

Pastor and People.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

JESUS—SHEPHERD.

C. C. WYLIE

When my steps shall still grow weary,
As I do His will,
He will guide me, He will aid me,
O'er the hill.

When with fear my heart shall tremble
And my grief be sore,
He will call me and I'll follow
Evermore.

When the vale with mist is shadowed,
Shall I absent roam?
Nay! His cross is aye my watchword,
And my home.

When I reach yon flowing river,
He will still endure,
And we'll stem the rushing torrent,
"Slow—but sure."

When I stand before the Father,
And the gloom is gone,
He will bid me sweetly welcome
To His throne.

Brampton, Oct. 28th, 1896.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

INFLUENCE.

BY EDITH A. BYERS

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE WORD
INFLUENCE.

The message of these pages has a peculiar interest for all, whether old or young, Christian or non-Christian. To all alike there come the words of Holy Writ, "No man liveth to himself." Christ's message is, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Man has never since his creation reached that state in which he is altogether independent of all outside influence. He has ever turned instinctively to someone or something beyond himself. When the first man was created, even he, that the mysterious plan of life might be carried out, was not left long alone, but soon human influence was brought to bear upon him; and so it has been down through the countless ages; humanity ever consciously and unconsciously influencing humanity, and, to-day, throughout the wide world, no man can be found, who consists, entirely, wholly, of his own individuality.

Part of one life is inseparably interwoven with another, the thoughts, words or actions of one reflected in others. Those few words we have spoken, that prayer we uttered or that sermon preached or heard, is being reproduced in the acts of some brother man. Even he, who dwells in distant lands, is living a life the results of which someone else is to a great degree responsible for, though we may not be able to trace each link of the connecting chain.

It has been said that we become like those with whom we associate; the little boy takes pride in doing as his father does, school children to imitate their teacher, or if there is a friend whom we admire, we try to become like him. Everyone, no matter how unimportant his life may seem, is setting an example which someone else will follow. Man was created with an imitative power, therefore everyone should seek to be a model from which his brother may take pattern.

Christians should be a copy of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, a reflection of His mind, disclosing His will and portraying His feelings. Christ's followers are sent to represent Him and to bear His message to others. Of what immense importance it is that they should not misrepresent Him, but rather that they should continually shed forth the perfume of a holy, consecrated life. The influence of such a life no one can measure.

If a grain of seed be placed in the ground the soil cannot help sending forth the nourishment which aids its growth and sustains its life. Neither can the rain which falls nor the sun which shines become of none

effect. So it is with us: we cannot live to ourselves.

Influence is indeed a solemn and awful power. It clings to us, and we cannot free ourselves from it. It is born with us and grows with our growth. It is manifest in every word and act. That hasty word may seem to have caused but a momentary depression, but that is not all; it intensified the ungodliness of some unbeliever; and it shamed some half converted one out of his penitent misgivings. It produced an influence slight but everlasting on the destiny of an immortal soul. Let us remember, then, the influence which words have, and guard against the hasty or unkind speech. The tongue is a mighty weapon which exerts an influence just in accordance with the use which we make of it.

In most gatherings of older or younger people there is a dangerous tendency to gossip. The affairs of others seem to possess a peculiar fascination as topics of conversation, and when the reputation of an acquaintance is under discussion we are sometimes tempted to add our mite to the evidence. He doeth well who keeps silence on subjects which are likely to tarnish his neighbor's good name. More harm is done than people imagine by the thoughtless chatter of idle tongues.

There are also the times when one is tempted to sudden anger, when some unjust accusation or undeserved taunt makes our angry passions rise; then is the time to remember, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Some unconverted friend may be watching, and our action may change the destiny of a human life and subdue and win the most obstinate nature. To acquire the ability to speak the word in season—that apt, tactful word, which always fits into the right place and smooths over the little difficulties of life—is a power which takes a great deal of patient effort to accomplish. We need to put bridles on our tongues that they will obey us, or they will be unruly evils and will cause many unhappy hours for others and lack of friendship and love for ourselves.

Influence has been compared to a stream of water, small in the beginning, but becoming at last a mighty river. A life seemingly uneventful, with nothing apparently but the daily round of household duties, the trivial work in office or store, has an influence which may sway the world. That child under a parent's or teacher's control, that boy or girl with whom one may be thrown into contact every day, may have talents and capabilities which if exercised in the right direction will make them of untold benefit to the world. They will not be blameless who neglect to awaken and call into exercise the good that was in them. How great the sin that has abused the opportunity afforded by blunting those capabilities for good through an evil influence.

But it was not without purpose that God created man with such marvellous depths of sympathy and love. It is the kind word, the bright smile, and the sympathetic touch which make life beautiful and cast sunshine on a rough, dark path. Surely, that is a great power which is able to lighten another's life and help another on life's journey. How mighty a power is that which may be the means of leading a soul Godward.

To young people just on the threshold of life, with all its possibilities before them, this subject of influence has a special interest. If they could only see what results depend upon their acts, what interests of a perishing world or a struggling church are involved in their character and efforts; if they could comprehend the immensity of the work there is to do, the tremendous issues at stake, the eternal destinies that may be affected, surely many now heedless would awake to their responsibilities, would walk circumspectly, would put away the trifling vanities of this world, would resolve to do all the good in their power, and endeavor so to live and act that their lives may be a blessing to mankind.

To be truly useful and helpful to others, to have our lives, as it were, shedding a

perpetual divine influence, just as a flower steadily bestows its fragrance upon the air, we must learn the lesson of self-sacrifice. According to our Lord's teaching we can only make the most of our life by losing it. He says "that losing the life for His sake is finding it." There is a lower self within us that must be overcome by the higher self. True living is really a succession of battles in which the better triumphs over the worse, the spirit over the flesh.

