

A Sunday Afternoon Meditation.

BY REV. JAMES SPRUNT.

Gideon, with but a handful of men, by the help of the Lord, put to flight the host of Midian. The Lord saved Gideon, but it was by the three hundred men. Remember this, it is well to notice that it is said of these men, that "they stood every man in his place."

In our battles for the Lord in these days are we not in a state of weakness often, and do we not continually suffer defeat because our "helpers in the war," as they like to be called, are not doing what these men of Gideon did?

We notice especially four things: (1) Every man stood in his place. (2) Every man stood in his place. (3) Every man stood in his place. (4) Every man who stood was a man.

1. Every man stood in his place. Not one was missing. Now we know that the success of the work of the Lord in any place depends in some measure upon those Christians who are immediately associated with it. The church that is supported by Christians who are always in their place must be successful, but the work that depends upon run-about Christians will sooner or later fail to the ground.

But not only will the work suffer for this running about; the run-about Christians will suffer themselves. It may be very nice to leave your own little meeting to hear Mr. So-and-so in the big church in the next district, and it may also be "a great treat" to sit at the feet of Mr. What's-his-name, who never fails to give you a "good time." But, depend upon it, the run-about Christian will become unhealthy in his own spiritual life, and will become of little use to any one. The majority of God's people need a great measure of the grace of stick-at-it-ness.

2. Every man stood in his place. Every one could be relied on, and counted upon to do his duty. We need men of this stamp to-day. Men who are standing in their place ready for anything.

Marching if "Onward" shall the order be;

or
Standing by their Captain, serving faithfully.

Most of us, when we were first converted, were ready to go anywhere and to do anything for him who loved us and gave himself for us. But are we ready now?

Thank God for the increased knowledge he has given us of his Word, but that ought not to have made us any the less ready to go and do some simple service for him. Brother, in the name of the Lord, lay aside your weights and gird up your loins! Get at the next thing. Don't wait for some great opportunity, but remember that all work that contributes to a great end is great; as the old rhyme has it, "For the want of a nail kingdom was lost."

3. Every man stood in his place. They were not running up and down to see what the others were doing. Every man was minding his own business. If God has given you work to do, then do it, and leave other folks' work alone. Unless God has called you to be an "over-seer," don't try to make yourself one.

Somehow, in these days, every one wants to be at the top. It is evident, however, that all can not be leaders. God has called some to take a prominent position, but he looks to every one to serve according to his abilities. Dr. McLaren well says, "What does it matter whether we have been set to dig out the foundation, working amongst mud and wet, or have laid the lowermost courses, which are all covered up and forgotten, or happen to be among those who bring forth the head-stones with shoutings? We are the builders all the same. The main thing is to have some work there."

Wherever in the world I am,

In whatsoever estate,

I have a fellowship with hearts

To keep and cultivate;

And a work of lowly love to do

For the Lord on whom I wait.

4. Every one who stood was a man. Brother, in your service for the Lord do you act, do you speak as a man? You may, perhaps, for the truth's sake be called upon to stand almost alone. Be a man, keep firm and faithful to the Lord and to his word. "Quit you like men, be strong" (I Cor. 16: 13). Stick to it with all your heart and soul and strength, don't be frightened into giving up, either by the smiles of friends or the threatening of foes. If the truth is worth believing, then believe and keep on believing. The moment we let go the Word of God, that very moment will our spiritual vision become confused, and our testimony will be but a futile representation of that which in apostolic days "turned the world upside down."—London Baptist.

Unfaithful Stewardship.

BY REV. E. WAT POLE WARREN, D. D.

