives lived on earth which have no name among men, whose work no pen records, but which are known and dear to God, and their influence will reach to the farthest shores. How silently fall the sunbeams, and yet what cheer, what beauty, what life they diffuse! How silently the angels work! Who has ever heard the flutter of their wings, the whisper of their tongues, or the tread of their footsteps? Christ Himself shunned all publicity and notoriety, but His influence is pulsing yet in millions of hearts and in abodes of redeemed ones; so, too, may we live lowly lives full of blessing, shedding unconscious influence on every life that comes in contact with our own. The word of cheer from the lips of an earnest Endeavorer to some disconsolate or lone one may be as great a work for the Master as a sermon an hour long, and one which He will reward, though no one on earth may know how it cheered the weary heart of His disciples.

Then the faithfulness required of us must reach to everything we do. "Be thou faith-

ful," is the word that rings from heaven in every ear, God's requirement for every piece of work that any one may do. No work can be of so little importance that it matters not whether it be done faithfully or not! Unfaithfulness in the smallest things is unfaithfulness, and God is grieved, and possibly sometime disaster may come as the consequence of the neglect. On the other hand faithfulness is pleasing to God, though it be only in the smallest things, for is it not far-reaching in its influence? The universe is not quite complete without each one's little work well done, and faithfulness as a measure of requirement is something that cannot be reached without an effort. It is not a low standard to make life easy. It is indeed a lofty measurement. "Thou has been faithful" is the highest possible commendation.

Nor must we confine our faithfulness to this or that duty. Our part may be but to wait, no active work at all. Some weary one shut up in a sick chamber may be illustrating more beautifully true faithfulness than one whose hands are completely filled with Christian work in this bustling world; and if we are faithfully following Jesus we have passed out of the world which rejected our Lord and belong to that in which He is Supreme.

But we should not be oblivious to the needs of the world and those around us. Its sorrows and sins lie near our heart. Its call for help like the piteous cry of sailors from a wreck is ever in our ears; its needs should call forth our most strenuous efforts. But we do not belong to it; we enter it to be ever its salt and light, and our true standing should be without it where Jesus is and we must always be attending to our Master's work. Charles the Twelfth of Sweden when besieged in Salsund was one day dictating a letter to his secretary when a bombshell from the enemy's camp came crashing through the roof into an adjoining room. The report was so great, that the frightened secretary dropped his pen. "What's the matter?" said the king with a perfectly composed countenance; "why do you not go on writing?" "Most gracious sire," said he, "the bombshell!" "Well," said the king, "what has the bombshell to do with the letter! Go on writing." And in like manner should we turn from the gaities and frivolities of the world to the more important work for Christ.

There is no work without its discouragements; we oftentimes feel that our labor is resulting in no fruit and that some one else would accomplish more. But the one question should be, Am I faithful? am I seeking strength and guidance from Jesus in every word and act? If so, then work on, labor on, pray on, confident that ye shall reap if ye faint not, and the more earnest the prayer, the more entire the dependence on Almighty Power, the brighter will be the work to us, and the more clearly will God flash the light of His wisdom upon our path, and the more quickly will the harvest grain appear.

In the museum at Rotterdam is a rough painting, it is a mere daub, and the keenest observer cannot discover any mark on it of genius or skill. But by its side hangs a masterpiece whose value is almost beyond estimate. The artist of the two is the same, the famous Rembrandt, but years of patient study and toil intervened between the two paintings. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we can tell on, we can make daubs, and the touch of Jesus' hand will transform them into masterpieces, and remember, poor trembling worker, He will not lose sight of your feeblest efforts. "Be thou faithful."

"You must live each day at your very best;
The work of the world is done by few;
God asks that a part be done by you."

"Say oft of the years as they pass from sight,
This is life with its golden store;
I shall have it once, but it comes no more."

"Have a purpose, and do it with your utmost
might;
You will finish your task on the other side,
When you wake in His likeness satisfied."

Judge Tourgee, in one of his books, tells of a young soldier, scarce a month from his