

The Young Man and His Problem.

BY REV. JAMES L. GORDON.

Secret of Popularity.

There is one true, genuine, and unfailing source of popularity and that is unselfishness. No man has ever yet persuaded men that he was living a life of unself love without winning a place in the hearts and affections of humanity. The human heart is keen to detect love. The world loves the lover. An English clergyman makes the following remark:

"When Dr. Matheson was obliged to have a colleague-successor, his colleague used to say that the Doctor persistently retired to the rear and pushed him to the front. This family-affectionateness will extend to every branch of the family. It is wonderful to see how one family can absorb many. When I have a piece of personal news, I have to write about a dozen letters to get the family told."

Credos and Needs.

Every man has his own theory about the universe—his own theology and his own creed. And in the main we are pretty much agreed about most things. Our differences are superficial—occasioned by birth, environment and geographical location. The one thing which we admire in each other is sincerity. The heart qualities appeal to all men. Speaking of the work of Gipsy Smith the *Interior* says:—

"Five thousand professions of conversion were noted, and all grades of society from lowest to highest were included in the list. In the police court before a Christian judge a man appeared to confess the theft of a gold watch. Being asked why he thus put himself in the way of going to the penitentiary, the man replied that he had found Jesus at the Gipsy Smith meeting and he could not do otherwise than make confession. The judge, deeply affected, adopted the words of Christ and said to the man: 'Go and sin no more.'—This is the kind of religion which everybody believes in."

A Splendid Record.

Brilliant people are fascinating but men of average ability rule the world. Steady men—faithful men—men of conscience, character and quality—these are the men who hold the universe together. Their names are seldom written on the scroll of fame, or their forms projected in undying bronze or their biographies written for our study and inspection—but the foundations of civilization rest upon the shoulders of the faithful men. *The Boston Congregationalist* remarks:

A railroad engineer has just died in New Jersey who in forty years had run passenger engines more than two million miles. No passenger was killed on trains in his care. His name was Lloyd Clarke. How many a life of unrecorded service like this goes to make up the sum total of the quiet heroism of humanity!

True Wealth.

Money is matter in its finest form. As an article of exchange it is absolutely indispensable. A civilization may be judged by the character of its coin. A bank bill measures the progress of humanity in the matter of commercial forms and methods—but true wealth must be found in conduct, conscience and character. These are the things which hold men together. These are the treasures within the reach of all. The ideals of true wealth force themselves upon us when we read the following in *Zions Herald*:

"The most beautiful end at the same time the most valuable handkerchief in the world is said to belong to the Queen of Italy. The handkerchief in question is an example of the earliest Venetian point lace, dating toward the end of the fifteenth century. The piece in spite of its great age is in perfect preservation, and it is valued at £4,000, although it is stated that two American millionaires have offered three times that sum for it, but in vain."

The Best Man.

Are you big enough to recognize the best man? He may not be your friend. He may have stood in your way. He may have criticised your methods. He may have said mean things about you. He may have been unkind in judging your motives, but in spite of all he may be a strong man and the only available man for a certain position concerning which you are called upon to cast a deciding vote. Are you big enough to vote for him? There was Abraham Lincoln. He was cordially hated by a vast number of his fellow-countrymen. Mr. Stanton said all the coarse, hard things possible about him, but when Father Abraham came into office he made Mr. Stanton Secretary for War. Why? Because he believed him to be the most suitable man for the post. Mr. Chase said all sorts of abusive things about Lincoln, but when the President came into office he made Mr. Chase Chief Justice because he believed him to be the best man to fill the position."

Receiving "A Call."

The voice of the people is not always the voice of God. Sometimes the people are mistaken. A poor preacher with two good sermons will very often receive "a call" where a man of more solid and endowing qualities with his intellectual goods poorly arranged in the show window will be passed by. A recent exchange says concerning the late Dr. Marcus Dods:

"Dr. Dods' career contains many valuable suggestions for all who, like him, devote themselves to the service of men through the church. After graduating from the theological college, he had to wait seven years for a pastorate, and was a candidate in twenty-three places before any church was ready to make the venture with him. But instead of being embittered by the apparent unappreciativeness of the churches, the young man devoted himself all the more earnestly from his twenty-fourth to his thirtieth year to intellectual labor. He translated Lange's 'Life of Christ,' edited the complete works of Augustine, wrote 'The Epistles to the Seven Churches,' a 'Manual of Devotion,' 'Prayers that Teach Us to Pray.' He was tempted at one time to give up trying to get a pulpit, but like a true son of the manse, he adhered to his early purpose, and the lesson of these seven trying years was doubtless summed up a long time after, when he said to a company of students, 'You may be perfectly sure that if you prepare yourself for a place of influence in the church the place will one day be given you.'"

Bismark's Iron Bed.

Bismark slept on an iron bedstead, plain, simple and unadorned. He had carried it about with him during many a military campaign and he liked it. It suited the proportions of his body. In the days of his glory, success and fame he still clung to his old iron bedstead. Gen. Grant said that in the days of his military expeditions his luggage consisted of two things—a night shirt and a tooth brush. The man of genius needs little. An English writer says:

"I was very much struck in reading the biography of Sir Edwin Burne-Jones by his widow. He had a house in London and a house in Brighton, and he found that when he was in the Brighton house nearly everything he wanted was in the London house, and when he was in London nearly everything he wanted was in the Brighton house. If I were offered a house in every county in England, I should respectfully decline them, unless I could have the power to sell them and devote the money to good purposes. You can have too many residences."