For instance, let me give you one or two concrete illustrations of the kind of thing I mean. A lady comes up to me in New York—and I wish I could say a lady; I wish I didn't have to say hundreds of ladies. They come to me with a tale like this: They say, "Dr. Warren, what upon earth am I to do with my boys? I don't know. I have no influence over them any longer. They won't do

anything that I tell them. As to going to church on Sunday morning, they distinctly and flatly refuse. I can do nothing with them. What am I to do?" I say, "I am afraid this may be a case of put out of the stewardship," for I want you to realize, my friends, that this is stewardship, and this account of stewardship is not something that is to come at the end of life; it is not to come at the last day; it is not a part of that great final judgment; it is something that is going on at every moment of our respective lives; and if we are found to be wasting our goods that fearful sentence is passed on us, "Thou art put out of thy stewardship; thou mayst no longer be steward." So I have to say to this poor mother who comes to me, "I am afraid this is a case of put out of the stewardship."

"Oh!" she says, "what do you mean?" "Why, I mean this: When that little babe or child was given to you, you used it as a toy. You played with it; you laughed at its cunning cute ways. You spoiled your child. You gave it to a nurse or a governess, and you didn't trouble yourself any more until the boy had grown up to a companionable age. His little follies and weaknesses and naughtinesses were passed by with you, and you said to him, as he stamped his foot on the ground, 'How cute.' And what about the mother's influence, and what about the training of the child that was given to you to be trained for the eternal kingdom, and knew no such training from its mother's lips. I am afraid if ever that boy, madam, is to be brought back again to his God, it will not be through you, unless, mark that 'unless'."

Who are the "they" who are going to meet you when you pass on to the other side? Who are the "they?" Oh, I could imagine that the mother says: "Oh, my little one. I lost that little one as a child, and my greatest and brightest hope is that when I go across the bar I may meet my pilot, and my little one shall throw her arms around my neck again, and I shall clasp her to my heart."

But why? Why? Why should that little one receive you? You gave it over to a nurse to train; you gave it over to a governess. A Sunday-school teacher; indeed, may see the little one, and the little one rush to the teacher and throw her arms around her, for the teacher taught her to know the Lamb of God; but you, why should they receive you?

Or it may be that a wife says: "Oh, I have been waiting all these years, and I hope the first thing my eyes shall open upon is my husband." But, why? Why? When he lived on earth you hindered, you didn't help him heavenward. How many of you wives have brought your husbands to Christ? Some faithful friend, some pastor, some one else has brought him so that he received Jesus as his Savior, but you—no.

We never talked together; I never could introduce the subject. I don't know; sometimes I am afraid I did not show a Christian life and example. I got irritable and angry, and I made him say, "If this is Christianity I don't care much about it." Why should he meet you? Your husband—I speak now with feeling—it may be you have a wife in heaven, and you think that your happiness would be utterly shattered if her arms are not around you when you cross into the golden gate. But why? Why should she come to meet you? Didn't you laugh at her religion! Didn't you make it hard for her sometimes to be religious? Didn't you try to tell her things that would stop what you called "that too much religion?" Didn't you make her a skeptic on this, and forbid her that, and refuse your sanction to something else, so that if she entered heaven it was over, not through you. And you expect her to meet you. No. Some one—some female friend, or it may be some earthly pastor she may come running to the gates of heaven to welcome, one who showed her the gate—but you; you stand alone. To stand alone, the crowds thronging in and the crowds looking out, and not a face you recognize to receive you into your everlasting habitation. Oh, the loneliness, the awful loneliness, entering heaven alone. I wonder if anybody ever did? Sometimes it seems to me that no one could go alone into the Kingdom of God; he must have some one to take with him.—Watchman.

A Suggestion Concerning a Revival.

There seems to be among the churches of the N. B. Eastern Association, and perhaps also of others—a sort of spiritual poverty—a great dearth so far as conversions to Christ are concerned. A very large part of the membership of the churches are not in any sense spiritually or even materially interested in the affairs of the Kingdom of God. Worldliness and the secular spirit have grown with such astonishing rapidity that many of them have lost their power in witnessing to the truths of evangelical religion, and many—like the man in the allegory—have lost their testimony altogether. The one remarkable thing about the early Christians was, that when they were filled with the Holy Ghost they all began to speak. Says one of these Spirit-filled men, we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard; and many times in the Acts do we read of similar ideas.

