

Pastor and People.

THE MASTER AND THE REAPERS.

The master called to his reapers :

" Make scythe and sickle keen,
And bring me the grain from the uplands.
And the grass from the meadows green ;
And from off the mist-clad marshes,
Where the salt waves fret and foam,
Ye shall gather the rustling sedges
To furnish the harvest home "

Then the laborers cried : " O master,
We will bring thee the yellow grain
That waves on the windy hillside,
And the tender grass from the plain ;
But that which springs up on the marshes
Is dry and harsh and thin,
Unlike the sweet field grasses,
So we will not gather it in."

But the master said " O foolish !
For many a weary day,
Through storm and drought, we have labored
For the grain and the fragrant hay.
The generous earth is fruitful,
And breezes of summer blow
Where these in the sun, and the dews of heaven,
Have ripened soft and slow.

" But out on the wide, bleak marsh land
Hath never a plough been set,
And with rapine and rage of hungry waves
The shivering soil is wet.
There flower the pale green sedges,
And the tides that ebb and flow,
And the biting breath of the sea wind,
Are the only care they know

" They have drunken of bitter waters,
Their food hath been sharp sea sand.
And yet they have yielded a harvest
Unto the master's hand.
So shall ye all, O reapers,
Honor them now the more,
And garner in gladness, with songs of praise,
The grass from the desolate shore."
— *Zoe Dana Underhill, in Harper's Magazine*

THE WORTH OF THE RESURRECTION.

BY REV. R. R. KNOWLES, B.A., OTTAWA.

We Christians should make much of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the sheet-anchor of the Christian faith. Though we give up all else, let us hold to this, for if this we keep, then do we hold all else in a grip which will not be relaxed. Have you ever thought of its bearing on all that is miraculous in the gospels? Who shall dare to taunt me regarding the incarnation, the healing miracles, the sin-pardoning of Jesus, the atonement, or the present influence and potency of Him whom we call Lord, while I can point to the empty tomb? If I can but hold to this as the miracle indisputable, then, from it, shall I argue backward, nor find it difficult to believe that while in the flesh Jesus did these wondrous things of whose impossibility we hear so much. The question is: "Did Christ rise from the dead?" If it be accepted that He did, then through that door shall we enter, and, returning over the path trodden by the Son of man, shall be not surprised, but rather, shall expect to behold all these miracles He wrought. We shall not fear, when, at the feast, the wine has been exhausted, we shall stand beside the stormy Sea of Galilee, nor wonder when its waves obey His will; we shall summon to His side the wretched leprosy ones, confident of their swift and gracious cure; we shall greet undismayed the procession winding slowly toward the tomb, nor be amazed when the life-touched heart of the only son pours out afresh its sacred tide; we shall stand beside the grave of Lazarus, and, with unquivering eye, "behold a man raised up by Christ." Thus does the acceptance of this mighty miracle assist us to accept the others. There is no use of arguing against the existence of the Carpathian hills, while the peerless Himalayas seek the sky, or while Mount Blanc, in supernal grandeur, leads the way to heaven. In the same way, 'tis of slight avail to rave against the supernatural in the life of Christ, while this majestic miracle towers in its obvious grandeur before the mystified but unobedient gaze of men. By His resurrection from the dead, Christ hath begotten us again, not alone unto a lively hope, but likewise unto a lively faith. We accept the loss, because we have beheld, and have believed the greater.

Let us observe, also, the bearing of Christ's resurrection upon the scope and significance of His death. If it is *Christ* that died, we shall wait at the tomb, expecting the resur-

rection, and, again, if Jesus rose, then are we sure that it was *Christ* who died. Mark this point: if Jesus has arisen, then was it "*Christ* who died," and what then? Do we not, in the light of this personality, perceive the possible significance of the death? We so often say: "It matters little who it is that dies; death is the important factor and plays the principal part, 'tis of as little consequence who dies, as it is regarding who is caught in Niagara's whirl, or who is thrown to the lions, or who is the target for the lightning shaft." But not so. It is of tremendous consequence who shall meet death, and prove whether he be its master, or its slave; who will revoke the monotony of things, and refusing to throw himself in unworthy resignation before this juggernaut, shall mount the chariot, and make death a vehicle to a deathless land. It is Christ that died—think of that? On His brow already is the immortal crown; in His hands already are the keys. Remember that Christ did not need to die; He did not need to live, but He lived, because in His life there was a purpose deep and noble, and Christ did not die without a purpose. When men die it is perforce; in the maelstrom are they caught; over the edge, struggling, they are pushed by the agencies of time. But behold the Christ *deviating* from His eternal path, to seek the narrow sea; behold Him going out of His way, laying even mortality under tribute as an agency of life, searching for the path that leads to the turbid, swollen Jordan; and depend upon it, He has not His eyes on death for nothing. He is dying, not to gratify insatiate death, for He is beyond his realm; not to find an avenue to celestial mansions, for they are His by native right and possession everlasting, but for the fulfilment of a deliberate purpose. He greeted death, because in full pursuit of a career which he had pursued with unflinching step, and with an impetus whose influence could not cease till His mission was gloriously fulfilled, and to that fulfilment death was necessary, because "He died for us." This is the solution of that sacrificial mystery, even that He deliberately perfected a bitter experience with its most bitter crown, that He made death His greatest servant on our behalf. This could He do, only inasmuch as He was divine, and since His divinity is established by His resurrection, His death is now aglow with a gracious purpose, and endowed with mighty magnetism. Since Christ has risen, let us leave the empty tomb and with swift beating hearts, return to Calvary, and view the cross, once considered only as the cruel instrument of death, now as that in which we shall glory evermore. The murder has become a gospel. We shall ever think of the cross in the light of the resurrection morning, and, in the glory thus thrown back upon it, shall read its new and precious meaning to the soul.

