

Finding God in Millersville

Republished by The Ontario from The American Magazine for September.

In his youth the man in this story hated God. But certain experiences, hereinafter recorded, caused him to change his mind. He is a successful manufacturer of cutlery. Following is his simple, straightforward explanation of why he knows there is a God:

"It takes a girl in our factory about two days to learn to put the seventeen parts of a meat chopper together. It may be that millions of worlds, each with its separate orbit, all balanced so wonderfully in space—it may be that they just happened; it may be that by a billion years of tumbling about they finally arranged themselves. I don't know. I am merely a plain manufacturer of cutlery. But this I do know, that you can shake the seventeen parts of a meat chopper around in a wash-tub for the next seventeen billion years and you'll never make a meat chopper."

"Colonel," I said to him, "do you believe that we will ever live again after we are done living here?" I shot the question right out of a clear sky, as we were sitting last week in his office, in Chicago. He is the largest jobber in our trade, and is under no particular obligation to be nice to me. On the contrary, I am under no obligations to him; he handles more than one hundred thousand dollars of our product annually.

He looked at me for a moment as though to be sure he had heard correctly; then he nodded to his secretary to leave the room. And that man, who is considered the hardest proposition in our business, and who probably has not put his foot inside a church since his wedding day, sat and talked with me for an hour and a quarter about religion.

After twenty-four years of pretty strenuous business life I have come to the conclusion that there are two subjects on which the average man will always talk—his own family and religion. Preachers who complain that men are not interested in religion either don't know how to talk to them, or they haven't hidden much in the smoking compartment of Pullmans. I have heard, in those little smoke-filled dungeons, discussions of whether there is a God, and what there is in life that is really worth a man's working for, discussions that would do credit to a theological seminary.

At the close of our talk the colonel said "Thornton, you ought to write the experience of yours just the way you've talked it."

"Bosh!" I said; "I'm not a writer." "That's just why you ought to do it," he insisted; "a writer would spill it, he'd do it too well. You'll just talk it right out; and there are a million men like me that'll read it. There are millions of us in this country who have discarded the ready-made religion that our mothers fitted us out with, and have been hewing away blindly trying to make a religion for ourselves. Go home and get your stenographer and write it."

On the way back, on the train, I made up my mind that he was right. I know I run the risk of being called a crank; but any man who has gone through the sort of a mill I have in the past fourteen years will acquit me of that charge. Fourteen years ago, when I took over our business, it had been wrecked and piled up in the ditch. Last year its net profits were forty-two thousand dollars; three-fifths of them mine. Cranks are not born; one must have much time to become a crank—time to devote to reflection and indignation. For fourteen years my barber has come to my office every morning because I did not have time enough even to go out for a shave.

I happened to be born in Syracuse, New York, forty-nine years ago. My mother died at my birth; my father was one of those men cursed with an unhappy color blindness, to whom all near fields appear parched, all distant fields green. Had I been left in his care I should probably have been weakened by pneumonia in the Yukon, as he was, and died of typhoid on my way to the Mexican silver mines, as he did.

Fortunately, he could not be bothered with me, the chase was too swift. I was early sent to my grandmother, who lived alone on a farm near Hobbs Corners, this state. Under her direction I grew up in hard la-

bor and the literal fear of God. The Corners was the centre of a considerable farming section, a couple of hundred families living about it within a radius of five miles. They were pure-blooded American stock, hard-working, unimaginative, intolerant people who had "got right with God." No care-free laughter was heard in Hobbs Corners on the Sabbath, nor, indeed, on any other day, except around the livery stable and pool-room—corridors of hell.

The deep religious spirit of the community protected it from card playing, dancing, and most other forms of wholesome amusement, but not against a bitter, malicious gossip. We kept every jot and tittle of law but we never learned to love our enemies, the Baptists. Life in Hobbs Corners was a bitter trial, imposed upon us by a just God, who might, perhaps, at its close admit us grudgingly into heaven.

My grandmother strove earnestly to instill in me a fear of this God; she succeeded in making me hate Him.

