

THE SUMMIT A LITTLE FARTHER ON.

By Rev. W. G. Brown, B.D.

"Isn't it strange that the summit of a range of mountains always seems a little farther off?" We were standing on a bluff about 7,000 feet high. To the old prospector such trips had become the habit of his life. He had lived much with nature, and had learned much from nature's God. The silence of our contemplation of the splendid sea of mountains, with their rugged peaks, was broken by the above remark from him, as we resumed our upward climb. Prospectors are more interested in the sides of mountains than in their summits. His observation was almost characteristic of the rugged class of pioneers to which he belonged.

As I walked out from our camp that night, the mountain peaks, which seemed to rise one above another, faded away in the dim moonlight. The scene suggested to my mind the words of the fearless apostolic prospector, "We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

To a physically robust man these mountain peaks seem to be constantly flinging down a challenge. To men and women of true moral courage the lives of noble men and women, who have lived before them, or who are living around them, act like a magnet. And perhaps no one is so susceptible to the influence of that subtle thing called magnetism, as the lad who is crossing the divide that separates boyhood from manhood. How important to stamp the motto, "Excelsior," upon his banner, pointing him to the constantly rising peaks of rugged manhood that rise above and beyond him! We can do this only by keeping our own eyes fixed upon the summit set before us by our Guide; "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The dimness of our vision, and the peaks that lie between it and us, make it impossible to know fully what the nature of that summit will be. But, although we cannot always see the peak that lies before us, we know the direction in which it lies, and the promise is "from glory to glory."

New Denver, B. C.

IT CANNOT BE PAINTED.

"Did you ever notice," asked a thoughtful minister, "that all the artists who have undertaken to picture the homecoming of the prodigal son, show the meeting of the father and the son in such a way that the onlooker sees the face of the son and the back of the father?"

"I should like to have some artist put us on the other side of the scene, where we could look into the face of the father. I know something of the look of penitence and shame, but I should like to see the look of love. But I suppose that's the reason nobody ever tries the father's face. Every man with a heart in him knows that he couldn't paint a father's love."

SYMPATHY.

Sympathy is a form of Christian service. It is not a favor granted by one and received by another; it is that action by which one life enters into another's life, takes up a portion of the burden, shares the joy of success, becomes for the time being a part of that life, and contributes to it some of its own strength. It does not weaken the individuality of the life it helps, it rather strengthens it. It does not lessen its responsibilities, it helps to bear them; by relieving the tension it gives opportunity for development, by companionship gives new courage and fresh ability for advance when the assisting presence is withdrawn.—Independent.

BREAD ON THE WATERS.

A lady in Scotland, whose husband had left her a competence, and two profligate sons who wasted her substance with riotous living. When she saw that her property was being squandered, she determined to make an offering to the Lord. She took twenty pounds and gave it to the London Missionary Society. Her sons were very angry at this, and told her she might as well cast the money into the sea. "I will cast it into the sea," she replied, "and it shall be my bread upon the waters."

The sons having spent all they could obtain, enlisted in a regiment and were sent to India. Their positions were far apart, but God so ordered in his providence that both were stationed near good missionaries. The elder one was led to repent of his sins, and embrace Christ. He died shortly afterward.

Meanwhile the widowed mother was praying for her boys. One evening as she was taking down the family Bible to read, the door softly opened and the younger son appeared, so greet the aged mother. He told her he had turned to God and Christ had blotted out all his sins.

Then he narrated his past history in connection with the influence the missionaries of the cross had had on his own mind, while his mother with tears of overflowing gratitude, exclaimed, "Oh, my twenty pounds! I have cast my bread upon the waters, and now I have found it, after many days."

Set not thy heart on dying

To find a world of bliss,
Lest for the future sighing
Thou miss the joys of this.

But let thy daily living

Bespeak a soul within
Which thus its aim fulfilling
True life at last shall win.

THE LOSS OF AN IDEAL.