We must be willing, then, to lose our life, to sacrifice ourselves, to give up our own way, our own ease and comfort, possibly even our own life. But we must not fear that in such renunciation we shall lose anything. God remembers every deed of love, every act of self-sacrifice. Though we work in obscure places and though no human tongue shall ever sound our praise, the bread which we have cast upon the waters will not return unto us void. The seed which we have sown will one day be reaped and then a rich and glorious reward will be given.

"The good we do with motives true
Will never quite be lost;
But somewhere in time's distant blue
We gain more than it cost.
And oft I think a strange surprise
Will meet us as we gain
Some diadem that hidden lies,
From deeds we thought in vain.

Oh toiler in a weary land,
Work on with cheerful face;
And sow the seed with lavish hand,
With all the gentle grace
That marks a brave yet loving soul,
A soul of royal birth,
And golden harvests shall enfold
Your own bright blessed earth."

Let us empty out our life in loving service making it a lasting blessing to the world and we shall be remembered forever and the influence of our good deeds shall live on. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Elmvale, Ont.

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"JOHN ROSS, OF BRUCEFIELD."

Those who knew Mr. Ross will recognize the man in the following anecdotes; and those who never met him will still recognize a personality quite unlike the ordinary run of men:

A brother minister stepped with him into an hotel dining-room in Paris, I think. They sat down at one of the tables, and waited to be served. At the table behind them were several men, evidently Roman Catholics, whose tongues seemed to revel in blasphemy. Probably the presence of the Protestant ministers gave a keener relish to their evil employment, for their talk waxed louder and more offensive while the new comers listened. The ministers kept silence for a while, and then Mr. Ross' companion looked keenly over at them and gave them a word of advice. This only made them talk louder and faster. In a little Mr. Ross rose from his seat, and stepped over to the noisy crew. He went straight to the worst of them, laid his hand upon his shoulder and said gently, "Friend, you and I both owe too much to Jesus Christ to speak ill of Him." That was all, but it was enough.

A young man called early one morning at the manse, and wanted to see the master of the house. The information that he had not yet risen did not have the desired effect. He said he would wait. He had important business and could not call again. Mr. Ross being reluctantly summoned, was not long in making his appearance. The visitor turned out to be an agent wanting to leave a comparatively worthless book that was to cost \$4.50.

Mr. Ross looked perplexed, and turned the book over several times as if he did not quite know what to do. Then he looked at the young stranger with a curious mixture of kindness, concern and amusement in his face. He said:

"I know you have my name down for this book, but do you remember how you got it, and on what condition it was given?"

The young man made no reply.

"You got it simply because you would not go away without it; and you got it with the distinct understanding that if I should be out of money when you brought it, I should be free."

No answer, only a darkening of countenance.

"Now, I have no money."

Still no answer but an increase of gloom.

Then Mr. Ross went on in a different tone:

"But I'll tell you what I will do. You have my name. Though you know I am free in the circumstances, still, you have my name. If you leave the book and give me your address, I shall send you the money when it comes in."

How the agent's countenance beamed its satisfaction and surprise while his tongue expressed his pleasure at the arrangement. He handed his address and was promptly bowing himself out, when Mr. Ross stopped him, saying:

"Wait a little," and, taking up his Bible bound in soft black leather, a Bible many who knew him will remember, he asked, "Do you ever read this book?"

"Yes sir, sometimes."

There was a light in the minister's eye as he went on:

"But only reading it will not do you any good. Now, see here. This is a book full of promises to which the name of the living God is solemnly attached. But does the mere reading of a promise make it yours? Now, suppose this morning instead of coming to me with my promise you had taken out your order book, and driven past my door reading my order with my name attached—reading it over and over as you went along—would that have done you any good? But you did not stop at reading my promise this morning. You came in here and asked me to fulfil it, and though you know I could honorably have got out of it, yet I had such a regard to my own name that I gave you what you wanted as far as it was in my power. Now do you see the power God has given us over Himself when He has given us His name? If a man will do much for the honor of his name, what may we not expect from the God of infinite and everlasting truth? Then the way to use this power is not merely to read over His promise, but to bring them back to Himself in a business-like way, as you did mine to me this morning. Use this Bible this way, and you will find it a perfect mine of wealth and power. Goodbye."

He shook hands kindly with the young stranger, and then turned back for a little to the well-worn Bible of which he had been speaking, consciously the richer for the happy illustration the circumstances of the morning had given him. Did the young man learn to use the marvellous key so distinctly laid into his hand, who can tell?

There is a mile between the old Brucefield manse and the village. While passing up this bit of road one day Mr. Ross was met by a young man selling books, who stopped and asked him to inspect his stock. He did as desired, but I am not informed whether he made a purchase or not, though judging by character and consequences, probably he did. After satisfying the young man with attention to what he had to show, he opened the Bible he carried in his hand and said:

"Now, sir, I have looked at your books, will you listen to mine?"

Then he read to him a passage or two which seemed to himself, and the listener as well, a message straight from heaven. So deep was the impression on both, that the minister did what was not usual with him, he proposed prayer then and there. They knelt down together on the roadside, and the voice of faith went up into the ear of the Faithful. Then Mr. Ross went his way, and the young stranger went his, but the change wrought there was like that on Zaccheus as he came down from the tree. From that hour he walked through life under a new Master, lived as a decided Christian, and became an elder in the congregation of the minister who reported the circumstances of his conversion.

It is hoped that something in the shape of memoirs of Mr. Ross will shortly be given to the public. Anyone having characteristic anecdotes about him, or striking utterances, or any material that might be helpful in executing the work, will render a great kindness by sending them on as soon as possible to Mrs. Anna Ross, Clinton, Ont.