

DREAMERS.

Some men are dreamers. We speak of them as visionaries. They look far into the future; they work for that which is not at hand. Perhaps they are impracticables. Perhaps they are. Sometimes they do prove to be but idle dreamers, and their lives are without practical results. But not always. Sometimes we see them possessed of an idea which controls them, which seems to burn out their lives. The realization seems to them to be near, but they do not realize it. Yet we see that they are not failures; they die without the fulfillment of their hope, but we see that they have accomplished something, even if it be no more than the stimulation of others to work for their dream. Such are lonely men. They live in a larger world; they have a wider horizon, a more inspiring hope, but we say they are out of touch with the actual life. With a feeling of pity for them we see them go down and leave to others that which they could not accomplish, and which, it may be, at the time seemed to be wholly impossible.

But the dreamers, the men who see visions, they who live in that world that extends beyond the visible, are the leaders of the world. God spake to men in dreams; at times when their eyes were closed to the present he gave them visions of the future. God yet speaks to men in dreams born of thought, of knowledge of hidden forces and of faith. They who hear him look up and out; they feel themselves in touch with the unseen, and they grasp for its powers and possibilities. The young men and the old are grouped together: "Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams," because the Spirit of God is upon them. It is more than the enthusiasm of youth; the Spirit of God opens to them that which may be; he inspires them with its glory, and they give themselves to the realization of the vision. It is not the weakness of age that speaks in dreams of what shall be and is now near; the Spirit of God gathers up in the minds of the old all that has been wrought in the past, and opens to them the promise of what he will do. They dream of marvelous things, things so marvelous that some turn aside with a feeling of pity for the wandering mind. And yet these are the leaders of the world. They have visions and they work for what they believe to be in the future. They give an inspiration that commands a following.

These are the men of faith, and it is faith that overcomes the world. They believe in the unseen and they seize the curtains to draw them back and unveil to others what they have seen. Paul thought of the people beyond the sea that lay before him; his heart was stirred as he dwelt upon the possibilities for the Gospel. He had seen its power among the heathen, and remembered his call to be a light to the Gentiles. Then came to him the vision of the man of Macedonia, and Christian Europe came to the day of power. We do not see visions without thought, without the moving of the heart, without the impulse that comes from the past and the belief in the greatness of God's purposes. Moses saw the burning bush on Horeb, and henceforth there was a wonderful dream in his life. He drew back from it, but it held him fast. Others thought him visionary and pitied him, but the vision was an inspiration; he stayed not from his holy resolution to obey the Voice that called him from the desert to the very court of Pharaoh. And he led his people out from bondage. This is the record of the heroes of every age: "By faith." Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." That which may be an idle dream to others has reality to faith, for God is back of

it. To every one who will stand on the top of the mountain there is a grander vision than that given to Moses on Nebo; a vision of the kingdom, with the nations coming into it. They are as yet dreamers who see it, but they are dreamers of faith. They are persuaded of the promise and press forward in the assurance of it. They may not all come into the possession of it, but others will take up the leadership and enter into the promise. "Thou shalt not go over," is said to many of us, but we see the good land that is beyond, and know that the church of God will possess it; the vision even now is taking shape in the reality.—Selected.

PRAYER.

Almighty Father, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, we thank Thee for Thy merciful keeping through another night. May the Day-Spring from on high visit us, and guide us into the way of peace. All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord. "The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." We ask not for length of days, but we pray for grace so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. We would this morning go forth with trustful and thankful hearts, feeling sure that the Lord will provide. Direct our path, Heavenly Father, and grant that all our works may be begun, continued, and ended in Thee. Should dark clouds gather around us, and the path of duty prove difficult, may we feel Thee near, and hear Thee say "Be strong and of good courage." May it be our daily joy to dwell, as we desire, in the circle of the presence of our Master Christ, who said "Abide in Me." Amen.

MY RETREATS.

David Smith in British Weekly.

I bless Thee, Lord, that, when my life
Is as a troubled sea,
I have, remote from its rough strife,
Harbours to shelter me.
I bless Thee for my home, where Love
Her sweet song ever sings,
And Peace spreads, like a nesting dove,
Her gentle, brooding wings.
And for this chamber of desire
Where my dear books abide,
My constant friends that never tire,
Teachers that never chide.
But chiefly for the Mercy-seat,
Where every weary load
I lay down at Thy gracious feet,
Jesus, my King, my God.

SAVING BY BELIEVING.

The Christian lifts others by believing in them. He sees in each the subject of redemption. "According to thy faith be it unto thee" means not only "You can be saved if you believe"; it means also, "You can save others"—save them by believing in them and in God; save them, not according to your foolish desires, but in accordance with God's intention for them, with the original law of their being.—Charles Gore, D. D.

The great principles of the religious life which are fundamental are universal, and have their chief evidence within. "Paul did not go to Adam and Genesis to get the essential testimony about sin. He went to experience for it. 'I see,' he says, 'a law in my members fighting against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity. This is the essential testimony respecting sin to Paul—this rise of sin in his own heart and in the heart of all the men who hear him. At quite a later stage in his conception of the religious life, in quite a subordinate capacity, and for the mere purpose of illustration, comes in the allusion to Adam and to what is called original sin.'"

WISE WAYS TO READ WISE BOOKS.

There are two ways of doing anything and everything, a right way and a wrong way. The right way is always an unwise way, the wrong way is always an unwise or foolish way. It goes without saying, that the object of all reading should be self-instruction and improvement, and to this end we should incline ourselves only to such reading as will accomplish that purpose. Our books should be good books, that is, wise books, books that will build us up in the strength of a good and right character, and properly fit us for the battle of life that lies before us. It is only thus that we can be fitted for the great purposes of life and take a useful part in the world about us. We are commanded to get wisdom, to get understanding. "Let thy heart retain my words; keep my commandments and live." The fountain of all wisdom declares—"Get wisdom, get understanding. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee; love her and she shall keep thee. Let her not go from thee; she is thy life."

To read a senseless, or a vicious book, is a crime against ourselves. It adds nothing to our store of knowledge. On the contrary, it weakens all the powers of the mind on which we depend for helpfulness. Besides it is a willful and wicked waste of time which should be better employed. An hour wasted may seem to us as a small matter. An hour too late may cost a fortune or a life. So a wasted hour, in case of fire or disease, may bring danger and destruction to our most vital interests. Yet even if no vital issues depended, all waste of time is sinful, for time, is the warp into which life is woven, and so wasted time is really so much life wasted. Think for a moment what a wasted hour each day means: seven hours lost in a week; three hundred and sixty-five hours, or thirty-six days and a half of working time a year, or five years of time lost in fifty. Who can afford such prodigal waste. Life is short, time is precious. Precious labor is needed on every side of us, and the laborers are few. And shall we go on trifling away the golden moments, more precious than gems, and waste and squander hours which gold could never purchase nor tears could ever regain for us again? Let us then seek the wisdom that is found in right doing, in right study, while we may.

The Christian's life is not lived, nor his victories gained by might nor by power, but mental and moral instrumentalities, by faith and hope and love, and inward spiritual powers and energies. He who seeks to acquire these can only do it by wisely reading the wisest of all books, for it is the inspired expression of infinite wisdom as well as infinite love. And its declaration is, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of thy life shall be many."

What, then, is the conclusion of this matter but this: That we should wisely study that wisest of all books, the Bible. There are many other good and valuable books for us to read and study, but this must always have the place of honor, for it concerns our interests in two worlds. With this book as their guide, the weakest may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, for Christ can give to them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries "shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

*Christian Endeavor Topic for Sunday
April 21, 1907. Prov. 4: 18.