

UNDER SAFE LEADERSHIP.

He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice.—St. John x: 4, 5.

What wonderful pictures of God's Leadership are scattered through the pages of the Bible. We are shown how He leads individuals, such as Eliezer, who was sent by Abraham to find a suitable wife for Isaac, and who put the guidance of his responsible mission entirely into God's hands and then went straight ahead with confidence. When his petition to be led aright was very plainly granted, he did not forget—as we sometimes do—to thank the Lord God of Abraham, Who, as he says, led him in the right way. Do we not see, as we look back on the past, that God has led us also?

Then there is the great picture of the host of Israel—millions of people, with their flocks and herds—travelling safely in the wilderness for forty years. See how secure they are! There is the fiery, cloudy pillar leading the way; following it they know that they will be directed aright, protected from danger, and given everything they need. God said to His people Israel: "I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot." And, in looking back on the wonderful history of the Christian Church, seeing how it has lived through fiery persecution, times of coldness, heresy and schism, and is growing ever more and more mighty, slowly but surely raising the ideals of the world by its leavening power,—in looking at this great host, led safely by God through nearly 2,000 years, we can gather hope for its safe conduct in the future. The Church is God's Church; it is founded on a Rock—even on Christ Himself—and the gates of hell can never prevail against it. Let us not fear for its safety; though it walks in the midst of enemies, it is the Bride of Christ, and He is always at hand to protect and lead His own.

Then there is the other lovely picture, so often repeated, of the shepherd caring for his own sheep, going before them to find fresh pasture and clear, still water, going after the foolish ones who stray, and always ready to give Himself to the uttermost for the sheep He loves with a tender, individual affection. Could anything express more beautifully our Lord's personal way of dealing with us? If the path be rough and hard, He knows all the hardships by personal experience, and never commands us to "Go!" His word is always "Come!" If He sometimes chooses the hard path that leads up the mountain it is because hardness is better than softness for developing fine character.

What a pity it is that we so often fail to trust Him. Something that we have been hoping for is denied us, and we at once feel afraid that our life will be spoiled. Or, we can't see the way clear before us, and instead of trusting our Guide, putting a hand in His and stepping fearlessly forward, we begin to worry and fret about the future. Worry grows from want of faith. Every time we allow it to get the better of us we are proclaiming the fact that we don't really believe in our Leader. Our father is rich with all the riches of the universe, why can't we learn to look to Him, as children should, for our daily supply of necessities—necessaries for body, mind, heart and spirit? Instead of that we are apt to cross bridges before we come to them, shoulder burdens that are still in the future, and may never be laid on us at all, and so we lose our rightful heritage of happy-heartedness and grow old and careworn—just because we do not trust our strong Leader. Though the path before us may be dark to us, He can see every yard of it. If we follow the guiding pillar of His providence we shall find, as Israel of old, that a path is cut through the sea of trouble, that water of comfort flows out of the hardest rocks of difficulty, and that in the barren wilderness manna enough for the day's needs is always given us.

It is both foolish and wrong to lie awake at night anxiously planning for the future. It is foolish, because it not only does no good and makes us need-

lessly unhappy, but it also makes us unfit to bear necessary burdens and fight the battles God expects us to fight and conquer in. Our Leader will not smooth all difficulties out of our road. Why, even the poorest teacher in the world knows better than to do that. Just because His love is not weakly indulgent, He will often lead those who trust Him straight up to pain and difficulty. Does He not call us to "follow in His steps." Did not His steps lead to the Gethsemane of renunciation and to the Calvary of crucifixion? How many have found that to follow His calling meant turning the back on ease and luxury, choosing to be worn in body and wearied in heart and mind by the sorrow and sin and burdens of others, which they voluntarily took on their own shoulders. Think of Father Damien and the men and women who have followed him, deliberately devoting their lives to the leper colony of Molokai. Think of leaving the sweetness of life among their friends, and choosing to dwell "in the midst of all the horror and uncleanness that surround this Island grave." Think of the courage shown by the man who faced the risk of contracting the horrible disease, and was for seventeen years "a spiritual leader and bodily physician for more than a thousand lepers." Stevenson says: "No human heart can know the agony which these years brought him, or the horror of the creeping death of the last seven years after he himself became a leper." Surely it was a Christ-like thing to do, a following in the footsteps of One who left His home to dwell a-