At fifteen I left Hobbs Corners and went to Millersville, the county seat, and got a job. I shall call the town Millersville for the purposes of this story, and myself Thornton, and our business the Millersville Cutlery Company. Colonel Miller, president of the company, was a business man of a fine type. He had some private faults, but he had also the essential man's virtue—honesty. He taught me that my word must be as good as my bond. He could tolerate any mistake in judgment, any lapse in duty, anything except a lie. And being honest with himself as well as the world, he could neither be a hypocrite nor a liar nor a snob.

The record of my first ten years in his employment might be written by any other business man who started young with no favoring influence except a determination to succeed. I worked long, hard hours, and gradually my pay and my responsibilities were increased. For a few months after my arrival in Millersville I went regularly to church, in obedience to a promise exacted by my grandmother. But, strange as it may seem, my very association with a good man, the colonel, influenced me greatly against religion. I worshipped the colonel, who kept his promises. I had no use for God—who did not.

All around me I saw hard-working honest men and women building their lives on those promises, and meeting one disaster after another. "Trust in the Lord and do good," said the Bible, "so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." In all Millersville there was no man who lived more sincerely in the spirit of that injunction than John Hamlin. His life was a record of unselfish service for the poor and afflicted of the town. Did he dwell in the land? He did. Was he fed? He was not. Four years in succession the Providence which he served so faithfully sent blighting winds across his fields at the very moment when they would do the most harm. They could have no been timed more accurately by the devil himself. Four years, when John needed a bit of help from Providence, destruction was dealt to him instead.

Did John curse God? Not much. Every Sunday he was found in his place in the family pew, kneeling humbly before Heaven and confessing loudly: "utter unworthiness to be allowed, to live." "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand," said the Bible to the faithful, "but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." That is a clear-cut promise.

Yet when the diphtheria stalked our streets no child of the local saloon-keeper, Tom Higgins, was struck down; only the three children of Joe Mason, the squarest, most loved man in town. If Joe Mason and John Hamlin did not protest in their hearts against this peridy of Providence, I protested for them. I made no public declaration; but I was through with religion, none the less. I ceased going to church. For the rest of the years, until my marriage, I led the care-free life of the majority of unattached young men.

A day came when Colonel Miller died. I do not like to remember that day, nor the chaotic years that followed. Suffice it to say that the business, in the hand of his son, passed from profit to the verge of bankruptcy in a very few years. Almost all businesses, I have since discovered, are merely the extension of a big per-

sonality; no matter what their resources, nor how great their lead over their competitors, they fall rapidly into ruin without a head. Any man that talks me that there is no personality within and behind the universe, that it merely happened and runs itself, will have to begin by explaining to me the bankruptcy of the Millersville Cutlery Company after Colonel Miller's death.

The creditors looked the situation over, and decided to continue the business, and offered me the chance to acquire a three-fifths control, provided I could discharge the company's obligations and put it on its feet again. In that task I buried the next few years of my life.

One afternoon late, as I was preparing to leave the office, my secretary spoke to me: "Jimmy is a-ying, Mr. Thornton," she said.

"Jimmy? Jimmy?" I repeated vaguely. "Who's Jimmy?"

"Your office boy," she said, "the little freckled-faced boy who came here a year ago."

I remembered him then—a bright little chap, one of a dozen in the outer office who ran our errands. I don't think I had ever known his last name. I felt a quick tinge of pity.

"Send some flowers," I said, "and have Doctor Fowler go over—"

"It's gone that," she answered; "but, Mr. Thornton—"

"Yes?" I was in a hurry.

"He wants to see you."

"Me? Why, Miss Stone, you know that's impossible."

"Put he's asked for you all day. He's dying, Mr. Thornton. Couldn't you—"

"Give me his address," I said, "I'll go over."

My car was at the door, and fifteen minutes later we drew up in front of the poor little two-family house where Jimmy lived. His mother and father, a day laborer, and four unkempt children were gathered in a smelly, sobbing group about the bed. Jimmy cried out to me feebly as I stepped in.

