

LIFE PROBLEMS

Measuring Time

Historians sometimes portion time according to the calendar, but this method fails to satisfy the demands of justice and does not harmonize with the real nature of things. Time is really to be measured by progress, and progress is measured by thoughts, and that is measured by what we incarnate theme and make them vital in human history.

We cannot close epochs with centuries. An epoch closes when an ideal is dethroned and another set in its place. Till that occurs history moves on a dead level so far as records go. Ideas are costly. If this present world crisis evolves a new ideal in practical human life and among the nations it will mark an epoch.

What does your life stand for? Are you just following, sheep-like, in the grooves already marked out by others? If you are, your community will go on as before and your life count for nothing good and permanent. Achieve something. Bring a new ideal to birth. Enthroned Christ in your neighborhood.

Bad Temper and Reform

No reforms that we are aware of were brought about through ill or ungoverned temper. Nevertheless it is men of temper who give us reforms. Moses is an example. When he looked on the afflictions of his brothers he was enraged. "This is wrong," he could say with all his might. But the next step we cannot say was correct. He struck the man he saw maltreating the Israelite slave—and killed him. Scripture says nothing about the pros and cons of this act in any direct way. Moses was simply called aside and sent into the wilderness for forty years' training in self-control. His motive was all right, but his method was hasty and ill-tempered. That won't do. It indicates a lack of faith in Providence. When these great reform movements are taken up we must be sure that we are working with God and in His way. Egyptians were killed in great numbers before the Israelites got clear of them, but it is plain to see that a wise Providence was in control of the situation, and not one fiery-tempered man.

Man as a Rock

One of the most potent writers of the Bible is Isaiah. Moulton, in the Modern Reader's Bible, places him among the foremost writers of literature in the world. He is full of strong figurative expressions. For instance, he speaks of a man as "a rock in a weary land," or a wilderness.

The rock is a protection to a traveller, from wind, tempest, sand storms, heat, and danger of various kinds. Those who have travelled under such circumstances know well what this means. Such is the way of a man in society. A strong manhood is a protection. There are temptations that wither weak men to the point of collapse. There are blinding sand storms of false hopes and sentiments. There are hurricanes of public opinion which sweep the weak away. But a Man shall be as a rock! People will say of such and such a man, "If it had not been for you, I could not have stood as I did."

The rocks are conspicuous. They stand out. True men are like the city set on a hill. Other eyes are looking to them. How many a man has been helped in resisting the tempting drink by the example of one companion. How often we refrain from saying an unpleasant word by the manly bearing of a friend!

The rock stands. The sands shift to and fro. The wind veers about, but the rock abides. So let a man stand straight and stop the drift. Others will be held back by him. He strong should help the weak. When was there ever greater need than now of brave, true men?

"Dull, Backward Fellows"

A military man was talking to his soldiers at a luncheon where "Credo" was a guest. The officer was remarking about the wonderful improvement that had taken place in the men under two or three months' training. "Now," he said to them in an admonishing way, "don't be too severe on the fellows who are just joining the ranks. They may seem very slow and awkward to you, but wait a while. These dull, backward fellows often make the best soldiers. The day may come when you will be glad to have such a fellow alongside of you in the trenches."

True enough! How often we hear people laugh at the backwardness of some boy or girl. They seem to promise nothing. In ten years they may walk all around us in usefulness and courage. Strange as it may seem, most of the men who have become leaders in great reforms have been overborne at first, and often along the way, with modesty and backwardness. Yes, look out for the dull fellows. Encourage them.

Canada's Class System

In "Canada, the Empire of the North," Miss Agnes Laut pictures a member of the Old Order' looking over things in this new land. He talks with the New Order—

"Then have you no social classes?"
"Lots. The ups, who have succeeded; and the half-way ups, who are succeeding; and the beginners, who are going to succeed; and the downs, who never try."

By success she means that we do our best at whatever we are at. Now that makes a pretty good kind of class system, doesn't it? That means an opportunity for all. It decides a man's place in society according to his merit.

We should try to keep Canada's class system this way, and not be making distinctions between men according to dress and wealth. Watch tendencies. Kill the serpents when they are small!

Your Turn

Some young people get out of patience because they are not receiving all the attention and notice which they think they deserve. Some must be nursed and coddled and petted, or they will not come to church or League any more. They will tell you they have been a member a long time and no one ever asked them to do anything.

Somebody may be to blame, of course; there are none perfect. But my belief is

that if you keep your heart in the right attitude your opportunity will come. It will come with an authority no one can overlook. Moses tried to hide from work, but God was watching his heart and mind, and when he was ready the call came. It will come to you if you are faithful. Don't whine on account of slights from a few poor mortals no better than yourself. Prepare for the best work and I believe "your turn" will come just as sure as harvest follows seed, or day follows night.

A Way of Escape'

Paul tells us that with every temptation—trial, testing, difficulty, whether good or evil in its source—there is a way of escape. There is a harbor for every storm-tossed soul.

This way of advancement or escape was strikingly illustrated to me when crossing the Rockies. I wondered how the surveyors ever got through the first time. The rivers and wild canyons looked inaccessible. One day I met a man who had been on the survey party. I asked him with greatly kindled interest how they got over those wild places. He told me quite a lot about it, but the gist of it was that there is always some way of going ahead if you will only look around.

We are all tempted. Let us not fall down and say that circumstances are too much for us. There is a way of escape. If we have a weakness along a particular line we are to take extra precautions. A man who is sensitive to malaria should not travel on the low levels. The drinker must shelter behind a pledge and in good company. The lustful must fill their hearts with grace which flows for all, and renders the enticing voices of evil sirens of non-effect.

Pointers

We cannot possess great principles without paying for them in faith, self-denial and sacrifice.

To be both useful and beautiful a character needs to be full-orbed.

Spiritual sowing should be the most fruitful of all kinds.

Education cannot take the place of regeneration because the part cannot take the place of the whole.

The higher in the scale the warfare is, the harder the fight; hence moral courage is the highest form of courage.

Honors sit lightly on those who are worthy of them.

Happiness follows in the wake of service, and peace in the wake of righteousness.

In moral warfare the quality of battalions counts the most.

The stronger a man is the more he needs help.

So long as a pure gospel is preached there will be a success.

The man who has not confessed his share in national sins still bars the way of progress.

A sweet temper, how good is it!

There would be plenty of contentment and rest if men would try Christ's method of living.

More people call on God in "lean" years than in "fat" ones.

Dreaming about things and doing nothing is "poor business."

Credo