Conditions of Success.

Ascertain, if you can, all the conditions of success. Beecher could not preach after eating a hearty meal. Mozart would not play when his audience indulged in gossips and light conversation—he demanded the appreciation of silence and attention. Moody would not exhort until the congregation had been "sung" into perfect harmony under the leadership of Mr. Sankey. Rev. J. A. Jones, of Bournemouth, England, says:

"Some men are curiously sensitive to climate. It made all the difference in the world to Robertson of Brighton, say Dr. Stopford Brooke in his biography, whether he wrote in a room which faced south or north, while a gloomy day influenced him life a misfortune."

My friend, know what your soul demands, and get the conditions right.

Genius and Will.

Will power is the supreme thing in human achievement. Keep your health in perfect order. Be sure of your physical basis. Let nothing interfere with your sleep, digestion and peace of mind. Be strong in the centre of your soul and then, laying the foundations well laid depend on your will. A paragraph from *The Intellectual Life* illustrates what I mean:—

"When the materials for the 'Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella' arrived in Prescott's house from Europe, his remaining eye had just suffered from over-exertion to such a degree that he could not use it again for years. 'I will remember,' he wrote in a letter to a friend, 'the blank despair which I felt when my literary treasures arrived, and I saw the mine of wealth lying around me which I was forbidden to explore.' And although, by a most tedious process, which would have worn out the patience of any other author, Mr. Prescott did at last arrive at the conclusion of his work, it cost him ten years of labor—probably thrice as much time as would have been needed by an author of equal ability without any infirmity of sight."

Married People.

The best foundation for a happy married life is built out of the materials which enter into a perfect friendship—an ideal friendship. Agreement is the one thing necessary. Agreement in taste, desires, ambitions and purposes. Folks who quarrel before they are married will probably have their differences after they have established a home. In a chapter on "Society and Solitude" I found these words:

"If Shelley had not disliked general society as he did, the originality of his own living and thinking would have been less complete; the influences of mediocre people, who, of course, are always in the majority, would have silently but surely operated to the destruction of that unequalled and personal delicacy of imagination to which we owe what is inimitable in his poetry. In the last year of his life, he said to the lady of Mary, his second wife, 'He can't bear solitude, nor I society—the quick coupled with the dead.'"

Woman's Influence.

The mightiest thing in the world is a woman's influence. I am not prepared to dispute a woman's right to vote. Why an ignorant man is granted a higher privilege in the political realm than an intelligent woman has always been a mystery to me—but of one thing I am sure you cannot place too high an estimate on the influence of a woman. Rev. Sam'l. P. Jones once said:

"A pastor in one of the cities in our Conference told me this. Said he: 'Just after I was stationed at this place I married one of my Christian young men to a worldly-minded, un-Christian girl; and a few days after that I married one of my Christian girls to a worldly-minded, wicked man.' Sometimes this is a mistake as long as eternity. 'But,' said he, 'before six months had passed away the Christian girl had brought her worldly husband to Christ, and he had joined the church; before another six months had passed the gay and giddy girl had taken her husband out of the church and he was going arm in arm with her to hell.'"

Sincerity of Soul.

Have a look at yourself. Know the thoughts of your own soul. Never think for a moment that you can deceive yourself. Be honest in your thoughts, clean in your thinking and clean-cut in your conclusions. In the years to come honesty of purpose and sincerity of soul will be the chief sources of satisfaction. *The Homiletic Review* says concerning Thomas Henry Huxley:

"And it is saddening how often he had to face the charge that he was an outcast, religiously speaking, an infidel. On the death of his boy he wrote a long letter to Kingsley—one of the most ingenuous and pathetic letters in all literature—in which he recurs to his convictions about the Christian's hope: 'I may be quite wrong, and in that case I know I shall have to pay the penalty for being wrong. But I can only say with Luther, 'Gott helfe mir, Ich kann nicht anders.' . . . But I can not help it. One thing people shall not call me with justice and that is—a liar. As you say of yourself, I too feel that I lack courage, but if ever the occasion arises when I am bound to speak, I will not shame my boy.'"

Pay for It.

In these days when preachers and prophets are working for the regeneration of society too much cannot be said concerning the ordinary virtues of justice and honesty. The average man knows the difference between truth and falsehood—between honesty and dishonesty. Oh that this knowledge might be applied to every day life. It is dishonesty to steal from anybody; it is a greater dishonesty to steal from everybody. Men holding offices of public trust should read the following:

"President Roosevelt is not the only official in the Administration who shattered a tradition. It has been the custom for years to permit the retiring Vice-President to carry away the inkstand provided for his use. A very expensive one was placed at Mr. Fairbanks' disposal four years ago, when this term ended last week Mr. Fairbanks surprised the Secretary of the Senate by handing him his personal check for \$200 in payment for the stand. So tradition has gone by the board once more."

Honor Bright.

A clean man is a national asset. A pure woman is the incarnation of the true national glory. A citizen who loves justice and hates evil is better than a battleship. The strength of any community consists of and exists in the men who are pure, clean, upright and straightforward, ready for the right and sensitive to every approach of evil. There must be a standard of citizenship. Let us test men by the words of the poet, Alfred Tennyson:

"I would pluck my hand from a man, even if he were my greatest hero or dearest friend, if he wronged a woman or told her a lie."