"Mr. Thornton—I wanted to see you. I wanted to tell you I done the best I could, Mr. Thornton—"

I sat down beside the tumbled bed and took his little fevered hand in mine. His mother threw herself distractedly upon the floor beside me. Doctor Fowler came in, touched the boy's head professionally, and drew away again. And so—with his hand in his boss's—Jimmy Egan died.

I left some money with the father and promised to come back the next day. Fowler and I went out together.

"Sad case," I said. I was vaguely disturbed, and it seemed that I must say something. I wanted Fowler to break into the sort of talk I was accustomed to—say it was decent of me to come down and to give the money. To my surprise he turned on me almost savagely—old Fowler, whom I had known for years, to whom I had paid fees of hundreds of dollars.

"How much fresh air is there in that abominable hole of yours, Thornton?" he demanded.

I was thunderstruck. "What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. How much air do the people get that make your profits for you? How much sunshine? Do you know what killed that kid? No air; no sunshine; long hours in a dirty hole of a factory. How many days did your people lose last year on account of bad health?"

"Why—damn your impudence, Fowler—why, I don't know—"

"Well, if you want my advice, you'd better find out. Here's my corner. Tell your man to stop. I've got another of your crowd to dose up before I go home Good night."

He was gone before I could say a word to him. Instead of driving home I sent word to Mrs. Thornton not to expect me for dinner. I dined at the Miller House alone. And after dinner I walked out through the district where the employees of the Millersville Cutlery Company lived out beyond the town, under the stars. And all the time it seemed to me that Jimmy's voice pursued me, and Jimmy's eyes shone through the darkness into mine.

What happened in the next year or more I shall have to sketch very briefly: Jimmy's people had no notion of laying Jimmy's death at my door; on the contrary, they were profuse in their gratitude to me for the help I had given them. They sent me a little snapshot of Jimmy in an ugly gilt frame. That snapshot, in all its pristine ugliness, stands on my desk beside the picture of my wife and boys.

As fast as I could, I remodeled our plant so as to let in both light and sunshine. The money that I had planned to put into redecorating our own home went into some shower baths for the men. On my own initiative, I closed the plant on Saturday afternoons except in the busy season, and shortened the other days an hour. I became interested in what other fellows in our line had done to make their factories attractive, and formed a secret resolve to have ours the show place of the cutlery business. It became a matter of pride with



me: I looked forward to the day when the trade paper would send men to write me up. It was pride—but there was something else that at first I hardly understood. Gradually, as I got nearer to my people, they began to move in close to me. Sanderson, the foreman of the shipping-room, came in one day, hat in hand, and said he wanted to talk to me about sending his boy to a technical school. Old Molly, one of our packers, knocked timidly one afternoon just at closing time, and blushing and stammering, wanted to know whether I thought any doctor could cure her varicose veins.

"I have to stand on my feet so much, Mr. Thornton, and you understand, I don't want to bother you for nothing, but you been so good to the men, I thought, perhaps—"

I was becoming a sort of father to the whole three hundred of them. I called myself a fool, but I liked it none the less. Something had waked up in me that I did not suspect was there. If any man had accused me of being philanthropic, of letting my "better nature assert itself," I would have denied the charge indignantly.

"It's just good business," I would have said. "I help to keep 'em efficient, and they work harder." Nevertheless, I knew it was more than that—much more.

Without realizing it until long afterward I had made my first great religious discovery. I had discovered my fellow man—my brother.

It was about this same time that I became more or less interested in reading the Bible. My youngsters in Sunday school were studying the New Testament, and their questions were embarrassing. I had a vague remembrance of some parts of the New Testament from my own Sunday school days, and my impressions of Jesus of Nazareth, joined together, would probably have read something like this:

Jesus of Nazareth was a weak-faced young man who claimed to be God. He spent three years preaching in Palestine, surrounded by a group of emotional women. He was once taken onto a high tower by the devil, who jeered at him and dared him to throw himself down. Jesus, although he claimed to have miraculous power, neither accepted the challenge nor threw the devil down. When tried before the Roman governor, he said: "I wanted to, I could call ten legions of angels to destroy you and rescue me." But he did not make good. He left many sayings, among them, "If a man smite you on one cheek, turn the other also."