We do not need to go back to the first century to find

how true this is. When men and women are filled with the Spirit they will witness with power to the saving truths of Christ. Some, of course, will say religion consists in deeds rather than words.

It is sufficient in reply to this to simply say that religion is doing the will of God as expressed in his Word. And that in order to do God's will every sincere Christian knows that speech, as well as other powers, must be used in fulfilling the will of God. Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord, and who can witness for Christ by keeping silent? I believe there will never be a general revival of religion in our Province or Provinces until the members of the churches in larger number confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus; as well as believe in their hearts that God hath raised him from the dead. We need this awful mute, dumb devil cast out.

Many of our churches stand in populous districts where a large percentage of the people are not acquainted with the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. There does not seem to be any special sense of responsibility or burden of soul in this great matter. As Baptists we believe that man's opportunity for salvation is limited to this life only.

We believe also that the churches of Christ exist for the purpose of giving the gospel of God's grace to those who do not know of it. If our neighbor dies without a knowledge of this salvation he is lost forever—to community and fellowship with God.—Certainly a terrible thought! According to Ezek. 33—the responsibility of such a fearful calamity does not rest upon the church or individual in the church—if these have done their duty. A careful perusal of such a Scripture would lead to earnest living, anxious, constant prayer that we might not fall in such a great work. In view of all the facts, it has been impressed upon my mind with great power that if the churches in the Convention could decide upon a given day, when all could meet for confession and prayer, earnest pleading for God's power to be made manifest, that perhaps there would be simultaneously inaugurated in our provinces, the greatest religious quickening we have ever seen.

The time is at hand and ripe for some such concerted action on the part of the churches. There are many earnest hearts already desirous of seeing better days, many praying for the spirit of God to move upon the hearts of the people and this is a good omen.

There could be a system of pastoral exchange—in special works, be an effort in every locality in the provinces without any special evangelistic assistance in many cases.

There might be others who have some suggestion along this line. Why could there not be some day set apart prior to the new year, for special confession and prayer and thus prepare the way for a great work at the opening of the New Year?

J. B. GANONG.

Hillsboro.

The Making of a Man.

It is not wealth, nor power, nor fame, nor learning that makes a man. These may aid when properly used. But with them all one would be weak and comparatively worthless without righteousness. Does not the Bible say, "There is none righteous?" The verdict that human nature is bad is almost unanimous among thinkers. Theologians of nearly every school subscribe to the doctrine of human depravity, although each must give his own definition to the term. Philosophers, poets, and writers of fiction, those men and women of genius who have taken in hand to interpret nature to man, and man to himself, with wicked voice declare that the heart of man is desperately wicked. All are not equally wicked, but all have gone out of the way. They have turned everyone to his own way.

How this awful state of affairs came about is a question concerning which thinkers are not agreed. We are not so much concerned to know why men became bad as we are to find out how they may become good. Nearly all men wish to be pure and right and good in word, thought, and deed. But something within as well as something without hinders. There is something in the will, in the desires, in the affections, in the conscience, that rises up in opposition to every noble and pure impulse and purpose. When they would do good evil is present. This is not only the teaching of the Bible, it is also the teaching of universal experience. The apostle is very emphatic when he says, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It is the glory of Christianity that is able to make bad men good. Heathen religions do not require goodness. According to the doctrines of paganism the gods are better pleased with sacrifices and offerings than with righteousness. If the dues of the gods are paid, a certain stipulated amount of corn and wine and oil and gold and silver, the worshiper who has thus discharged his religious obligations may feel himself at liberty to follow his own inclinations. The general who makes a bargain with Jupiter or Mars to build a temple or slaughter so many thousand sheep and oxen if he wins the battle need not concern himself about the righteousness of the cause or the motives of his own heart.