

OPPORTUNITY.

(By Rev. J. H. Turnbull, B.A.)

Opportunity comes to us all, and is therefore of interest to us all. Some lives are in this, as in other respects, more richly endowed than others, but no life is entirely destitute. Literally, the word refers to what is just opposite the harbor, and suggests the vessel coming in from the deep sea. For a long time she has been on her monotonous and uncertain way, but now the object of her voyage is near. The harbor entrance is sighted, and yonder, within its peaceful shelter, lies the city with its wharves and storehouses. Success is not quite attained, but the way to it seems clear and open. The difficulties and uncertainties of the voyage are practically past.

In life, to carry out the figure, we may say that we cruise before many a harbor. There may be seasons of monotony and uncertainty, but one day we shall surely lift up our eyes and see the harbor straight before us. Indeed we shall probably come within sight of many ports, and perhaps will wisely choose to pass some by, since we have more important business to transact farther on.

Life is prodigal of her gifts in every department. For the one plant or animal that survives, the hundreds or thousands are called into existence. The development and maturity of one must come through the sacrifice of many. So with opportunity. To attempt to preserve and perpetuate every opportunity is to lose all. If the traveler on a journey attempts to follow, even for a little, every way that opens into his, he will never get ahead. If the vessel having any special mission, attempts to enter into every harbor, the special business will surely suffer.

There are, therefore, many opportunities that must be neglected by the life that would succeed. This is only another way of saying that our way must be purposely narrowed and pent-up. Leaving out of account the thousand ways of death, which open from the life-course of every person, there are countless ways leading to desirable ends which certain persons with propriety may pursue which must be sedulously shunned by us. A successful merchant remarked, that in all his business career, in his ventures outside, he had never made a dollar to the good. The ventures were all legitimate and most of them had eventually brought gain to some one, but he had been foolish to meddle with them. Experience teaches the wise man, that there are plenty of opportunities of making money to which he must purposely be blind. And the same truth holds in every department of life.

But if many opportunities must be neglected, some must be embraced. We must learn to recognize our suitable opportunities and to improve them to the fullest extent.

Paul says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men." In connection with every opportunity, there is the possibility of doing good. Do not act as though the admonition were, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us secure our own advantage in favors or benefits for our friends." The Christian ideal is the unselfish ideal—always. There is no limit to what any of us may accomplish if we take the apostle's words as our motto.

Ottawa.

ALTITUDES OF FAITH.

By J. Marvin Nichols.

"To faith's enlightened sight,
All the mountains flame with light;
Hill is high—but God is higher,
"Circling us with hosts of fire."

The eye would suffer pain were it not that it looks upon one vast panorama. Vision is restful because of its ever-changing view. It is not one weary expanse. Heights and valleys, rolling prairies and wooded hills, barren wastes and fruitful fields, clouds big with refreshing showers and the skies

that look like brass—all this mighty sweep of vision is saved from weariness by things that are near and different. Far-off horizons suddenly draw near. Monotony is an evil and the source of life's unrest. That which breaks the even tenor is always a blessing.

I shall never forget how that once I was startled by the ocean itself. Beneath me were its fathomless depths. Above me a cloudless dome of blue, unbroken only when the stars stole out to keep their vigils. To my right and to my left, stretched a weary waste whose distant rim seemed all but to touch the sky. A dead calm is always unendurable. In the grip of the storm the ocean is sublime. There's a charm in the wild witchery of the waves. The whispering winds tell their story. The pounding sea throbs on. We listen to the restless sighings of the ocean. It thrills us in its effort to break away from eternal confinement. Sometimes, in the distance, fringed heights lift their heads from the depths below. It is restful to mark the headlands that fret the tides as they come and go. Vision never tires of watching the crested waves as they dance and gleam. We love to gaze on the thick-plumed squadrons of the sea. So it always is. At last, that which serves to break the monotony of life is always a blessing. It may be the tempest—it may be the storm; no matter which.

The life of faith has its long level stretches. Because there are valleys, there are the high and holy hills. Long distances are gone over in the earthly pilgrimage. These plains would always be desolate were it not that here and there are the heights that loom into view.

Faith's broad experience has its common stretches. There are plains that border along earth's low-grounds. Here the air is laden with the deadly miasma that rises from the bogs not far away. Thank God! Beyond us are the hills. These are the altitudes where the air is pure and fragrant. These are not the common places.

