

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

THE QUARRY OF CHARACTER.

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The greatest thing in life is character. "Man needs but little here below, nor needs that little long." That is the body; but man is a soul, and his soul needs are great, and its possibilities are unlimited. Character is something that we can never get rid of. Death only gives it full control. Let us consider a few moments the quarry from which character is made. As the temple of Solomon was made from stones made ready at the quarry, under the Holy City, so the immortal life of man is determined by its quarry.

Nature is emblematic; hence the truth and the beauty of Christ's parables. There is an analogy between the works of man in Nature and in his own self-conscious life. The Temple of Solomon illustrates four different truths in the life of man. Jesus spoke of Himself as a part of the Temple of the Church, rejected and yet the chief corner stone. Peter followed this thought—"Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual temple." John in apocalyptic vision was told that "He that overcometh shall be a pillar in the temple of God." Phillips Brooks wrote on this truth—"Slowly the temple of God is being built." Under this interpretation, man when tried, is being hewn into shape and adorned for his future sphere of life. The world is the quarry; and the Church is the building, founded upon the rock of Christ's divinity, against which the gates of hell can never prevail.

Again home is the quarry; and the state is the temple. This is patriotic, as Jesus ever was. "Our citizenship is in heaven," or the body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit." Or character is the temple, "made in secret, and curiously wrought in the hidden depths." "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Let us look for a moment at the quarry of character.

Public opinion is much in the moulding of our life, as well as in our influence. The outward life is important in both directions. Yet a man may outwardly be a perfect gentleman, "smile and smile, and be a villain." When the outward is dissolved the inner life of the soul will be manifest. A hundred years from now we shall seem just what we are. Our real self depends upon the quarry and the work done in the quarry. The temple is made ready at the quarry.

We should inspect the quarry. Sometimes in life God unearths the quarry, to everybody's consternation. The factories in the Jungles are the quarries from which flesh is curiously wrought into canned goods. We have here in government inspection. St. Petersburg is one of the earth's most beautiful cities, adorned by untroubled citizens of other cities. The wife of an American Ambassador had a presentiment of an unseen guest, mainly through the sense of smell. Finally the housekeeper, in love for the Ambassador's child, told that in the basement as is the custom in that city, there was a family, and the children had diphtheria. The wife of the American representative introduced American ways. It is disgraceful when any person fails to inspect the quarry of their life, the basement of their silence and of their private behaviour. We cry out "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way of everlasting cleanness, and Wholeness."

Goethe said, "Life is a quarry, out of which we are to mould and chisel and complete a character." What

is done in the quarry is permanent. Outward things may be only whitewash. Sostratus, an Egyptian architect, was commanded to engrave the name of the king on the pyramid he was building. In the quarry he cut his own name deep in the stone. He then filled in plaster, and cut in it the name of the king. In a century the stucco fell out; but the name of Sostratus remains to this day. If we live a true life, deep set in the quarry, then it matters little though our fellowmen may whitewash us, with mud.

The material of the quarry is our heritage from our parents. We must use only the parts that are true and honorable. There must be no flaws or discoloration, no flinty nodules nor sandy incoherences. A kind and cultured life of such consistency has great possibilities. Near Calgary, on the western prairie, there is a quarry of stone, easy to cut; and when exposed to the elements in a building it hardens, to be like granite. So character becomes more and more permanent.

The workmanship may be better than that of Michael Angelo. He took a castaway piece of marble, and he carved out one of his immortal works of art, "Moses." Our thoughts are our quarriesmen. As Nebuchadnezzar put his name on every brick in repairing Babylon; so our thoughts engrave their characteristics on every piece of work. If we are honest, we live our creed and materialize our meditations.

If left to themselves, our thoughts are prone to be a lazy crew. What energizes thought is emotion; and the heart-thoughts are the superintendents of the quarriesmen. The heart makes us think to some purpose. If we strive to think God's thoughts after Him, His love in our heart will transform our ideals into character imperishable.

The Temple of Solomon was finished, without noise, without confusion, without excitement. The work was well done at the quarry. God has a plan for the character of each one of us, which will display some feature of the infinite loveliness of Christ. We know the Father by the Son. As we consult Christ and are one with Him, we learn the specifications of the Divine Architect of our personality.