To be bereft of an ideal is worse than death. Death may be the putting on of an ideal, the crowning of life with all its hopes and possibilities. But to have nothing to live for, to see nothing in life, only vagueness, emptiness, inanition, languor and ennui is a living death. Better a death crowned with a hopeful ideal with all the glories of the immortal life before it than to let the energies waste and rust in aimless, purposeless existence. But why should any life be aimless in a world such as this? There is room in it for every voice. There is a path in it for every foot, there is a work for every hand. There are hearts waiting to respond to every word of love. There are parched lips waiting for the cup of cold water. There are tottering, blind spirits feeling their way over troubled pathways needing the guidance of eyes that can see. There are victims to vice whom the song might lead to Jesus. There are warped and twisted tenements where penury has refused to relax its pitiless grasp, where the prayer and the ready help would be as blessed as the footsteps of the Great Comforter on the streets of Capernaum. There is no need for emptiness of life in this world. From every soul paths radiate, like the spokes of a wheel, paths of opportunity along any one of which we may walk to the glorification of God.

When you are doing the thing that is right, which God wants you to do, you are to go straight ahead, putting in every atom of strength there is in you, and, having done that, calmly leave the rest to God. He has all the money and all the time there is, and at the right moment will send along His servant, and do the thing you have been praying for, if you never consciously asked, but just kept doing. Probably you did both; they go together.—Jacob Riis.

LIFE'S TURNING POINTS.

"It is hard to get away from God and God's call to the high life of service. Not even one's failure or his sins can silence the voice that says to him as the voice said to Jacob, 'Behold, I am with thee.' Jacob had made a failure of life and had committed an act of contemptible injustice toward his own brother. It was his own doing, and as a result he had lost almost all that a man holds dear. He was reaping what he had sowed and there was no one to blame but himself. He was a man dissatisfied with himself, ashamed, guilty and found out,—a man without a country, without a future and without a God. But Jacob could not get away from God. The Jacob who rose in the morning was not the hopeless fugitive of the night before, but a man with an overpowering sense of God's presence with him, and a consciousness that there was still a future of usefulness and service before him."

Sometimes the truth comes to us as it came to Jacob, when in shame and defeat we are fleeing from the life we have been trying to live and the work we have been trying to do, disappointed and ready to give up. In the very hour of defeat more than one discouraged soul may be led to say, "Surely God is with me and I knew it not." We may thank Him from the depths of our hearts that He saves us from ourselves.

"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."—Matheson.

If you fear God and believe that He is with you, God will prosper your plans and labor; but never make that an excuse for saying in your own hearts, like Jacob, "God intends that I should have these good things; therefore I may take them for myself by unfair means." The birthright is yours. But do not make that an excuse for robbing and cheating Esau.—Charles Kingsley.

Resolve, like Jacob, to keep religion in mind by the use of religious rites. Churchgoing, the keeping of the Sabbath, are not religion; but religion hardly lives without them.—Robertson.

We often wonder in profitless moments of self-study how we would act in a crisis, imagining the while that the crises of our lives are ushered in with due regard to stage effect, whereas they are in and out again before we realize it. It is only in looking back that we find the true turning point as a man having lost his way goes mentally back over the road to discover where his mistake occurred.—Merriam.

"The Present, the Present is all thou hast
For thy sure possessing;
Like the patriarch's angel, hold it fast
Till it gives its blessing."

Whether you struggle with angel or devil, duty or temptation, friend or foe, out of the struggle you may have a blessing, or your effort may be in vain. Whenever a hero battles long and hard and prevails by his spirit, he always wins a blessing; but almost always he comes away from the encounter limping. The victorious veteran is often a cripple. Battle-won righteousness is stronger and better than the child's innocence, but it lacks something which innocence possessed, and lost in the struggle.—E. H. Byington.

*Y. P. S. C. E. Topic for April 14th.—"Lessons from the Patriarchs." Jacob. Gen. 48:1-19.