

The Home Mission Journal.

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Paul Crandal's Charge.

BY HOPE DARING.

CHAPTER VI.

BECOMING ACQUAINTED.

Soon after breakfast the next morning Paul started to investigate the condition of the parsonage. He found the house small, but convenient and in good condition. There was a kitchen, dining-room, parlor, and one sleeping room below and three rooms above. He had nearly completed his round of observation when a step sounded on the little front porch.

Paul opened the door. The new-comer was a tall, heavy man with a face furrowed by time. He held out one hand.

"You are Mr. Crandal, the new minister, I believe," he said. "My name is Amos Shedd, and I have a strange story to tell you, if you have time to listen to it."

"I have both time and inclination," Paul said, smiling cordially, "but I am sorry I cannot offer my first visitor a better seat than this empty box. Sit down and tell me the story."

Without further introduction Amos Shedd briefly told the story of his life and of the wondrous change God had so recently wrought in him.

"I don't know how to begin to work for Him," he said, with the simplicity of a child. "Can you help me, Mr. Crandal?"

"I can let you help me," Paul cried, again extending his hand. "Oh, Mr. Shedd, God sent you to me this morning!"

"Eh, what's that you say? Why, Shedd, you here?"

It was Deacon Hardy who had entered unperceived. Paul turned, his face aglow with enthusiasm, and told the deacon the story of Amos Shedd's conversion.

When the tale was finished, the listener nodded at Mr. Shedd. "I always thought, Amos, you'd see different some day. Pity you've wasted your life, though."

The old man lifted one hand as if to ward off a blow. Before Paul could speak, he said brokenly:

"I'm sorry, Deacon Hardy. Do you think it is too late now? I hoped to do some good yet—"

It was the minister's voice which interrupted him. "Too late, Mr. Shedd! It is never too late with God—never while a soul longs to do his will. Deacon Hardy is glad to give you his hand and welcome you into the Lord's kingdom."

Deacon Hardy did give Amos Shedd his hand; but he did it in a half-hearted way. Mr. Shedd promised to come to church on Sunday morning. Paul walked with him to the gate, and something in the old man's wistful face led the minister to say:

"Don't wait until Sunday to commence work. Do you not know of some one you can help?"

Amos Shedd waited a moment before replying. He looked absently down the village street where the leaves lay in drifts of bronze, copper and dull red. In the background lay low hills, whose tops were veiled in purple mist.

"Yes," he said, suddenly, bringing his deep-set eyes back to his companion's face. "I know a widow in poor health, with little children dependent upon her. Tomorrow the mortgage which I hold upon her home is due. I intended to foreclose it and send her homeless out into the street. May God forgive me! I will go to her now and tell her she has nothing to fear from me. Yes,

Amos Shedd has found something which is dearer to him than his money."

The next few days were busy ones for Paul. His mother had already shipped the furniture for the parsonage to Danversville, and a week later Paul was to go for her.

On Sunday morning the church was well filled. The face of Paul Crandal shone with a strange radiance as he looked into the faces of the people to whom he believed God had sent him.

His text was, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." It was not only a scholarly sermon, but also a brave claim upon the surety of the promise, and a confident appeal to his hearers, because they were born of God, to join with him in overcoming the world.

Some faces grew thoughtful, others tender, and a few hard—for Paul did not assume the world, in this case, to be aught but sin, and against sin in all forms he lifted a denouncing voice. He dwelt a little upon the evils of drunkenness and gambling, perhaps because in his work at Knowlton these had been the forces which had done the most to make his labor fruitless.

When the services were over, many friendly faces crowded around him. He sought out Amos Shedd and managed to tell enough of his story to Mrs. West and one or two others to insure the old man a hearty welcome.

Sunday school followed. Paul enjoyed the hour here. Ah, the field was widening. All these young lives to be made better. Could he ask for more?

Deacon Hardy did not remain to Sabbath school. When Paul took his place at the dining table, two unpleasant facts forced themselves upon his attention. The first was that Mrs. Hardy must have remained away from church to prepare the dinner of roast chicken, baked fish, various vegetables, hot biscuits and orange shortcake. The second was that upon the face of his host rested an unmistakable cloud.

The origin of this last was soon made known. The deacon finished his dinner, pushed back his plate, ominously cleared his throat, and began:

"I'm afraid you made a wrong beginning to-day, Dominic. I feel it my duty to tell you that drinking and gambling are best not mentioned in this pulpit. 'Tain't necessary, 'cause there's only one place French', where anything of that kind goes on."

