

# THE GOSPEL MESSENGER,

OR UNIVERSALIST ADVOCATE.

["AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO THEM, FEAR NOT, FOR BEHOLD I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY WHICH SHALL BE UNTO ALL PEOPLE."—Luko 2: 10.]

VOL. 1,

LONDON, CANADA WEST, JUNE, 1849.

NO. 6,

## "GO AND DO THOU LIKEWISE."

BY REV. J. H. CHAPIN.

This precept may be applied to any good deed, great life, or noble effort.—Such are not merely for the immediate circumstances with which they were surrounded—not only for one day or one generation. They are for all times, and for every man. If you have seen a good deed or heard of it, or read of one performed long ages ago, it matters not when—that good deed speaks to you—it says, "Go and do thou likewise."

"Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footsteps on the sands of time."

"Footsteps, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er the solemn main,  
A farlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing shall take heart again."

We are thrilled, perhaps, by some achievement of patriotism. We read of some dauntless man, who, on the field of battle or the scaffold, in the hall of council or the dungeon, upheld, and suffered for some great cause of liberty—some principle that has tended to the progress of the race. We are thrilled, I say, by that man's history. We wonder at his greatness. We wish we could have seen him, and conversed with him. But now to every one of us, from that green battle-field or blood-stained scaffold, from that venerable hall or gloomy dungeon, come to us the teaching, "Go, and do thou likewise"—likewise, after a like manner, that is, with a like spirit. You will not, it is possible, be placed in exactly the same circumstances with that great man—you would not, perhaps, adopt precisely such means—you may not be called from your humble station to fill such a large space in the eyes of the world; yet this is the injunction laid upon you, "Go, and do thou likewise"—that is, whenever called to maintain freedom of thought, word or deed, maintain it—for yourself, or for others—maintain it as a principle so c apply rooted in your heart, that the glittering lines of war-hoists, the uplifted axe of the headsmen, the insolent voice of authority, or the clanking chains of the prison-house, cannot make you pluck it out. You will not be called upon to encounter just such things, but, if you are independent, and true, it is quite likely that that persecution which pierceth the soul will be raised against you—the voice of denunciation will beat in storms upon you, and men will frown or sneer. Then remember what those did, who, though they "may have held up trembling hands in the fire," went for the truth, to that fire—and go, and do thou likewise.

You have heard of men of wondrous perseverance, who, when met by one rebuff, have made another attempt, and still another—who have spoken with pebbles in their mouths, or roared to the angry sea—or have crossed the Atlantic to seek a new world, with all men hooting after them as enthusiasts, but who, pressing on, have

plucked a glorious triumph. You have wondered how things like these could be, and yet here also comes the teaching, "Go, and do thou likewise." Not, perhaps, in becoming orators like Demosthenes, or discoverers like Columbus—but in reaching the laudable ends you have in view, encompassed as they may be with difficulties. Press on, use every right effort, never despair!

Thus the lives and the deeds of others, of which we have read, which we have admired, are not merely for the purpose of thrilling us with their eloquence and their beauty—they are to be imitated, lived out, so far as may be, by us in our circumstances. The truth is, we make of great men, beings too abstract and distant—we think of them too much as prodigies, when we should regard them as very near to us, as the developments of faculties that are in us all, as representatives of what we are and what we may be. Solemn and calm they walk there—the great ones of earth—gliding among the broken arches of the past, with the moonlight of old ages streaming down upon their venerable faces; and thus beheld, they seem to us set apart for our wonder and admiration. But we are not to look upon them only there. Out in the fields and marts of actual life, toiling in its workshops, bringing relief to its lazar-houses, going abroad familiarly and freely, may we see them—and looking upon them thus, they seem real to us, like our own flesh and blood—we come in contact with them; and then cheerily from the harvest of humanity, waving in golden light over the valleys and the up-lands, cheerily from the bloomy woods, and the clanking shop, and the noisy street—in the reaper's shout and the craftsman's song, peals up the cry, "go and do thou likewise."

But the great men are the good men. Greatness is goodness. Reader, where then turn for an example and a principle of goodness? Earth's greatest become small—earth's philosophers grow dim beside that principle of love to which Jesus pointed in the good Samaritan—beside that Life of love which he lived upon the mountain, in the garden, and on the cross. Here is our chief example. From this lesson, from this life, comes the voice of authority and persuasion, "Go, and do thou likewise."

### CAN YOU APPLY IT?

"Do you believe that the sweet little child you hold in your arms, is totally depraved?"