This wasn't an attractive picture; I hated to pass it on to my boys—at least until I had verified it. So I set to reading some of the books that professed to interpret Him to us, among them Thomas Hughes' "Mankind of Christ," and Dawson's "Life of Christ." I didn't expect to be interested; to my surprise, I was. Gradually, an entirely new picture of Jesus of Nazareth took shape in my mind.

I came to picture Him first of all as physically strong. His first thirty years were spent in swinging an ax and pushing a plane; his last three years were occupied almost continually in tramping from one village to another and sleeping out of doors. He had "no place to lay his head." On his first trip down to Jerusalem his ears were full of the complaints of the simple peasants against the graft and oppression of the priestly gang at the Temple. He was young and unknown, a poor peasant. Yet he strode in among that gang of robbers, and with a rude little whip drove them in terror before him out of the Temple. You can't make me believe that he could have done that unless there was iron muscle behind that little whip, ready to back it up.

As I got to know him better I conceived a real admiration for Jesus of Nazareth, coupled with an intense surprise that in all the twenty centuries that have elapsed since he lived, his Church has never shown him to the world as he really was. My admiration at first was merely the sort that Napoleon felt for him. Without armies of influence, as Napoleon pointed out, he had conquered the world and erected an empire that has outlasted all others. Mine was merely that sort of admiration to start with; but it deepened as my study went on. I came to marvel at the perfection of his life—his magnificent self-possession, that was not lost even when they awakened him in the midst of a storm that threatened the ship; his mental supremacy over the keenest minds of his time, and his spiritual grandeur.

So gradually, I made my second religious discovery: I discovered Jesus of Nazareth.

A psychologist, I suppose, would be able to trace the process that was going on inside me, step by step, and set it down with scientific precision. I can't. I only know that I went on with my reading and thinking. I took a good many long walks alone. It has been said that no astronomer can be an atheist. However that may be, I know, at least, that nothing seems to lift me out of myself like an hour or two alone under the stars. To think that each one of those tiny points of light is a sun as big or bigger than our sun, and that round it circle whole systems of worlds like ours—the idea rocks my mind a little; but I come back to it again and again as a never-failing source of spiritual stimulation.

It takes a girl in our factory about two days to learn to put the seventeen parts of a meat chopper together. It may be that millions of worlds, each with its separate orbit, all balanced so wonderfully in space—it may be that they just happened; it may be that by a billion years of tumbling about they finally arranged themselves. I don't know. I am merely a plain manufacturer of cutlery. But this I do know, that you can shake the seventeen parts of a meat chopper around in a wash-tub for the next seventeen billion years and you'll never make a meat chopper.

All this time I was really wanting to believe in God, but I didn't quite dare. I'd trained myself for thirty odd years never to accept any conclusion until I had the facts to back it up, and I hated to commit myself to something that couldn't be actually proved. So I kept working along with my people at the factory, doing what I could to be a sort of father to them. The closer I got to them, the more I admired them. The amount of love and patience and simple faith in the average lowly man and woman has become to me nothing short of marvelous. Men whom I had always regarded as rather slow-witted, ordinary fellows, I found to be real heroes when I got under their skins. All the enthusiasm that I had put into building up our business I put into trying to build those fellows up, to helping them make the most of themselves. Human personality became to me the most marvelous and precious and wonderful thing in the world.

Then, suddenly, one Saturday afternoon, when I was alone in the office, it flashed across me that I had the proof I was looking for. The world might have created itself, I said to myself, but the world couldn't have created something greater than itself. The creature can't be greater than the creator, and human personality is greater than the world. . . . To create personality there must have been a personality.

