

Christ's Valuation of Men.

BY IAN MCLAREN (DR. JOHN WATSON.)

What Jesus implicitly denied at every turn—by his teaching and his death—was that there should or will be any necessary or final waste in humanity. Just as the progress of science is marked by the recovery or utilization of what was thought to be worthless stuff, so that out of what is most unsightly is now brought fair colors, so Jesus proposed to make lovely saints out of these forsaken sinners. As a great spiritual inventor Jesus moved among the residuum of his day, with quick eye and hopeful heart, touching and handling it with deftness and understanding. Nothing of God's human work must be counted worthless; in the end nothing of it will be flung away. Lost is a word with two meanings: with the Pharisees it was a description—cast away; with Jesus it was a prophecy—going to be found.

The Master was persuaded that the sinner was miserable, and the very idea was strange and almost diverting to a Pharisee. It seemed to him that the sinners were entirely happy after their kind, because they were often rich, and had a certain power, and gave feasts and lived riotously. Perhaps there were days when the saints regarded the sinners with envy because of "the roses and raptures of vice." Jesus, who knew all men and had ever his hand on their pulse, saw beneath the poor show of gayety and the mask of bravado. He knew the self-reproach and sated disgust, the bitter remorse and wistful regrets of the sinner. According to the Master, the sinners were hungry and thirsty, laboring and heavy laden, vagrants of the highways and hedges, a set of despairing miscreants. They were as a sheep which, either through willfulness or foolishness, has wandered from the flock and lost its way, and is far from the fold, rushing hither and thither, torn and bleeding, palpitating and terrified.

The Master also believed firmly that the sinner was precious; and neither had this occurred to a Pharisee. The value of such a woman as washed Jesus' feet seemed less than nothing; she was a disgrace and a snare, an ulcer eating into the very vitals of society. She was a sad tragedy, with her degraded beauty and gay attire—a woman ruined, a woman ruining. Was she not also a soul made in the divine image and intended for high ends—a coin which had passed through many unholy hands, and now lay in the mire? She was still silver, and had on her the traces of her origin. What a wealth of passionate love and unreserved devotion was running to waste in this life! Now this piece of good money shall be laid out to usury, when the eyes wherewith she tempted men's hearts to destruction shall shed tears on the Master's feet, and the hair wherewith she ensnared men's lives shall wipe them dry.

And the Master dared to think that every sinner who had gone astray was missed of God. It might seem that amid the multitude of creatures one less counted for nothing; but if any Pharisee thought so, he did not know the minuteness and the breadth of the divine love. It had no forgetfulness; it made no omissions. As a bookman will discover in the dark the absence of a tiny volume, as a gardener will mark the empty place where a plant has once been, as a workman looks in vain for the tool among many his hand desires, so does the divine love have in constant remembrance him who is lost, and will not rest till he be restored.

When, with devout gratitude, we lift our eyes to heaven, we elevate the simplest meal to the borderland of sacramental glory.—John Marshall Lang, D.D.

He Goeth Before.

"He goeth before you."—Matt. 28. 7.

"He goeth before us!" Is it infancy? He went before us there, in being Himself the Babe of Bethlehem! Is it youth? He "goeth before us" in the nurturing home of Nazareth, sanctifying early toil and filial obedience! Is it hours of weariness and faintness and poverty? He "goeth before us" an exhausted traveler to the well of Jacob, "weary with His journey!" Is it temptation we have to struggle with? He "goeth before us" to the wilderness of Judea, and to the awful depths of the olive groves of Gethsemane, to grapple with the hour and power of darkness! Is it loss of ends? He "goeth before us" to the grave of Bethany to weep there! Is it death (the last enemy) we dread? He "goeth before us" wrapped in the cerements of the tomb, descending into the region of Hades, uncrowning the king of terrors, trampling his diadem in the dust! Is it entrance into Heaven? He "goeth before us" there. Having overcome the sharpness of death, He has opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. He shows us the path of life leading into His own blessed presence, where there is fullness of joy, and to His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.—Dr. J. R. Macduff.

Where Jesus is Found.

BY HENRY VAN DYKE, D.D.