Right in the midst of life's toilsome journey, we come to fastnesses among whose heights we can shut out the world's loud roar. The years of wandering in the desert are forgotten when we reach the crest of some radiant Neb. Sinai's wilderness is lost to view when we sit down on some Pisgah's height. Into such experiences God sometimes suddenly lifts us. We shall not always abide in the valley. From these enrapturing summits we survey, with unrestricted vision, the land of promise. The outlook cannot be had in the vales that are so long and deep. The very hills restrict our vision and we cannot see beyond. Only from the hilltops comes the over-expanding vision. The higher the summits the more distant the horizon.

Some day, thank God, we shall come to heights so lofty that there will be no more horizon—we shall find the undimmed vision. God will invite us to sit down in faith's awful altitudes. Life's horizon will fade away—the mountains will flame with light. The very air will be populous with the ransomed and the blood-washed. Faith's enlarged sight will survey undreamed realms. We shall find ourselves in company with all our loved and lost in the years gone by. The holy hush will be broken only by redemption's song. The very discords of life will be gathered up into one vast symphony. And we shall see that far down the river of God lies all our richer inheritance.

Thank God for these holy heights! They do not lead back to the valleys whence we came. They lead out upon the high plateaus and bring us again to heights yet far more lofty. In life's pilgrimage there are vast and tire-some stretches. Some sweet day we shall be lost amid the hills of God. Oh, yes—it is a pilgrimage—but from faith to faith, from glory to glory. Some day the altitudes will be so high that the tumult of earth will never reach us. The jars and jargon of the earth will be swallowed up in the music of the spheres.

LESSONS FROM JOHN'S GOSPEL.*

By Robert E. Speer.

We believe in the deity of Christ on satisfactory evidence. That is one lesson of this Gospel of John. It was for the purpose of setting forth such evidence, with a view to producing such belief, that the Gospel was written (John 20: 30, 31). Many men who doubted have been converted and convinced as they read in this Gospel. Louis Harms, the founder of the Hermsburg Mission was converted thus.

Jesus Christ is more than any words describing him can indicate to us. In metaphor after metaphor he presents himself but each one only hints at his glory. Language has to be broken open to let in the real meanings which he came to give to it, so that it might preserve them for others and carry them throughout the world. Consider his claim, "I am the light of the world." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." None of these words define Christ. He cannot be confined in any set of words. He is God in the flesh. John's Gospel shows him to be that.

We learn from him here the lesson of the loftiness of lowly service. On the last evening, we read that Jesus "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself." In the full realization of his divine character, his origin and his destiny, he rose and stooped and served. So we see that the life of God is the serving life, the life of love and care. That is a lesson above all others. If our Lord and God considered this to be life, when shall we begin to live?

The Gospel of John records for us the new commandment of Jesus. He gave few commandments. He was ever revealing principles. But this one principle he put in the form of a commandment and he told them it was new. "Love." But was that new? The Old Testament had ever bidden men to love. Yes, but this was a new love. The old love had been "as yourself." The new love was to be "better than yourself." Now men were to love with a love like Christ's, unselfish, everlasting, and only by such love would men accredit themselves as his disciples and subdue the world. Are we loving any one with such love? It was to be no rare and exceptional thing. All Christians were thus to love.

Here we see Jesus praying. His prayers elsewhere are just bits, but here we have a great, full prayer. It is in the seventeenth chapter. It begins "Father" and it nowhere addresses God otherwise. Indeed, Jesus always addressed God thus "Father." Why do we not always do so? Instead of that we often begin our prayers in the chill of the divine attributes instead of in the warmth of a Father's love. And in the prayer observe how little Jesus asked for himself and how much for others. There is just one petition for himself, in verse 1, repeated in verse 5. All the other requests are for others, for his disciples and for those who were to believe.

John saw what is seen only by the eyes of love. The world and life and God are all different to the eyes of love and faith. We need the vision which pierces beyond the outer shell and discerns the inward reality. Then we shall find love, and life, and God everywhere.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—Life and Light (John 1: 1-13).

Tues.—How Jesus found me (John 1: 40-51).

Wed.—Heavenly things (John 3: 12, 13, 16-21).

Thurs.—The living Fount (John 4: 10, 14: 7-37).

Fri.—The living Bread (John 6: 52-59.)

Sat.—The pledge of life (John 20: 1-18).

*Y. P. Tople—Sunday, July 11, 1909. Life Lessons for me from the Gospel of John. (John 14: 1-2.)