came there and "made his great renunciation, and slept that first night, alone with pestilence; and looking forward (with what courage, with what pitiful sinkings of dread, God only knows) to a lifetime of dressing sores and stumps." Even yet, he says, "every fourth face is a blot on the landscape, and had you visited the hospital and seen the butt-ends of human beings lying there almost unrecognizable but still breathing, still thinking, still remembering: you would have understood that life in the lazaretto is an ordeal from which the nerves of a man's spirit shrink. . . . a pitiful place to visit, and a hell to dwell in."

And yet Damien's self-sacrifice was well worth while, for a noble band of sisters, doctors and missionaries, fired by his example, minister to those sorrowful, stricken people. "It was his part, by one striking act of martyrdom, to direct all men's eyes on that distressful country. At a blow, and with the price of his life, he made the place illustrious and public. . . . If ever any man brought reforms, and died to bring them, it was he. There is not a clean cup or towel in the Bishop-Home but Damien washed it." So says Stevenson, owning at the same time that this heroic soul was by no means perfect.

We are all called to be saints, and sinners though we may be—let us strive after our high calling. Christ's call of "Follow Me!" touches the nobility that lies in the hearts of men; just because He does not call to a life of soft ease and comfort, but to brave endurance and grand self-sacrifice. And those who give up their lives to His leadership

as he remarked, were "pining for work." I wrote to them, and they came enthusiastically to our assistance, and are charmed with the opportunity of doing settlement work. One of them told me of another lady. I wrote to her, and she came to see me an hour ago, eagerly promising to share our labors to the limit of her spare time.

Do you think that my running up against that clergyman was an accident? I don't. Was my remark to him merely a chance? Surely not. If I had trusted my Leader, instead of using up nerve force uselessly by lying awake at night trying to see my way, needful helpers would have been sent to me.

When Moses tried to evade God's calling, pleading that he was "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue," he was told that all the eloquence really needed for his mission would be supplied. He was not to go to the battle depending on his own resources. He should have Divine help: "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say;" and he should also have human assistance and sympathy: "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee."

Do you think those brothers—who were intended to supply each other's need—might have missed each other in the desert? If they had been walling at random, without a guide, their meeting would have been most unlikely; but, when God intends that people should meet, they don't miss each other—how could they?

If God leads us up to some duty, He can supply the wisdom and power we need, either in our own person or through someone else. He can see the oak in the acorn, and He knows well how to bring a great work to perfection.

Let us get into the habit of trusting

THE QUIET HOUR



A SCENE ON THE RED DEER, NORTHERN ALBERTA.

mong those who were corrupted with the leprosy of sin—a loathsome and terrible disease in the eyes of perfect purity—and who endured the curse of sin, for, St. Paul says: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Surely that pure and holy spirit must have shrunk back in dread from such agony, and yet He went forward, in spite of the shrinking, and was satisfied that the Father was making no mistake in planning His life-work and life-pain.

Do you think Damien regrets the sacrifice he made? Stevenson says that when he visited the Island it was a different place than when Dami-

en inspired others in their turn. But it is not only in great matters that we should follow our Leader trustingly, but in everyday affairs. A few weeks ago, when I first became a settlement superintendent, I did the very thing I have just been condemning as "foolish and wrong," for I often used to lie awake at night wondering how I could ever accomplish all the work that was piling up before me. One day I was passing through a narrow lane of the corridors of a hospital, and I met a clergyman who had just returned to me, saying: "I have just returned to the city. I have just returned to the end to find that the settlement had once given me a chance to do it."

our Leader in the little testings He sends us every day. Then, when He tries our faith severely, we shall be able to trust Him still. To feel safe only when the road is easy and bright does not require any trust at all. How pleased our Lord must be when His followers trust Him in the dark, trust on when things seem to be all wrong. The saying is true: "It is more disgraceful to distrust one's friends than to be deceived by them," and how much more careful we should be not to distrust our great Friend—God. He has helped us in the past, can we not look back on the guidance and protection we have already received and take heart for the future? HOPE.