With us, as with the early disciples, the death of Christ is full of sweet meaning, only as we appreciate the divinity of Him who died. While rejoicing in the glory of Christ's resurrection, let us think not more of the divine life than of the divine death. The Lord's resurrection is the great commentary on His ignominious death. We believe that He died for our sins, *because* He has risen for our justification; we glory in the worth and import of the resurrection, because we glory in the import of the death which made it necessary.

THE DANGERS TO WHICH THE YOUNG ARE EXPOSED.*

Pitfalls and dangers fringe man's path from the cradle to the grave. These are clustered most thickly along the earlier part of his course. While dangers are encountered in every stage of life, those of youth are more numerous and deadly than those of maturer years or of old age. The subject assigned me takes it for granted that there are special dangers to which the young are exposed. That there are such I need not stop to prove. The fact is recognized on every hand. These special dangers arise from inexperience, from the keenness of sense, from natural buoyancy and hopefulness, and from the fact that the world and its pleasures are new to the young.

* Paper read by Rev. J. W. Mitchell, M.A. at the recent convention of the Welland County Sabbath School Association.

Many of the lessons of life are only effectively taught and learned by experience. Sense in youth is unsated, and enjoyment keen. Life seems boundless and inexhaustible. All its portals are spanned with the glowing arch of hope. They have not yet learned, as that Scottish poet did, so sadly, by his own experience:

" That pleasures are like poppies spread;
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-flake in the river,
A moment white, then lost forever."

What are these dangers? They are many. I will attempt to indicate a few only. Some of them are physical. The appetites and passions in youth are clamorous. The impulse to indulgence is then especially strong. When not held in check and controlled by deep-seated conviction of duty and sense of responsibility, the results are often disastrous. Every appetite has a corresponding gratification to which it impels, and a danger from excess lying beyond. The cravings of hunger, if loose rein be given, lead on to the indulgence of the epicure and glutton; the cravings of thirst and for stimulants, to the excesses of the tobacco slave, the drunkard and opium-eater. In still another case, we see the outcome of indulgence in the licentious profligate, the harlot and the victim of solitary vice.

Leaving the moral bearings of these matters out of account at present, let me say generally that any excess persisted in, any unnatural practice indulged, is physically disastrous. It ruins the body. Shadow does not cling more closely to substance than enervation to indulgence. Cause and effect are not more certainly bound the one to the other than excess and exhaustion, abuse and death. Here the inexperience of the young exposes them to special danger. They have to learn the bounds beyond which they may not pass. In their ignorance they often venture too far, and find themselves, ere they realize their position, in a current that is too strong for them—borne on by an overmastering power into rapids in which they are helpless, and onward over the precipice of irretrievable physical ruin. Safety is purchased at the price of self-restraint and self-denial; bodily vigour by keeping far away from such dangers. We all recognize the wisdom of the coachman who, applying for a situation and questioned as to his skill, and asked among other things how near he could drive to the brink of a precipice, replied that he really could not tell, as he had made it a rule of his life to keep as far from danger as possible. One who in his own day explored all the seas and sounded all the depths of physical pleasure has written: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." It is all as unsatisfactory and evanescent as "the dream of a night vision, as when an hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty, or as when a thirsty man dreameth and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite." (Isaiah 29: 7, 8.) The gratifications of sense are unsatisfactory and evanescent, but there is a greater and still greater evil beyond. "The end of these things is death." "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." (Eccl. 11: 9.)

Would you know the path of safety? It is found only in trusting God—in implicitly obeying him who formed man, who knows what he is, and whose commands are in full harmony with his truest well-being. Indeed, it is only through implicit obedience to the command of God that even physical vigor in its perfection is attainable.