I haven't joined the Church yet, but I have an idea that I will. There's a new minister in town, a young chap, and while his mind is pretty well spotted yet with Old Testament ideas, he is young enough so that I have hopes in him. I have made him a proposition that if he will drop the Wednesday evening prayer meeting, which has been dead for twenty years and organize a Boy Scout Club to meet on that night I will go on his board of trustees. He's young, and eager to be of some use in the world, and I think I may make a pretty fair Christian of him yet, in spite of his bad start.

In his heart he thinks, of course, that I am not a regular Christian, though he's too polite to say so, but he doesn't know that God is a working partner in the Millersville Cutlery Works; that He attends a directors' meeting every night. We have a thousand plans for making our three hundred people happier that we haven't sprung yet, because to work them out will require time.

No prayer meetings are held in our plant, but there's a smile on every single face in it. And I've come to believe that the real symbol of religion is just that—a smile.

That's the story, sketched and badly told, but true. There's only one thing to add, and that is I'm glad my grandmother passed on to what she was always speaking of as her "reward" five years ago. A story such as this would have seemed to her so irreverent as to endanger my chance of eternal salvation. But it does not seem to me to be irreverent to talk with Him as He is, and about Him familiarly. He has said He is a Father; surely no father wants his children to tremble at his name.

But grandmother could never have realized that. Her God sat on a golden throne, thundering His wrath against the wicked, and visiting trials upon the righteous to test their devotion. By no possible feat of faith could she have pictured Him as I do, working side by side with me, talking with me about my problems, smiling, actually laughing, as step by step we make our three hundred people happier—loving, counseling, fighting for better men and women, right here in Millersville.

IF STRENGTH DECLINES AS AGE ADVANCES FOLLOW THIS SUGGESTION

So many women grow old before their time, perhaps your wife or sister. A little while ago, buoyant, full of vigor and activity,—she enjoyed life and imparted pleasure to the whole family; but now in a few short years she has faded and lost color and strength. So his just ready to develop some disease that will further weaken and debilitate. You remember how it began, failure of appetite, tired in the morning, found housework burdensome, always nervous and a little irritable. It's a shame to let her go down hill further when you can build her up so quickly with Ferrozone. The change from this nourishing tonic makes in a weak woman is surprising. It gives great zest for food, increases appetite and digestion enormously. The blood gets richer and stronger and adds new life to every organ in the body. A rebuilding process works through the entire system. The first week will show an improvement, and a month or two will fatten up the thinnest, most run-down woman you can think of. Take Ferrozone for lost color, for nervousness, for weakness,—use it when run-down and feeling poorly—it will do you more lasting good, keep you in better health, than anything else. Just as good for men and children, too, because Ferrozone is harmless and safe, 50c. per box or six for \$2.50 at all dealers, or direct by mail from the Catarrhoses Co., Kingston, Ont.

On days when I was all tired out I used to say to myself: "What a hopeless mess it is, this living. It's a rotten game played with loaded dice. We're put here, each with some spark of foolish egotism that makes him believe his life is vastly important. We struggle through to the end, and in the end find—nothing. Why should anyone bring a son into so senseless a world?"

I don't feel that way any more. The happiest times in my life are when I find someone among my folks who really appreciates what I'm trying to do, and who turns in and tries to help. Having that in mind I am ready to believe that He must have smiled for a second on that Saturday afternoon when I found Him in my office.

At least I like to think so. I like to picture Him, big, powerful, with the heart of a woman. Big enough to hold the worlds in his hand, and tender enough to care for every sparrow, working in His world, wanting to make it better, but able to make progress only as fast as He can get fellows like me on His side. If that picture of Him is true, if He really needs me as a working partner, then that's the answer to the riddle. My life really is as valuable as important, as worth-while in the world as I have always wanted to believe it. He needs me; that's impor-

THE CAMP TOOTH-PULLERS. Have Completed the Work For the 155th Battalion.

