

# THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS PROBLEM.

By Rev. James L. Gordon, Central Congregational Church, Winnipeg.

## PROFESSIONALISM.

The dry rot in every profession is "professionalism." When doctors can witness pain and not sympathise with it. When preachers can gaze upon death-bed scenes and not be startled by the experience. When Y.M.C.A. officials can shake hands with homesick boys and not recognize an hour of crisis in the life of a soul. When the secretary of a charity bureau can ask a poor woman a score of questions, and not know that each question stings—then you have the curse of professionalism. An American exchange remarks: "Henry Dexter who died last week, founder and ex-president of the American News Company and generous philanthropist did not a few original things in his life. One hot summer day, ten years ago, when he was troubled with dizziness on the street, he took a cab and drove to a hospital which he had helped liberally in a financial way for many years. Without revealing his identity, he took a room as a private patient, and remained six days. His contributions to that hospital stopped thereafter. He did not approve the indifferent way in which a patient eighty-seven years old had been treated."

## POOR PROPHETS.

Josh Billings once said that a man had better not know so much than to know so many things which are not so. The average man who says a thing "won't work," is usually the man who is not working at the thing which "won't work." The worker "believes" the thing "will work." The man who is always telling you what won't happen is a poor prophet:—"It is only thirty years ago," said President Faunce, of Brown University, in a recent address, "since a New England college professor held up an incandescent lamp before his class and said, 'Gentlemen, this is a most interesting object. It can never be, of course, of any commercial value. It can never be used in the industries and arts, because the cost of production hinders that, but it is a beautiful, scientific toy.'"

## PLAIN ANGLO-SAXON.

Our language is spoken by one hundred and twenty million people. No other language has ever been spoken by so many people. It is the language of William Shakespeare and John Milton. It has been enriched, as no other language has, by contributions from every known tongue. I believe that some day it will be the universal language. The following from the vicar of St. Augustine, Sheffield, is interesting:—"This day, three and a half centuries ago, saw our nation in mourning for a dead and yet unburied king. For some three weeks past, the body of King Edward the Sixth lay in his death-chamber at Greenwich. It was not till the eighth of August that the royal barge came up the river to the stairs of Westminster, and the coffin was brought into this Abbey. They laid it in the east end of the Lady Chapel. The place is marked by an altar erected by Dean Stanley, and you can see the simple name on the floor. As you read it, I would ask you to remember that you are standing where the sound of your native tongue was first heard at the burial of a king, that there for the first time in history an Archbishop said farewell to an English sovereign in the language used by the people of England."

## GETTING AHEAD

The science of getting on in the world is the science of getting ahead of yourself. Last summer I watched a race in which a number of our college students were engaged, and the young man who carried off the first prize, was only thirty-six inches ahead of the man who followed on his heels. By such scant advantages do we win the battles of life. To see the opportunity and to be in position to seize it—that's the secret. In "The Fra" I read these words:—"Nathan Rothschild was on the battlefield of Waterloo on that memorable day, and as the sun went down he did not know whether Napoleon or Wellington was victor. No one knew. But Nathan says, 'As darkness came, I saw the English making campfires and the Germans were singing, and one was playing some sort of musical instrument.' We know the rest. Nathan Rothschild rode eighty miles before sunrise, and his message to his brother, 'Buy English Securities,' reached London twenty-four hours ahead of the official post. The move made the house of Rothschild supreme in finance."

## YOUR SCEPTRE.

"Kings and priests unto God" is a scriptural phrase, but not a fanciful suggestion. Every man sits on a throne. Every man is clothed in the garments of a divine royalty. Every man wields a sceptre. The pen—a sceptre. The spade—a sceptre. The yard stick—a sceptre. The artist's brush—a sceptre. The bandmaster's baton—a sceptre. A

man's tools are the instruments whereby he must achieve power and success. A king's sceptre is a useless thing compared with the rule in the hands of an architect. Zion's Herald remarks concerning a New England preacher:—"A copy of Millet's 'Angelus' was hanging in the back part of the pulpit. The minister called attention to the fact that the part of the picture lighted up by the setting sun was not the spire of the church, nor the man and woman standing with heads bowed as the ringing bell called them to prayer; but the illuminated things were the spade and wheelbarrow with which they had been working."

## TOLSTOY.

Tolstoy is dead. He was a great man, a great soul, and a great prophet. But he made his reputation as a writer. It was his literary genius which first commanded the attention of the world. The chief characteristic of his literary output consisted in the fact that it was so real and so true to life. All the circumstances of an experience were written with such strange vividness, even though their presentation caused an unpleasant impression on the mind. As a suggestion of Tolstoy's style of "realism" I submit the following:—"I remember once, when a bear attacked me and pressed me down under him, driving the claws of his enormous paw into my shoulder, I felt no pain. I lay under him and looked into his warm, large mouth, with its wet, white teeth. He breathed above me, and I saw how he turned his head to get into position to bite into both my temples at once; and in his hurry, or from excited appetite, he made a trial snap in the air, just above my head, and again opened his mouth—that red, wet, hungry mouth, dripping with saliva. I felt I was about to die, and I looked into that mouth as one condemned to execution looks into the grave dug for him. I looked, and I remember that I felt no fear or dread. I saw with one eye beyond the outline of that mouth a patch of blue sky gleaming between purple clouds roughly piled on one another, and I thought how lovely it was up there."

