

The Home Mission Journal.

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Paul Grandal's Charge.

BY HOPE DARING.

CHAPTER II.

Marion West sat looking thoughtfully out of the window. She had begun to feel uneasy about herself, and had not demurred when Dr. Briggs proposed this visit.

"Somehow I already feel great confidence in Dr. Fletcher," she thought. "I am sure he will help me."

A few moments later the door opened to admit him.

"Dr. Briggs has gone. Here is some medicine which will, I trust, ease the pain from which you have been suffering."

She rose, and something in the steady blue eyes which met her own quickened her breath.

"What do you think my trouble is?" she asked.

It was a moment before he spoke. Then he asked, calmly, "Do you want me to tell you?"

"Certainly," and the face of Marion West flushed.

"Be seated, Mrs. West." Dr. Fletcher thoughtfully drew her chair back from the square of sunlight outlined by the window upon the carpet. "As Dr. Briggs has given you no hint of what I am about to say, it will be somewhat of a shock to you. Can you stand such a shock?"

She nodded assent. He looked straight into her face and went on, a rare note of hesitancy in his firm voice.

"I find you are suffering from a cancer."

She started. Slowly the blood receded from her face and lips. "A cancer," she repeated slowly. "Oh, Dr. Fletcher, you can surely help me!"

He shook his head. "I am very sorry to say that little can be done for you. The medicine will relieve you—for a time."

"How long a time?" she queried fiercely.

"How long will I live, Dr. Fletcher?"

"Not more than a year, I think. I may—"

She silenced him with an imperative gesture of her slender hand. "Please go away. I must have a moment to myself."

Without a word he obeyed. Then, when she was alone, she fell upon her knees in earnest, heartfelt supplication.

Dr. Fletcher had begun to grow a little uneasy before the door of the inner room opened. There was a dazed look upon Mrs. West's face, but she was very calm.

"Your fee, please?" she asked quietly.

He named a modest sum. As she placed it in his hand, he said, with an impulsiveness much at variance with his usual reserve.

"I hope I need not tell you, Mrs. West, how sorry I am that my verdict was not a more favorable one. There are times when even our boasted science seems to be an empty thing."

She tried to smile, but her lips quivered piteously.

"You are alone in the world?" he asked, after a moment.

"All alone."

He looked at the money he still held in his hand. "Pardon me, are you poor?"

"I am not rich, neither am I in a condition to need the help your kind heart prompts you to offer. I will have plenty to give me every comfort—for a year."

He attempted to reassure her, but she again silenced him with that commanding motion of the hand.

"I thank you, Dr. Fletcher. I am stunned yet, but God's way is right. Death is only the

gateway to eternal life."

She went away. Dr. Fletcher watched her until she disappeared from sight.

"Poor thing!" he thought. "Still I would give all my learning and wealth for her ability to say 'God's way is right.'"

Meanwhile Marion West was making her way about the city, doing errands for herself as well as attending to various commissions for her neighbors. She even entered a quiet restaurant and ordered her dinner. She ate but little, however, but sat staring straight before her, that bewildered look still upon her face.

It was four o'clock when she boarded the train for Danesville. During the short ride she sat looking from the window at the fields and orchards laden with the wealth of the summer's harvest. Already there was a hint of autumnal crispness in the air. Here and there among the leaves were dashes of crimson, gold and orange.

She caught her breath convulsively. "Next year," she said, a sob in her throat, "next year I shall be—where?"

Danesville was situated in a valley through which brawled a noisy brook. As Mrs. West hurried up the street to her little cottage, she was stopped by several persons who, with neighborly kindness, inquired as to the result of her visit to the doctor.

Mrs. West evaded their questions. She must be alone and face this awful sinking of her heart.

She attended mechanically to her customary duties. Fortunately no one called. At an early hour she closed the lower part of the house and went to the upper room, where she slept. Here she threw herself face downward on the bed and fought out the great battle of her life.

Fought it not in her own strength. The Christ whom she loved, who had suffered and died for her, came in answer to her cry. The bitterness and fear passed away. It was only the summons home which had come to her.

When she rose from the bed the glories of the sunset had faded from the Western sky, and a full moon lighted the little room. She lifted her face to the picture of her husband which hung over the high, old-fashioned bureau.

"Twenty years since you went home, dear," she whispered. "Now I shall soon be with you. Thank God for a love like ours, my husband."

Then she went to the window and looked out over the quiet village. Midway down the street stood the little church.

