

The Home Mission Journal.

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REV. J. H. HUGHES,

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Paul Grandel's Cha.ge.

BY HOPE DAKING.

CHAPTER IV.

Another incident occurred that day in Danesville, which must needs be recorded here.

In one room of the little schoolhouse the teacher lingered after dismissing her pupils. Lucile Baxter was a slender little woman of twenty-three. Her fair cheeks were flushed with the rose of perfect health, her grey eyes were clear and serene, and the brown hair brushed back from her brow was smooth and shining.

She stood at the blackboard, deftly drawing a picture of a stalk of corn. This picture would serve on the morrow as the basis of a lesson for her little pupils. A step sounded in the hall, and a boyish voice called out:

"Lucile, are you here yet?"

"Yes, Freddie. Come in."

It was one of her younger brothers, for Lucile was the eldest of a large family. There were four brothers and a baby sister, and to them all Lucile was a paragon of virtues and accomplishments.

"It's just a letter," Freddie said. "I stopped at the office on the way home, and I thought I'd run back and bring this to you."

"Thank you, dear. You are very kind," and the flush on Lucile's cheek deepened to a vivid crimson.

Freddie nodded and ran away. The young teacher laid her cheek caressingly against the envelope.

"I looked for you a week ago, darling," she whispered softly. "But I knew you would come all in good time, because—oh, because true love knows no doubt. Now you must wait just a moment while I finish my work. Then I will enjoy you."

She laid the letter on her desk and worked rapidly on, a happy smile on her lips.

Lucile Baxter and George Landis had been engaged for three years. Soon after their engagement young Landis had secured a position in a distant city. They were to have been married in October, but when he had asked that the wedding be deferred until spring, Lucile had never questioned the wisdom of his request. There was but one cloud upon her sky, the opposition of her father to George's suit. Mr. Baxter was a kind parent, and he did not attempt to force Lucile's choice. Still the girl knew her father distrusted her lover.

Lucile finished her drawing, washed her hands, brushed a bit of crayon dust from her neat green serge, and sat down to read her letter. Before opening, she softly kissed it.

The letter was not long. The girl read it, and the color faded from her cheeks, the light died out of her eyes. Lucile was learning the hardest lesson a trusting woman ever learns—that the love upon which she had staked her all was false.

George Landis told her that in a week's time he was to marry the daughter of his employer. There was a half-defensive plea that he had long seen that they were growing apart, and that Lucile must have understood the change that time had wrought in him. In closing, he further insulted the outraged girl by hoping that they might still be friends, and saying that he should always have an interest in her welfare.

Lucile's face grew stern and hard. She replaced the letter in the envelope, and said to herself, "It is well. I am glad he learned his mistake."

She rose and moved aimlessly about the room.

Pausing at the window, she looked out over the landscape. It was in that grove of trees down by the brook that she had first listened to the story of George Landis' love. How glad she had been that the hallowed spot was in sight from her schoolroom window.

Only a moment she stood there. Then tears came to her relief, and, throwing herself into a chair, Lucile sobbed out the wounded pride and grief that had been crushing her.

She had truly loved George Landis. Loved the man she had thought him to be, perhaps, rather than the man he was, but her heart was none the less sore for that.

God pity the woman who must face such an hour alone! This was not Lucile's portion. When tears had relieved the tension upon heart and brain, she turned to Christ for strength.

Gradually she grew calmer. Pride, too, came to her aid. She must school herself to bear the curious looks, and—still harder—the pitying words of those who knew of her broken engagement.

"I must bear it," she said, compressing her lips firmly. "Oh, I wish it was not wicked to pray to die. There is nothing for me to live for."

All her plans for the future had clustered around the time when she should be the happy wife of George Landis. She recalled the sum laid aside from her salary for her wedding dress and the modest store of household linen over which she had worked so happily.

There must be something for me to do, even if there is nothing for me to enjoy," she thought wearily. "God will not desert me. Whatever comes, I must keep my faith and trust in him."

She sat down in her accustomed chair and laid her head upon the desk. From a contemplation of the dreary future she turned to the needs of the present hour, crying unto God for sustaining grace. A half hour later she entered the sitting-room of her home. There was a chorus of exclamations over the pallor.

"Please, mother, I don't want any supper," Lucile said, faintly. "I am going to lie down. Here is a letter for you to read. Don't come to talk to me until I have time to rest."

Mrs. Baxter was much disturbed by the note of weariness in her daughter's usually fresh voice, but she was too wise a mother to question her.

Lucile lay with her face hidden among the pillows until daylight faded and the subdued light of the moon filled the room. Then she heard her mother open the door and cross to her side.