—The question was proposed to a very intelligent lady, the widow of a Presbyterian clergyman. She was delighting herself with the joyous smiles of her latest born; and really the scene would have been a noble subject for the skill of a painter.

We had been conversing on the points of controversy, in relation to which Uni-

versalists are deemed decidedly heterodox—the doctrines of original sin, total depravity, and the like, being included in the list. So long as the general theory, considered simply as a theory, was in her mind, she stoutly maintained the teachings of the creed—namely, that all the posterity of Adam, previously to regeneration, are wholly adverse to all that is good, and wholly and continually inclined to all evil.

Alas! for the theory. She could not apply it: "Do you believe that the sweet little child you hold in your arms, is totally depraved?"

A shade of melancholy passed over her countenance: the babe smiled in her face: a tear filled her eye; and she answered, "No, I do not."

O friends! it was her own child—the image of a departed father; and she could not apply the theory.

—A child in the street was in danger of being crushed by a span of unmanageable horses. A woman hastened from her door to the rescue. She gained her end. "Is that your child?" asked a by-stander. "No—but it is somebody's child," was her Christian answer.

Why should that Presbyterian lady apply her theory of total depravity in any case? She could not apply it to her own infant; and it is not every descendant of Adam somebody's child?

The truth is, theory is one thing: application is another. People may indulge in generalities, and yet refuse to descend to particulars. The former may be a mere matter of the head—the latter comes nearer the heart.

I remember a fine illustration in the writings of Sterne. Let me quote the passage entire:

"I was going to begin with the millions of my fellow-creatures born to no inheritance but slavery; but finding, however affecting the picture was, that I could not bring it near me, and that the multitude of sad groups in it did but distract me—I took a single captive, and having first shut him up in his dungeon, I looked through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture.

I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferred.—Upon looking nearer I saw him pale and feverish:—in thirty years the western breeze had not once fanned his blood—he had seen no sun, no moon in all that time; nor had the voice of a friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice:—and he had ren—

—But here my heart began to bleed—and I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait.

He was sitting upon the ground upon a little straw, in the furthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and bed; a little calender of small sticks were laid at the head, notched all over with the dismal days and nights he had passed there—he had one of those little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was picking another day of misery to add to the heap! As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards

the door, then cast it down—shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard the chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle.—He gave a deep sigh—I saw the iron enter into his soul—I burst into tears—I could not sustain the picture of confinement which my fancy had drawn."

What a graphic description! The millions born to no inheritance but slavery, could not be brought near enough for contemplation. The multitude of sad groups only distracted and confused the mind.—But when a single captive was contemplated in his gloomy dungeon—ah! now it is brought nearer; and the writer could not sustain the picture of confinement which his fancy had drawn.

But suppose that to confinement had been added the agonies of endless torment! How now? And suppose that the captive were named in your hearing and known to your sight. Let him not even be your parent, child, friend, or neighbor. Let him be, if you please, a confessedly bad man. Can you apply your theory of never ending woe? Can you apply it to his individual case?—PAUSE AND CONSIDER.—

And now attend to a few examples, selected from the Commentary of Dr. ADAM CLARKE. No man more stoutly commended for the doctrine of endless misery, regarded merely as a doctrine of the church; and he even sometimes strained a point, in order to make out a strong argument.—But he had too much of the spirit of Christ in his heart, to apply that doctrine to specific individual cases. Thus:

1. Judas Iscariot. After an extended, clear, and candid consideration of the case of Judas, the eminent commentator says:

"And I contend further, that there is no positive evidence of the final damnation of Judas in the sacred text. I hope it will not displease the humane reader, that I have entered so deeply into the consideration of this most deplorable case. I would not set up, knowingly, any plea against the claims of justice, and God forbid that a sinner should be found capable of pleading against the cries of mercy, in behalf of a fellow culprit." See the close of Acts i.

2. Absalom. "Is there no hope for the soul of this profligate young man? He died in his iniquity; but is it not possible that he implored the mercy of his Maker while he hung in the tree? And is it not possible that the mercy of God was extended to him? And was not that suspension a respite to the end that he might have time to deprecate the wrath of divine justice?"

"Thus is, at least, a charitable conjecture, and humanity will delight, in such a case, to lay hold even on possibilities.—If there be any room for hope in such a death, who, that knows the worth of an immortal soul, would not wish to indulge in it?" Note on 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

3. Ananias and Sapphira. "This guilty pair died by an immediate judgment