Suddenly Marion West fell upon her knees. "Only one year more and so much to be done. I have let many opportunities go unimproved. Help me, my Saviour, to make this last year a more fruitful one than those which have gone before."

(To be Continued.)

The Bread of Life.

THE statement of our Lord which, while apparently clear and easily sounded, contains in itself depth beyond depth, so that he who attempts to fathom all its significance is amazed that the farthest reach of his thought or imagination does not extend to its full significances. And yet the discourse suggests certain vistas of truth that we can all see and appreciate, even though we realize that our vision is not strong enough to follow them in their full development.

Our Lord does not hesitate to discriminate between the motives that led men to attach themselves to Him, nor to reject those whose reasons for following Him were unworthy. Most leaders who have to depend on their followers for the success of their plans are ready to gain adherents by an appeal to any kind of motive. Frequently they deliberately misled their followers by arousing expectations which, in the nature of the case, they cannot meet. Even a man like Mr. Gladstone put forth his famous Newcastle Program. In the church itself there is a constant tendency to think that the great thing is to gain members, even though they are won by an appeal to unworthy motives. One of the heroic acts of Jesus was his clear and emphatic exposition of the nature and purposes of His mission—a declaration that alienated many of those who had attached themselves to Him. Immediately following the report of this discourse we read: "From that time many of his disciples went back and walked

no longer with him."

We cannot miss the implication of the words of Jesus that the provision made in Himself for the spiritual necessities of men is as ample as that made in the manna for the physical wants of the Israelites in the desert. Sometimes we are tempted to think of God's provision for human salvation as something restricted in amount, like gold or rare gems. While it is a pearl of great price, from the point of view of its abundance and availability. There was no limit to the supply of manna; there is none to the supply of bread; there is none to provision for human salvation. It is in this very connection that we read those gracious words—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Putting these two thoughts together we see plainly the only limitation to the universality of salvation. It is not in the divine purpose or provision; it is not in the power of Christ; it is simply in the honesty and worthiness of the motive in which men seek it. Those who come through hope of having their physical appetites satisfied—and that is simply typical of all kinds of low and self-seeking motives—will find nothing in Christ. To such he will indeed be "a root out of dry ground," but every soul that comes to Him for the satisfaction of its deep and real necessities will find that He is indeed "the Bread of Life."

"The Seed is the Word."

BY REV. CHARLES H. MOSS.

WE have nothing to do with the nature of a seed. Its qualities and powers and life are hidden from our view.

We discover them only when the seed, placed in an environment congenial to its nature, flings open its heart and flaunts its secret before us. It must be wooed to make its confession. It must have its confidence won before it reveals its secret. Its heart nature cannot be known save through the ministry of gentleness. Nothing outside reveals its true content. No uncongenial soil or inhospitable rock can persuade it to uttersom itself. To judge of value or beauty or power inside the wheat germ, or rose haw or acorn, by the hard and unpromising exterior were folly; but when, after burial in soil adapted to its nature, we see at last the green shoot, the stalk, the waving, gold-crowned head, bearing its hundred-fold harvest; the fragrant, radiant petalled, exquisitely moulded rose; the giant oak, grappling with strenuous energy for anchorage among the rocks, while tempests sweep its branches in attempt to wrest it from its enthronement, then do we first, in fulness, read the story of the reticent and forbidding germ.

To hearts holden by human limitation a d sin, the Word seems but enigma. Our only way to learn its meaning and discover its power is by the planting of it in congenial soil.

Surely it were neither fair nor sensible to judge it by what it discloses on a barren rock or in a thorn hedge, for its germ can never be unfolded there; but when into honest, eager, willing hearts, as into a fallow field, it falls, having the various nourishment God has providentially arranged for its development, we see it bursting out into a new life.

Human life, transformed, redeemed, beautified, made fragrant, glorified by the exquisite flowering and fruiting and refreshing that the Word, buried, reborn, and living in the soul produces,—life such as this, a daily, hourly miracle, is the magnificent and unanswerable proof of the vitality, power, and endurance of the Word of God.

We can be truest and best blessings to others only when we live victoriously ourselves. We owe it, therefore to the needy, sorrowing, tempted world about us to keep our inner life calm, quiet, strong, restful, and full of sweet love, in whatsoever outer turbulence, trial, or opposition we must live. The one secret is to abide in Christ.

Self-sacrifice is the law of life. It is not that we must give up something but that we must give up self.