

Our Young People

LOWLINESS.

Topic for Feb. 25.—"The Strength of Humility."—Luke 18: 9-14.

The Earth Virtue

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

You will not understand what is said about humility until you remember the origin of the word. Look it up in your dictionaries,—those treasures of one-word parables,—and you will find its source in the old Latin "humus," the ground. A man is humble, as I think, not when he gets down to the ground, but when he is the ground. Let me tell you a few ways in which humility is like the earth; only a few out of the many ways that you may discover for ourselves and name in the meeting.

In the first place, humility is like the ground in being strong. It is the ground that holds us all up. Pride is often compared, and justly, to the waves of the sea. We speak of "blown pride," likening it to a bubble. There is no "getting solid" with a conceited man. No dealings with him are on a firm footing, because he is all for number one. But the real business of this world is done by men who think of themselves no more highly than they ought to think. They put their shoulders to the wheel while others ride in the carriage. They push and tug and sweat under great enterprises, careless whether the world hears of them or not, so the thing gets done. Such men are the ground, and hold us all up.

In the second place, humility is willing, like the ground. You may step on it, if you please. You may turn it over with a spade, tear it with a harrow, bake it with the sun or chill it with the frost, stick into it cornseed or potatoes or rose roots; it keeps on placidly doing its best. There is not in the universe a Jack-at-all-trades like the soil. In the same fashion the truly humble man refuses no task through vain-glory or fretfulness, but trustfully opens his life to whatever God sends.

Then humility works unseen, like the ground. It does not flourish its roots in the air, as some plants do. Its gracious currents flow in the dark. Its processes are silent. The kingdom of God comes not with observation.

Finally, humility is unselfish, like the ground. It does not ask to bear the blossoms, though it furnishes everything from which the beautiful pink and white marvels were built up; nor to carry the fruit, though all the juices of the autumn ran first through its veins. The humble man is entirely willing that others should get credit for his work, and is rejoiced when it bears fruitage in other lives.

To humble one's self, according to the parable we study to-day, is not to have a low opinion of one's self; it is to be so busy in beautiful service for others as to have no time for thought of one's self. Humility is not "running one's self down," but holding others up.

This is the fundamental virtue. Not the wisest teacher can instruct a scholar until he becomes teachable. You cannot swim until you forget yourself, "let go of yourself," and trust the water. You can make no progress in God's world until you let go of yourself and yield yourself to God.

But if humility is the lowest, the fundamental, virtue, it is the highest also; it is the virtue that lays hold on the loftiest experiences, the most sublime powers. Here, too, it is the earth virtue, for the same ground that descends into the valleys rises into the hills. The surface of the plain climbs and climbs until some glad day it has reached the Mount of Transfiguration. "He that humbleth himself shall be—shall be—exalted."

Hints for Talks and Testimonies.

What is the source of true humility?

Why is the fact that one has not fallen into great sin an added reason for humility?

Why is humility sometimes thought to be a sign of weakness?

Why is humility a necessary step toward knowledge and growth?

How does humility imply an understanding of God's law?

Why is the humble person's knowledge of himself more likely to be true?

How does humility fit one to judge of others?

Why is a humble person less liable to yield to temptation?

Why is a humble person likely to have more of Christ's strength?

Why is a humble person better able to render service to others?

For Daily Reading

Mon., Feb. 19.	—Real humility.	John 1: 19-27; 1 Cor. 15: 8-10
Tues., Feb. 20.	—The meekness of Christ.	Phil. 2: 5-11
Wed., Feb. 21.	Is meekness a weakness?	Num. 12: 1-10
Thurs., Feb. 22.	—The value of meekness.	Ps. 25: 9; Jas. 4: 6
Fri., Feb. 23.	—Jesus teaching humility.	Luke 14: 7-11
Sat., Feb. 24.	—Promises from the humble.	1 Pet. 5: 5, 6
Sun., Feb. 25.	—Topic The Strength of Humility.	Luke 18: 9-14

Robert Ingersol and Henry Ward Beecher were great friends. Mutual admiration of each for the other's genius was the common ground. Mr. Beecher had in his study for reference a beautiful glass globe. As he stood admiring it the great infidel inquired,

"Who made that?"

"Oh," responded the great preacher. "That just came by chance!"

Living a Day at a Time.

The coming year will have three hundred and sixty-five days in its calendar, but really will have only one working day, and that is called "To-day." That is all you will be accountable for; none but a fool lives in to-morrow. Serve your master by the day. Each four and twenty hours brings its own duties to be done, its own temptations to be conquered, its own loads to be carried, and its own progress to be made heavenward. There never was a Christian yet strong enough to carry to-day's duties with to-morrow's worries piled on top of them. Take short views' and never try to climb walls until you get to them, or to cross a bridge till you reach it. Begin every day with Jesus Christ' and then, keeping step with him, march on to duty over the roughest road that lies before you, and in the teeth of the hardest wind you may encounter. "My times are in thy hands," and they could not be in better hands. Our times are in our all-wise and all-loving Father's hands, both for control and concealment. He takes care of us and yet we cannot feel just what to-morrow or the next year will bring forth. For one, I am glad of it. So let us sing

"Keep thou my feet: I do not ask to see

The distant scene: one step enough for me."

—Theodore L. Cuyler,

A Word of Cheer.

There are ministers who seldom receive a word of praise. Their big, eloquent brothers go through life with hosannas ringing perpetually in their ears, while they drudge on unnoticed, with no one to stir their pulses by shouting, "Well done." It is a mistake to suppose that God's commendation alone is sufficient. Moses was strong, but he was not strong enough to hold up his hands to the end of the day. "Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun," Happy the minister who is steadied and sustained by Christians who appreciate the work that is being done and who hearten their leader by a frequent word of gratitude and appreciation. A minister was one day surprised at the close of his sermon to have a stranger greet him thus: "I thank you for that sermon; it did me good." He had preached faithfully for a year, and no member of his congregation had in all that time expressed to him a word of appreciation. The words of the stranger overcame him. To be assured that a sermon of his had reached the heart was like rain on thirsty soil. He hurried home and told his wife the good news. They bowed their heads and wept together.—"Home Magazine."

An English paper says that Rev. Mr. Newby, pastor of a church in Guthrie, during a sermon recently, stopped abruptly and asked,

"How many of you have read the Bible?" Fifty hands went up.

"Good!" said the pastor. "Now, how many of you have read the second chapter of Jude?"

Twenty-five hands went up.

A wan smile overspread the divine's face. "That's also good; but when you go home read that chapter again, and you will doubtless learn something to your interest."