"We shall stand with Christ in glory. Looking o'er life's finished story." The story of our life in character. Millinocket, Maine.

EDINBURGH—ST. ANDREW'S.

It was a great privilege to worship in St. Giles Cathedral the Sunday which we spent in Edinburgh. There are certain accessories to the worship as conducted in St. Giles that are not palatable to the taste of a plain, unpretentious and unaffected non-conformist. The verger, clad in a gown with scarlet yoke and bearing a mace, marched up the aisle, followed by three gowned ministers, looking as solemn as a high-class funeral. This aisle passes in front of the pulpit and terminates at a long table in one end of the church. Here one of the three ministers—the preacher of the day—seated himself at one end of the table, and the other two disappeared. The pastor of the church arose in the pulpit and conducted that part of the worship which precedes the sermon, except that a young minister, standing at a desk opposite the pulpit, read the Scripture lessons—one lesson from the Old Testament and one from the New. When this part of the worship was over, the verger in the same solemn and stately manner marched down to the long table, and taking in tow the preacher of the day, Rev. Dr. Raymond, of Buffalo, N.Y., marched back to the pulpit. Leaving there Dr. Raymond, he took the pastor in tow and marched him

down that same long aisle and seated him at the long table. When the sermon was over, the verger went after the preacher and marched him down to a seat at the opposite end of the long table. The other two ministers now appeared and took seats near the table. A collection was taken, a chant was rendered by the choir, and then the pastor asked the people to resume their seats after the benediction, and remain seated till the clergy passed out. Whereupon, he pronounced the benediction, the people did as directed, and the verger led all four of the clergy in funeral procession through the full length of the church, and out at the door. All of which looked to us like a far away and feeble attempt at the priestly pomp and pageantry of Rome. We take comfort in believing that such an unnecessary display of solemn and formal dignity has not descended from John Knox.

The pulpit which John Knox was "like to ding into blades and jump out of" is no longer seen in St. Giles. No more is the ever-to-be-venerated stool which Janet Geddes flung at the dean's head. They are to be seen at the Antiquarian Museum, on Queens street, along with certain instruments of torture which help to bring into vivid memory "the good old times" for which many discontented saints are sighing.

Just back of St. Giles, in the middle of the street, on one of the stones of which the street is paved, are the letters I. K., the Latin initials of John Knox. This stone marks the place where John Knox was at first buried—his ashes now rest elsewhere. It has been suggested that he was buried in the middle of the street that people might at length "run over" him, a thing none could ever do while he lived. Presumably, however, when he was buried there that spot was not in the street.

Hearing that there would be a service for children in Old Gray Friars church, at 5 p.m., we purposed to worship there at that hour. There was some mistake—the church was not open, but we took advantage of the occasion to stroll through the historic grave-yard that surrounds the church. On one of the flat stones, covering a grave, is an inscription which tells you that according to tradition, on that stone the National Covenant was signed, February 20, 1638. This, then, was the stone about which we had read so many times in connection with those stirring days when Charles I. and his indiscreet adviser, Archbishop Laud, were trying to convert Scotch-Presbyterians into Episcopalians. Here, in this very spot, the people, high and low, gathered, and with boundless enthusiasm, and even tears of joy, signed the old Covenant which had been drawn up and first signed in 1580. By this act they served positive notice on their king that he was not lord of their conscience, and that they would remain Presbyterians till death, and probably longer.

In another part of the grave-yard is the "Martyrs' Monument." It was erected to commemorate all those, from the Duke of Argyll to Renwick, who preferred to die rather than to renounce the Covenant they had signed.

We have in these two stones the key to Scotland's glory. One stone shows how in an age when kings ruled by divine right and were not willing that their subjects should call their souls their own, Scotland had sons who dared to band together, and lifting up holy hands to heaven, swear to live according to what they individually believed to be the will of God. The other stone points out that those men, thus daring and thus swearing, when confronted with the stern fact that it meant death in forms of horrible cruelty, were able to remain steadfast, and, to the number of 18,000, give themselves a sacrifice to liberty of conscience.