Paul looked straight into the speaker's face. There was something more here than appeared on the surface.

"One place is one too many. Why should we not wage war against that?"

"'Cause we can't. French pays more for the church than any member. Then he's got a mortgage on our church property. You'll positively have to let him alone."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Pastor's Plea to Dissatisfied Church Members.

W. A. STANTON, D. D.

MEN are asking today not merely what a church believes and teaches, but what it does. It does just what its members do, no more, no less. Every member in it who does nothing detracts just that much from its usefulness and therefore its influence. A church may be as orthodox as the Bible, but unless it is as useful as the heres of the Bible it will degenerate into a mere club for the preservation of dead orthodoxy. As a rule, the next step downward is to become an arena for a church fight. It is discouraging to plot a fight in a busy church, but in the other kind all one needs to do is whistle and say, "Sick-'em!" Presto! Change! The fight is on.

I plead for practical usefulness in the church. The dissatisfied member quickly says, "So do I." Good! my brother or sister,—for sometimes it is a sister. But there are two way of saying, "So do I." Do you mean that you want to be useful to the church, or that you only want the church to be useful to you? There is a difference. I hope you see it.

Blessings impose obligations. If the church is to be useful to you it follows that you must be useful to the church. The law is inexorable. The only reason that some people in the church

derive no benefit from it is because they are in it and not of it. They bring no good to it, hence they get no good from it. They may complain all they please, but it will not alter the case. If they join a church to be ministered unto but not to minister, they will be dissatisfied in a very short time. Church members as a rule are very good judges of human nature and quickly put a true estimate upon new members. Be what you want others to be to you and you will soon see that they are what you want them to be. You will find yourself saying, "These are just the sort of folks I like." But if you wait for them to be what you want them to be before you are anything at all to them, you will find yourself saying, "I do not like such folks, they are cold, unsocial, freezing; I am going somewhere else." No, my friend, you are mistaken. You are looking in a glass and seeing just the face that is in front of it. I never visited an insane asylum that I did not find someone who thought he alone was sane and all others insane. I have seen many a drunken man who insisted that he alone was sober. So it is with the church growler who sees in other members nothing but coldness, unsociability, selfishness, unspirituality. We once had a member of our church who spent the summer Sundays in the parks, at picnics, on excursions, and at home in negligee. When autumn came he withdrew from our membership because it was not sufficiently social and spiritual. No one was surprised. He reaped exactly what he sowed.

THE REMEDY.

I know but one, and that has two steps in it. First, be sure that you have religion. By religion I mean the life of God in your soul. Have that. Then go to work. Do something for the church. A shrewd politician's way to make a man his friend who seemed about to become an enemy was to ask a favor of him. If he could get him to do him a favor he had his friendship. We always feel kindly toward those for whom we are trying to do something.

Begin to do something for God and you will love Him better. Begin to do something for the church and you will love it better. Take a class in Sunday school; visit some who are sick or in trouble and try to help them; go to the prayer meeting that you imagine is so dull and try to liven it up some; call on some of the new members instead of complaining because none of the old members call on you; return some of the calls that others have made on you before you complain any more because more have not called; be regularly in your pew on Sunday so that when you are sick people will notice your absence; show that you take an interest in the church and in its members. Do this and I assure you that they will take an interest in you and that all causes for complaints will soon disappear. If we want attention from others we must pay attention to others. If we want to receive we must be willing to give. If we want friends we must show ourselves friendly.

For nearly twenty-three years I have been a pastor. I am serving my fourth church. I have learned that in one respect churches do not differ much; out of all of them people will get just about what they put in, plus the interest. Where I have been I have found members who thought each church was the best to which they ever belonged. In the same church would be others who thought it was the worst. The difference was always in the person rather than in the church. To those who wear blue glasses all seems blue. Through them even grass would be blue. Take them off and green looks green.

Get religion, get to work, do something for the church and for somebody. The worse the church is the more you must do. Try to save the church and in so doing you may save yourself and others.—Pittsburg, Pa.

The Church of Christ has no enemy so strong, so subtle, and so destructive of all that the Church is called to stand for as the liquor traffic. Did the ministers of the Church of Christ realize this as they ought they would make unceasing war on the monstrous thing.

It is our opinion, however, that tobacco is robbing the Church of more support than liquor, bad as it is, for it is tolerated and used where liquor is not. No Church will discipline a member for the excessive use of tobacco whether he helps to support the Church or not.