

It is magnificently worth while to purpose in your heart to do the noble thing, both for your own sake and for the sake of others. It is indeed upon that high plane of thought the apostle Paul moved when he discussed with the Corinthian Church the problem concerning the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. Our leaguers will remember his conclusion and his declared purpose of heart, "If eating meat cause my brother to offend (and if eating it will not save him from offending), I will eat no more meat while the world standeth."

It is probable that the eating of the king's meat and the drinking of the king's wine would have brought Daniel into conflict with Jewish law at more than one point. We will not pause over that question, but, as we have already intimated, many of his companions argued that "when you are in Rome you must do as the Romans do," and conformed at once to the customs of Babylon. Their Jewish principles seemed excellent enough to them at home, but here in Babylon with a king's favor to gain and a new atmosphere to breathe, it seemed foolish to stand by them too rigidly, and therein they were not unlike some modern Christians who in the foreign land or in the easy moral atmosphere of a summer watering-place what they would by no means dream of doing at home amidst life's ordinary surroundings. Daniel, however, was of a different stamp. He was as ambitious as any of his fellows, and as determined to make his way as he could. But with him principle was principle in Babylon as well as in Jerusalem. He was not like Kipling's character who sings:

"Ship me somewhere east of Suez,  
Where the best is like the worst,  
Where there ain't no ten commandments,  
And a man can raise a thirteenth."

To Daniel divine laws were operative "east of Suez" as well as west of it. His ethics were not subject to climatic changes. He knew that a man had to be as wholeheartedly clean in Babylon as in Jerusalem if he were to stand clear before the bar of his own conscience. That is one of the great lessons he teaches us.

#### THE WISDOMENESS OF DANIEL'S PIETY.

But the writer is not quite sure that the largest lesson of this story does not come to us through Daniel's manner of carrying out his purpose rather than through the purpose itself. At any rate it is quite worth noticing that with all the granite-like unyieldingness of Daniel's religious principle, there was also a wisdom about his piety that went far toward easing what would otherwise have been a very rough pathway. It is a fine art to be wisely good—to be good in such a fashion that your personality does not become so harsh, cold, austere, or sombre as to make men despise your goodness and grow antagonistic to it. It is the glory of our Lord that His goodness did not drive simple souls away from Him, but drew them to His side and created in them a hunger for a righteousness like His, and it is likewise the glory of Daniel's piety that it does not seem to have robbed him of the favor of those most affected by it—the officers who were charged with the oversight of him as a promising young captive. True, the author of the story explains that it was God who "had brought Daniel into tender favor with the prince of the eunuchs," but experience has probably taught all of us that the way God has of bringing good men into favor with their fellows is to help them develop a lovable personality. Since the world began God never brought an unlovable into the tender favor of anybody except by

that method. When He gets a Christian "diamond in the rough," He straightway sets to work polishing it, and only when He has done this does it begin to win favor. If you are a "rough diamond," you had better let God do some polishing and cutting at you. It is worth while having your religion and your loyalty to God, other way of saying that consecrated tact has a place in every well-regulated Christian life. Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself," and if it had come to a sharp conflict of wills between him and the chief eunuch, or he no doubt that his ultimatum would have been, "Kill me if you will, but eat I will not." But it speaks volumes for his common sense and for his tact that he did not create any unnecessary initial antagonism by the way in which he announced his purpose. He began with a

pleading tone; he appealed to the chief eunuch's better feelings and "requested that he might not defile himself." And when the eunuch pointed out that he would endanger his own head by making the requested concession, Daniel did not hotly blurt out a defiance as some might have done. He interpreted the eunuch's answer to mean that if Daniel could induce some meaner official to favor him, he, the eunuch, would wink at the irregularity. Then Daniel turned to the steward or butler, who probably had direct oversight of his diet, and made to him the proposition of a ten days' trial of pulse and water—a sane and conservative proposition that won the officer's consent, because among other things it promised probably to put something into his pocket through expenses saved. And so Daniel's piety won out, because it mixed itself with a little consecrated tact, and made itself winsome.

## Homes or Tenements

Luke 2: 40-52.

TOPIC OF WEEK OF DECEMBER 23.

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THE Home with its sacred traditions and precious memories is fast disappearing from our Anglo-Saxon civilization. It is being seriously undermined by the social changes accompanying the industrial revolution. The trend from the old historic home to the modern tenement means more for the success or ruin of our civilization than any other thing. The material, as well as the spiritual, and religious development of the home life is dependent upon the conservation of the home life. It is never wise to claim that the present is not as good as the past, and seek to preserve the home in its old-fashioned type. Let us conserve all that is true and essential, and adjust it to our present conditions. The progress of our civilization is wrought up with the integrity of the home type.

The Home, as a social unit, is constituted by two personalities blending their lines into a community life—physical, mental, moral and spiritual. God made man and woman equal and complementary. But they were to become "one flesh" in marriage. It is this fusion of two personalities, that creates the social, moral and spiritual atmosphere in the home, necessary for the normal growth of the children. "The physical is the only, nor by any means, the permanent, foundation in marriage. This must be found in the same fraternal spirit which guarantees a perpetuation of the Kingdom. Just as this ideal society is independent of physical bounds and changing physical elements, so is the spiritual basis of the marriage relation to be independent in spiritual rather than physical unity." We must not forget, that we hand down to our children—not simply the physical heritage, but the whole personality and the environment in which that personality can best thrive. For this reason Jesus allowed no other ground for divorce than that of adultery. "Marriage is a fundamental human relation. It is in its normal condition when monogamous. It is something more than a living together of man and woman. It is the psychical as well as the physical completion of personality."

The home furnishes almost the sole educational influence upon the child for the first seven years. Since so long a period of helplessness characterizes the early life of human beings, some form of protection and care in family life is necessary for the preservation of the race. In the home we find

the executive, legislative and judicial departments, with all the machinery that properly belongs to punitive institutions. The child is taught the sanctity of law, authority and property, the recognition of the rights of others, and the penalty of bad citizenship. Above all, it is in the home, that the child is to receive his first and most important training in religion. No other institution can possibly have such an opportunity to develop the child's religious nature, and no other teacher in the world is so well equipped by nature to lead the child to God, and give him an appreciation of religion as a Christian mother. The home is practically society in miniature, and it is here, that the moral ideals are formed. It may be also the cause of much of the evil in society. It furnishes the soil, if not the seed, for such evils as intemperance, pauperism, divorce, lust and crime. Out of 4,830 prisoners at the Elmira Reformatory, 2,550 came from bad homes, and over 372 from good homes, while 2,000 were surrounded by wholesome influences at the time of the lapse into crime.

The home should be comparatively isolated to do its best work. This gives the parents a better chance to direct and influence the child in his early years of life. The parents should be his companions and teachers. To come into contact with the outside world too early an age, is detrimental to the child. Isolation develops a real companionship within the home. The true community spirit is best developed where the homes are separated from one another. In the city we may not know our next door neighbor. As people get closer together, they get farther apart.

Can the modern tenements conserve these elements of home life? The family in the tenement is not isolated sufficiently to instill into the mind of the children the value of the home as a separate unit. They do not develop a love for home. In later years they will not be thrilled by hearing that old familiar song—Home Sweet Home. The sweet memories of the log cabin have anchored many a man in the storm of life. We cannot bear to have such ties and influences broken by the predominance of tenement life. This is one strong reason why many believe that the tenement is only a stage in the transition. Eventually we will return to the isolated home, linked by social ties to the community around.

Besides, the conditions under which