

## PIVOT-BATTLES IN LIFE.

By Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler.

The history of the world has often turned on a few decisive battles. Had they resulted differently, some great currents of history would have been entirely changed. On the field of Marathon, for example Greece was saved from the heel of Persian despotism; and the victory of the Christian forces at Lepanto saved Eastern Europe from the Dominion of Islam. The battle of Marengo placed the Imperial crown on Napoleon's brow; Waterloo swept it off, and sent the gigantic desolator to the desolation of his prison-rock of St. Helena. The American Revolution turned on the pivot of the fight at Saratoga; and the struggle for Union and Emancipation turned on the pivot of that fierce encounter at the "bloody angle" on the field of Gettysburg.

Everyone is likely to have one or more decisive moral battles in life. A "Yes" or a "No" has cost many a man his fortune, or his character, his life or his soul. If Daniel had said "yes" to the temptations in the royal palace, and afterwards to the threats outside of the palace, we never should have heard of Daniel. We all may have our Marengos or our Waterloos where we win or lose the crown of Christian character. When such decisive conflicts come on, there are a few simple rules of our moral warfare to be remembered and practised. Here are some of them:

1. Never change your position in the face of an enemy. This policy was fatal to the Russians at Austerlitz; it has cost many a disgraceful defeat in spiritual warfare.

2. Never place on guard a doubtful principle. Your sentinel will surely betray you.

3. Never abandon the high ground of Right for the lowlands and swamps of expediency. No man was ever lost in a straight road.

4. Get your spiritual armour from the Word of God, and put on the whole armour. Ahab was wounded through the joints of his harness. Never yield an inch to Satan's most plausible temptations. It is hard to recover a force that has begun to retreat.

5. Do not mind blows in the face whether in the form of ridicule or of open opposition. Many an one has been sneered out of his soul's salvation. Brave people are struck in the face; cowards are wounded in the back.

6. Whether wounded by foes, or deserted by false friends, never surrender! It is said that towards the close of the long bloody fight at Waterloo, when the scarred remnant of the Imperial guard were summoned to lay down their arms, they shouted, "The Old Guard can die, but they never surrender." The Great Captain of our salvation could die for us, but He never deserts us. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Remember that it is only those who endure to the end who are saved.

If the moral biographies of most persons could be carefully scanned, it would be found that their destinies have often turned on certain pivot-occasions in life. Decisions made in a few moments have reached into eternity. The young ruler decided in a few minutes to reject Christ; Bartimeus seized the one pivot-opportunity of his life and was healed. John B. Gough's whole career as the prince of Christian advocates of temperance turned on his decision to take the total abstinence pledge on a certain evening in Worcester. It was under the faithful pleadings of Harlan Page—at a street corner on a cold wintry night—that young Edwin F. Hatfield decided for Christ; that was the starting point of one of the most fruitful ministries New York has ever seen.

Some who are reading this article may be seriously thinking about this most momentous of all questions—Shall I give myself to Christ? My friend you have the power of choice. Decide now! It will be harder to do it to-morrow, and of the morrow you are not sure. You expect to be saved; and yet your soul may be lost through procrastination hour with conscience, and with Christ. Ask Him to let you follow Him, and to give you strength and courage to take the first steps. What thou doest do quickly!

Heaven or hell may hang on the pivot of the decision you are now making. Shall this battle end in victory or ruin?

## LOGICAL ABSURDITY.

We have heard people say, again and again that God will be merciful; at the very last he will say, "Ah, well, you have lived a bad life, I know, but I will forgive you, you may go into heaven."

He who could speak so is immoral. He who could talk so is not to be trusted.

There is nothing so false in reasoning, so absurd in logic, so corrupt in morals, as rapid sentimental talk of that kind.

What then does God propose to do? He proposes this: "Do you feel the sinfulness of sin?" Yes. "Do you renounce all hope of saving yourself?" Yes. "Do you know what sin is as sin? Not merely as a social offence, not merely as a national or social crime, but sin as sin; and do you hate it as such?" I do. Then God says, Take all the grace you need; the cross is the answer to the pain of your conviction, and atonement made by my son is the way, and the only way, and the infinitely sufficient way, to pardon, to purity, and to peace!—Joseph Parker.

Speak well of everyone. If you cannot, then speak no ill. Silence here is golden. This does not mean that no criticisms are permissible, but never say of others what you would not be willing to say to them or in their presence.—Ex.