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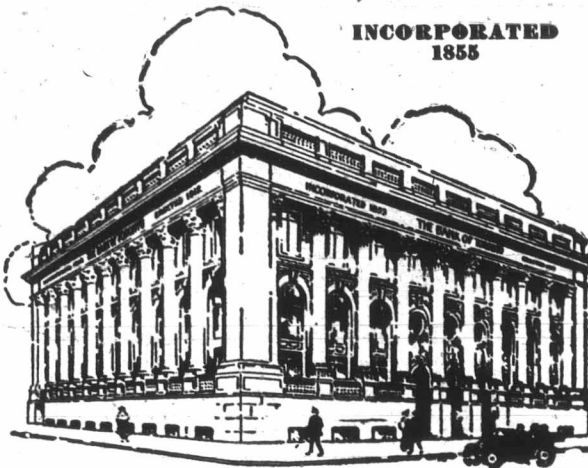
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## A STUDY IN FAITH

By A. D. B.

HE was a man of sixty or so. His grizzled hair and beard and jovial face were a familiar sight in the chapel choir. He hadn't much voice to boast of, but as he said, "with the lads all away it's up to us old 'uns to do our bit," and his boy, his only boy, had been one of the best singers in the choir.

Although this was the only official position held by him in the little Non-conformist church, he was very well known to most of the congregation, for he interpreted his membership seriously and was most determinedly friendly with all whom he met. He had one great talent—the art of talking naturally and unaffectedly and freely about the things of the soul. For this reason, doubtless, those who had boys at the front or far across the world were glad to speak with him.

"Well," he would say after the services to this friend and that, "we've prayed for them again to-day so we can carry an easy mind." "The Lord will have them in His keeping." And his simple words carried great comfort, for all knew how much his only son meant to this man.

Often in conversation he would catch the tone of sympathy underlying the usual inquiry as to how his son was doing, and, as though conscious of the challenge to his faith, would reply with his brightest smile, "I have prayed for my boy, morning, noon and night since we parted—I have no fear of what may happen. The Lord knows best." It is easy, then, to imagine the grief and pain that the minister felt when he found himself one morning faced by that grim, and yet so usual, task that falls to the minister's lot—the task of breaking the news that death had claimed another "only" son.

With sinking heart and bruised faith the minister made his way to the good man's home. There could be no doubt of the news. He held in his hand the letter from a chaplain chum who knew the lad and the father, and for that reason had written to him. "Was there, perhaps, presumption and sin," he wondered dully, "in so strong and assertive a faith in prayer that it should be visited with so cruel a reward?" He trembled for the effect of the news, not merely upon the man but upon the whole church.

How gently he tried to break the news! It was never unnatural, somehow, to mention Scripture to this man, so he began: "Do you remember that beautiful verse in Romans which speaks about God—giving up—His only Son—freely—for us all?" Then quietly he spoke of the chaplain's letter and its contents.

For a moment the good fellow covered his eyes.

"I know how you have prayed," said the minister. "It is very hard."

Quickly the hand fell from the eyes—quickly those eyes searched the minister's face radiant with a great light of faith and firmly and clearly these great words came:—

"Sir, you misunderstand. My heart is grieved because it will be so much longer till I see my boy again, but not because I doubt God's love. Because I prayed—just because I put him, morning noon and night in the Lord's hands—I know he can only have gone by the Lord's good will, and I am content. If I had not prayed, then indeed I might have felt that only man's wicked will had done this thing; but as it is"—(and he lifted his eyes to heaven)—"Thy will be done!"

The minister's heart gave a bound of relief; a wave of reverence and of conviction poured into his soul; he knew he had listened to a great prophetic word of God.

On the following Sunday the "Man of Faith" was in his usual place in the choir.

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