The report of the Dental clinic at the camp shows that only seventy-two members of the 155th Battalion had perfect teeth before coming in to camp, but now the full complement of men have well working dental fixtures. On July 21st work was started on the Belleville battalion men and an examination made of every man's set of teeth. There were 886 N.C.O.'s and men examined, and for each man a dental history sheet was started. On the 814 men who have to have treatment there were 6,116 operations and 124 artificial dentures were inserted.

The dental clinic has certainly been doing a great amount of work in its quiet way, and this is emphasized by the fact that beside the work of the 155th Battalion members there were 1,170 emergency cases taken care of.

CASTORIA
For Infants and Children
In Use For Over 30 Years
Always bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Watson*

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FELT LIKE A NEW PERSON

After Taking Only One Box Of "Fruit-a-lives"

EARL BRIT HAMMOND, N. S. "It is with great pleasure that I write to tell you of the wonderful benefits I have received from taking "Fruit-a-lives". For years, I was a dreadful sufferer from Constipation and Headaches, and I was miserable in every way. Nothing in the way of medicines seemed to help me. Then I finally tried "Fruit-a-lives" and the effect was splendid. After taking one box, I feel like a new person, to have relief from those sickening Headaches."

Mrs. MARIE DEWOLFE. 50c. a box, 6 for \$2.50, trial size, 25c. At all dealers or sent postpaid by Fruit-a-lives Limited, Ottawa.

DISPENSER ON A TRANSPORT

Mr. Ray L. Peppin Leaves This City on Monday.

Mr. Ray L. Peppin, Phm.B., who has been with Mr. F. C. Clarke, druggist for over two years, has enlisted with Queen's Ambulance, and will leave on Monday for Kingston whence he will go to Halifax. Mr. Peppin is going to take the position of dispenser on a transport plying between Britain and Canada. This is an important office for which he is fully qualified as a druggist. He will be on the Atlantic coast of the time.

Mr. Peppin was apprenticed to Mr. J. S. McKeown and took his degree at the College of Pharmacy, University of Toronto. He is a brother of Gunner C. J. Peppin, Jr., of the 1st Battery, 1st Brigade, who went with the First Canadian Contingent.

INSURANCE MEN DINED.
(From Wednesday's Daily)

Last evening the life insurance men of the city met and dined at Hotel Quatre to do honor to the president of the Underwriters Association of Canada—Mr. J. Burt Morgan of Victoria, B.C., and owing to some misunderstanding he was not present, not having reached the city. Among those present were Messrs. J. W. Johnson, M.P.F., W. C. Mikel, K.C., Dr. W. W. Bryce, and J. Elliott. Among the insurance men present were a past president and the secretaries.

FUNERAL OF LATE G. W. PALMER
(From Wednesday's Daily)

The funeral of the late G. W. Palmer, who met death in a tragic manner as a result of an automobile accident near Madoc, took place yesterday from his late residence, Cannonville. People of all classes from all parts of the county and city attended the obsequies. The Rev. M. E. Wilson conducted the religious service after which R. W. Bro. H. F. Ketcheson, D.D.G.M., officiated at the Masonic ritual. Many members of the order were present to pay their last tribute of respect to their deceased brother. Numerous gifts of flowers had been received. The bearers were all members of the Masonic order—R. W. Bro. H. F. Ketcheson, R. W. Bro. L. R. Terwilliger, W. Bro. E. Naylor and Bros. G. W. Kerr, T. Farham and Henry Farham. Interment was in the family plot in Belleville cemetery.

Y.M.C.A. NOTES.

The first Sunday afternoon Men's Meeting of the season, will be held next Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock in the auditorium, Rev. Dr. Scott, pastor of Bridge St. Methodist Church will be the speaker.

Boys' classes are growing in numbers and interest, under the able direction of Mr. Allan, the Boys' Work secretary. The "preps" class, including boys from 9 to 12 years of age, is an entirely new class and is proving very popular.

Mr. W. C. Chisholm has been engaged to take charge of the Bowling Alliance again this season. Business Men's Gym classes will begin Monday night 8 to 9.20. There will be classes also on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 5 to 6.

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