There are mental and moral dangers to which the young are especially exposed. According to the old Latin proverb, there can only be a sound mind when the body is sound. Everything that weakens the physical organism, everything that awakens morbid desires, everything that over-stimulates the appetites and passions, that gives the physical a larger than its true place, that of being minister and servant to the nobler part of man, destroys the balance of the human economy, and, in the destruction of the balance, debases and degrades. Physical indulgence leads on to lunacy, imbecility and death. On the way it inflicts the judgment of moral blindness, and the atrophy of all that is noble and godlike in man. But there are other mental and moral dangers to which the young are exposed besides those that are the direct fruit of sensual indulgence. The daily and weekly newspapers that come so freely into our homes are often the bearers of moral poison, unsuspected by parents, and not unfrequently ingeniously disguised to tempt the victims for whom they are designed. It comes in the form of advertisements of quacks and frauds, of prizes and lotteries, of inducements to betting and stock gambling and speculation in wheat or other

produce. The proceedings of the race course and the more brutal prize ring are detailed at length; the preparations for the contest and the odds laid on this or that favorite are duly chronicled. Sometimes infidel and obscene publications are brought to the notice of the young by the same agency. Their curiosity is piqued. They fall into the trap that is set for them, perhaps are ensnared for life, or only escape with loss which can never be recovered—the sense of innocence and the consciousness of integrity. There is the cheap illustrated weekly, with its sensational details of defalcations, domestic broils and infidelities, robberies, murders and other crimes, hawked about our streets. There is the cheap novel, with its thrilling adventures, its false ideals, its painted heroes and heroines, and its base moral code, reeking with slang, blasphemy and the bar-room—a fruitful source of ruin to the boy, unsettling his mind, tainting his morals, corrupting his language, unfitting him for quiet study, patient industry and a useful life. The rapid increase of crime among the young on this continent is calculated to alarm every lover of his race, and is intimately connected with the glorification of crime upon the stage and in fiction. Those familiar with the facts of the case assure us that of the criminals arraigned in the courts of the neighboring state of New York one-half are under twenty-one years of age, and one-third of the whole number are under sixteen.

There is the danger of impure and obscene literature—the secret circulation in schools, colleges and among young acquaintances of publications that are more disastrous in their working than plague or epidemic let loose upon the community. They taint every mind they touch with their moral leprosy. They inflame the passions, deprave the heart, and lay their hellish spell upon the imagination. Many who have reached mature years would gladly make large sacrifices to have the purity of mind of which they have been thus robbed restored—to be able to forget and shut out forever scenes pictured to the imagination, which come back unbidden, and often when least desired—to be able to erase from the tablet of memory words that have been a life-long source of defilement.

To the young who are within hearing of my voice let me say: Repel as your deadliest enemy that one, be he companion, friend or aught else, who offers you anything that you must conceal from those about you—anything that he lays you under obligation to read or examine in secret. In many cases it would be a kindlier act were that one to administer to you instead a dose of the subtlest poison concealed in tempting confectionery. As you flee from the hissing serpent, flee from those who offer you what you cannot show your mother, or read and exhibit freely in the midst of the family circle.

When the young man visits the great city or goes from under the parental roof to provide for himself, he is often possessed with a great desire to see the world. He has been brought up in the shelter of a quiet home. He has seen little of open vice or crime. He has heard of the fast life of the great city; distant glimpses of what is seen and done in its resorts reach him through the newspaper and the reports of his companions. A morbid curiosity is awakened to see for himself. When he goes from home he is bound that he will "see the world." By seeing the world in this connection is seeing its places of questionable character and forbidden resort, the billiard-room, the saloon, the theatre, the pool-room, the dance-hall, the gambling hell or even places of baser resort. He has no intention to become a habitual frequenter of any one of them. He laughs at the very suggestion of such a thing, or of there being any danger involved to him. But he is curious to see for himself; he wants to get an inside view of city life. I need scarcely say that there are always those at hand who are ready to initiate him into all these mysteries—also! too often to be fascinated by some one or other of them—to return again and again till he is laid firmly under some deadly spell of the devil, sinking lower and lower through months or years, till his face is familiar in low resorts, where obscene language and shameless exhibition of nudity go hand in hand, and he becomes a guide to others, it may be a teacher in one of those high schools of the devil, where lust is inflamed and crime glorified. It is upon those fresh from their country homes, with all their inexperience and morbid curiosity that these resorts depend for recruiting the ever depleting ranks of their victims. The young man drifts thoughtlessly into the current of the outer circle of this great whirlpool. He is caught and held, before he is aware, in its mighty sweep. The motion at the outset is exhilarating, but the speed quickens and the circle narrows till he is swung round and round, powerless as a log in the funnel of the vortex, descending slowly, deeper and deeper with every turn, till he is plunged and swallowed up in the gurgling abyss at the bottom and by and by another bloated, battered and tattered wreck of humanity is cast upon the shore, carted off and flung into a nameless grave.