## MEN AND PRAYER.

Prayer is a natural instinct, and so men pray. All men pray. The strangest sort of men pray. Saloon keepers, railroad officials, variety actors, commercial promoters, wholesale liquor dealers, cabmen, motor-men, newspaper reporters—all these pray. Let a man, even an infidel, get into trouble, and he begins to pray. A beloved child on the verge of death, or a business concern on the verge of bankruptcy, and both father and merchant begin to pray. They can't help themselves. Henry M. Stanley remarks:—"On all my expeditions prayer made me stronger morally and mentally than any of my non-praying companions. It did not blind my eyes or dull my mind or close my ears; but on the contrary it gave me confidence. I have evidence satisfactory to myself that prayers are granted."

## GET READY.

I am not surprised if some men fail. I would be very much surprised if certain men succeeded. There are certain slipshod methods which imitate disaster. Yesterday I received a most important letter; important, at least, to the man who wrote it. It called for an answer, and it was important that the answer should be sent to the right address. There were two addresses given—one at the opening of the letter and the other at the close. Both were written so indistinctly that a Philadelphia lawyer would have found himself in despair. And so it goes. Hundreds of men fail because they deserve to fail. Rev. W. L. Watkinson remarks:—"Get ready for the position just above you and which may soon become vacant; the world is eagerly waiting for men who can do things five per cent. better than they're being done."

## CONCEITED YOUTH.

Young man, don't be afraid of people branding you as conceited. Most young fellows are conceited. A strong man is always conceited until he puts his powers to the test. The question is, can he crystallize his conceit. Can you create fact out of fancy and build mansions out of the raw material of your imagination, which, of course, would be one better than "building castles in Spain." Listen to Disraeli at twenty-nine:—"The world calls me conceited. The world is in error. I trace all the blunders of my life to sacrificing my own opinion to that of others. When I was considered very conceited indeed I was nervous and had self-confidence only by fits. I intend in future to act entirely from my own impulse. I have an unerring instinct—I can read characters at a glance; few men can deceive me. My mind is a continental mind. It is a revolutionary mind. I am only truly great in action. If ever I am placed in a truly eminent position, I shall prove this. I could rule the House of Commons, although there

would be a great prejudice against me at first. It is the most jealous assembly in the world. The fixed character of our English society, the consequence of our aristocratic institutions, renders a career difficult. Poetry is the safety-valve of my passions, but I wish to act what I write. My works are the embodiment of my feelings. In 'Vivian Grey' I have portrayed my active and real ambition. In 'Alroy' my ideal ambition. The 'Psychological Romance' is the secret history of my poetic character. This trilogy is the secret history of my feelings. I shall write no more about myself."

## AT A GLANCE.

Take things at a glance and weigh your first impressions. That first impression will always bring you a thought of real value. That first impression, before you have weighed or analysed it, has for you a special message—it is the message of your soul to your soul. "I remember the first time I saw you"—try and reproduce that memory. It was the heart's first photograph, and it is reliable as the record of a bit of flash-light information which will come to you in no other way. The private secretary of Cecil Rhodes says:—"Mr. Rhodes was a keen judge of character, and had a great liking for young men of spirit and integrity. He was a great reader of character, and almost invariably went by first impressions. I can remember several instances of well-connected young men applying to him for employment, backed up by letters of introduction from prominent men in England. If he thought that the applicant had a claim on him, or was an exceptionally good man, he would say to me, 'Ask him to call upon me. I want to see his face.' If he liked his face, he invariably went to some trouble to find him a post. . . . He appeared particularly partial to people with blue eyes. On more than one occasion I heard him make use of the following remark about a man he had met for the first time: 'I like him. He has clear blue eyes which look one straight in the face.'"

## FORCE.

"Force" can not be purchased at ten cents a package. It is not something which you can put in a yellow paper box and hand over a store counter. It is a quality of the soul. You can see it in the flash of the eye, feel it in the grasp of the hand, measure it in the swift movement of the foot, and behold it in the peculiar swing of one's personality. Force is the driving power of the soul. This is the thing which you feel in the thrill of the orator's voice. Great speakers have "force." Plutarch tells us that Cicero's friends feared he would kill himself by bursting a blood-vessel, with such intense energy did he speak. Cicero had force and the blood-vessel did not break.

## PRACTICE.

Preachers, as a class, are the best public speakers. Here and there in every community you will find a man with exceptional gifts as a public speaker, but omitting this special creation, this "man of genius," preachers excel as public speakers. Why? Because they are practicing the art. They speak to live, as it were, and then they live to speak. It becomes second nature. Practice makes perfect. Any man can be an effective public speaker if he "hits on" the style which suits his personality. Find out the style which suits your temperament and then practice. Von Bulow, the eminent pianist, is reported to have said, "If I stop practicing for one day I notice it in my playing; if I stop two days my friends notice it; if I stop three days the public notice it."

## LEGITIMATE AMBITION.

Most successful men are naturally ambitious. Upon the brow of each one is written something which tells of an inborn desire to succeed. Tennyson began life with a determination to be famous, and Lincoln said a thousand times in the days of his youth, "I intend to be somebody." Moody, as a retail boot and shoe man, wanted to "sell more goods than any other shoe man in Chicago." Of course, when he became an evangelist, he simply transferred his ambition from shoes to souls—and God was pleased. Listen to the words of John H. Vincent, the famous methodist bishop:—"I was a comparatively young man, but recently from the East, and was in Illinois to take charge of a pulpit which had been occupied by some of the strongest men of the Rock River Conference. Among the laymen of that church, in addition to Otis Hardy, were Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Niece, Mr. Mack and Hugh Norwood. I was a young man, something of a student, ambitious and eager to make a 'success.' I engaged in the work with the highest and best motives I could command. I trust that while the human incentives were present there was also an earnest desire to do good work for the glory of God and the benefit of those committed to my care."