Sitting down on the bed, Mrs. Baxter lifted Lucile's head to her bosom. No sound broke the silence for a little time. At last the mother whispered:

"It is better for you to know his real nature now, darling, than after you were his wife. Be brave, little daughter. God will help you."

"Yes, mother"—there was a new note of determination in the girl's voice—"all my plans for the future are gone, but my life shall not be a useless one. Perhaps I can be a better daughter and sister. The Lord's work can be mine, and I will give myself to it."

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Three "Thens" of Psalm LI.

J. W. WEDDELL.

HOW to please God should be the greatest thought and endeavor of man, and this Psalm tells us the way. "Then shalt thou be pleased," says the closing verse. When? (1) The "then" of full salvation, vs. 15. "Then wilt I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." When? *When fully saved yourself.* This first "then" is in italics and is added. It does not refer simply to what goes before. We must go back a bit. David has sinned against God and he has been brought to contrition. "I acknowledge my transgressions," he says, "and my sin is ever before me," vs. 3. Herein, also, is he showing God's ways, and that there is but one way for the royal sinner, the righteous man sinning, and the poorest wretchedest publican. He must humble himself at the little wicket gate of penitence. This is God's way for the sinner, and David the king shows it. But God's way

includes acceptance also, where confession is sincere. That prayer, we may believe, was heard. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me—a free spirit" (the word is elsewhere translated *prince*), (Ps. cxliii:8), one of God's free sons. Thus, indeed, does David teach God's ways: first, to humble on account of sin, and then, to exalt on account of mercy. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Be fully convicted of sin, be fully repentant of all departure from God, be fully restored by his grace to favor with the Father. "Then wilt I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Be mightily save yourself and so save others.

(2) The "then" of acceptable sacrifice, vs. 19. "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness." God is king; everything is his; God is judge; everything returns to him at last. What offering will please him?—that we want to know; certainly we do. It is not *what* we bring, even though we give it all. "Thou desirest not sacrifice else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering," vs. 16. It is rather *whom* we bring—the giving of self. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," vs. 17. Here are the sacrifices of righteousness, the sacrifices that amount to righteousness, that count, like Abraham's, for righteousness. They follow upon the giving of self. They "first gave their own selves to the Lord." II Cor. viii: 5. Say: "Here am I, Lord." Then, and not till then is God pleased. Henceforth all—all counts.

(3) The "then" of abundant service and success. This naturally follows, for it is included. "Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar," vs. 19. It is all right now. Fill out the happy scene that is sketched in this closing line: the temple at Jerusalem supplied with approved offerings, a large homage, free access, God reconciled and the sinner atoned, all well with the world—two worlds. Bring bullocks, bring psalm of praise, bring everything. God is here! And so the assured heart can sing, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: Build thou the walls of Jerusalem," vs. 18. For now God has taken things in hand, and all runs straight and smooth. Happy the soul that yields fully to God and finds God's "good pleasure" to be his own. "All things are yours, since ye are Christ's,—and Christ is God's."

The Fault-Finder.

J. F. BARTLETT.

He is not a bad man at heart, God bless him; I pity him; I can almost love him at times, unless he becomes *too* mean. I suppose God made him; but if so, he does not seem to be grateful for it. Indeed, he is constitutionally opposed to the idea of being perfectly satisfied with anything, except with the sweet privilege of finding fault. If, in an unguarded moment, he is almost betrayed into speaking praise of something or some body, without the usual addenda, he is sure to add a postscript that will keep his record good. "The sermon was good, *but*,"—"the weather is fine, *but*"—the windows are always open when they ought to be closed, and closed when they ought to be open; the people he meets are always too gushing or too frigid; the way a thing is done by his neighbor or by his church is exactly the way it ought not to have been done. If such a man has a wife, she needs to be either an angel or an Amazon. A peculiar thing about the chronic fault-finder is the strange formation of his eyes; the nearer a thing is to him the less he can see it. He can see a speck of sawdust in the eyes of a man across the street, notwithstanding the fact that splinters as large as toothpicks intercept his vision, and he does not know it. The person most deserving of censure, himself, is the only person with whom he is perfectly satisfied. He reminds one of what the old Quaker said to his wife: "Sophia, all the world is queer, excepting thee and me; and Sophia, thou art a little queer." The only practical good a fault-finder brings to pass is two-fold: First, he develops the patience of those who are forced to endure him; and second, he is a beacon-light of warning. Fault-finding is a sin; it gives evidence of an unthankful, uncharitable heart.