Never in a costly palace did I rest on golden bed,
Never in a hermit's cavern have I eaten idle
break.

Born within a lowly stable, where the cattle
found Me stood,
Trained a carpenter in Nazareth, I have toiled,
and found it good.

They who tread the path of labor follow where
My feet have trod;
They who work without complaining do the holy
will of God.

Where the many toil together, there am I among
My own;
Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I
with him alone.

I, the peace that passeth knowledge, dwell amid
the daily strife,
I, the bread of heaven, am broken in the sacra-
ment of life.

Peter's Wife's Mother.

Suppose a telegram should come from Rome that Leo XIII.'s wife's mother lay sick with a fever, what would the devout Catholics think about it? They are taught to believe in the divinely appointed celibacy of the clergy. But we read in Matt. viii. 14 that Peter, who has been represented by Romanists as being the first of the popes, had a wife. And we learn from 1 Cor. ix. 5 that he did not divorce her when he became an apostle, or leave her in Capernaum, but led her about with him. ("Cephas" is the Hebrew for "Peter.") Paul wrote that letter to the Corinthians A.D. 59, about twenty-eight years after the healing of the mother-in-law in Capernaum. If Peter was leading his wife about with him then, he probably led her with him to Rome, and she lived with him there after he became the bishop of the imperial city—if he ever did.

All of the apostles may have been married men, but the only one of them who is reported to us as having a wife is Peter. As to his marital relations we have the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul. Is it any wonder that the Romish priests don't the laity to read the Bible?

Seekers After God in Russia.

"While in St. Petersburg," said Dr. Baedeker, speaking in London recently, "I went one Sunday morning to a meeting of believers for the breaking of bread, and there I met three men who had a very neglected appearance, but they had come, I found, from the 'high north'—from the neighborhood of the White Sea. Their history was a most remarkable one. They said they belonged to a body of about 200 men who desire salvation, and they had heard that they might be saved by fasting and prayer, and so they had been meeting together in a forest and had given themselves to fasting and prayer. They had fasted by eating only half a pound of bread every day, and for prayer they cast themselves down to the ground and got up again 5,000 times a day. One of the three was seized by the police and taken off to prison two years before. When his case was investigated, the authorities passed a sentence of four years upon him as being connected with the 'secret ones,' and he was sent down to the borders of the Black Sea, about 5,000 miles from his own village. On his way there he fell in with other banished men, some of whom were Stundists. They asked the cause of one another's banishment. The man replied, 'I have been banished for my faith.' 'Are you a Stundist?' he was asked. He told the Stundists that he was trying to be saved by giving up his life to fasting and prayer. But, these will not save you, said the Stundist exile; and then in their simple way they explained to him the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The man laid hold of it and rejoiced in the forgiveness of sine. He wrote a letter to his friends in the forest, telling them he had found the way of peace. By and by he managed to escape from his place of exile, and then he traveled the whole 5,000 miles back to his friends and made known to them the glad tidings of salvation as he had heard them from the Stundist exile, and had the joy of seeing seventeen of them brought to Christ. He then came with two of them to St. Petersburg. His conscience had troubled him for having run away from banishment, and so he had made up his mind to go back to endure the remainder of his sentence. It is thus that the truth spreads and will continue to spread in Russia."

Each man stands at the center of a great network of voluntary influence for good. Through words, bearing and gesture he sends out his energies. Oftentimes a single speech has effected great reforms. Oft one man's act has deflected the stream of the centuries. Full oft a single word has been like a switch that turns a train from the route running towards the frozen North to a track leading into the tropic South.—Newell Dwight Hillis.

O Christ! for whom our natures long,
Help us to die to sin and wrong.
And daily rise by thy great might
To purer life, to clearer light.

There are three types of character: the natural man, the compromising Christian, and the consecrated Christian. These three types are represented by Sodom, Lot and Abraham.

It is difficult to read the New Testament and avoid the Saviour's imperative insistence upon the open acknowledgment of Him. If the now common view that Christianity is a mere private relation between the soul and God had prevailed in Nero's time, he would have found no martyrs to fling to his hungry lions.—Charles Edward Cheney, D.D.