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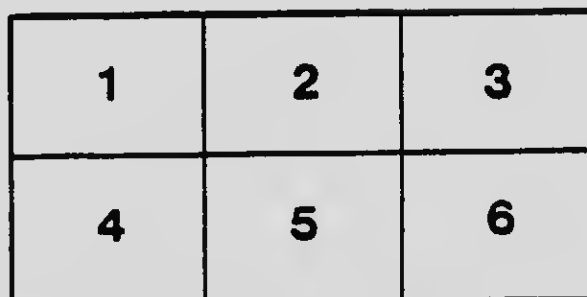
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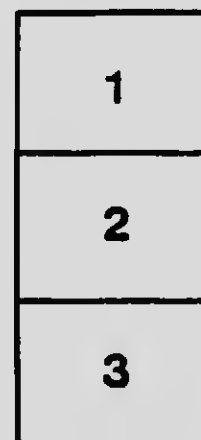
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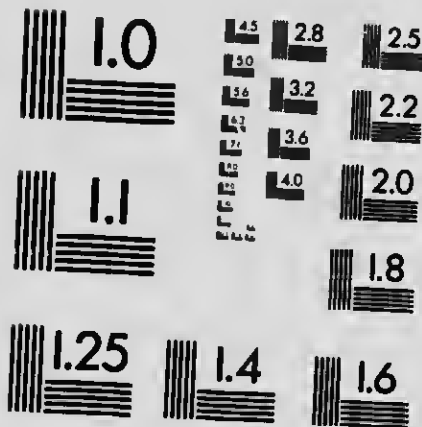
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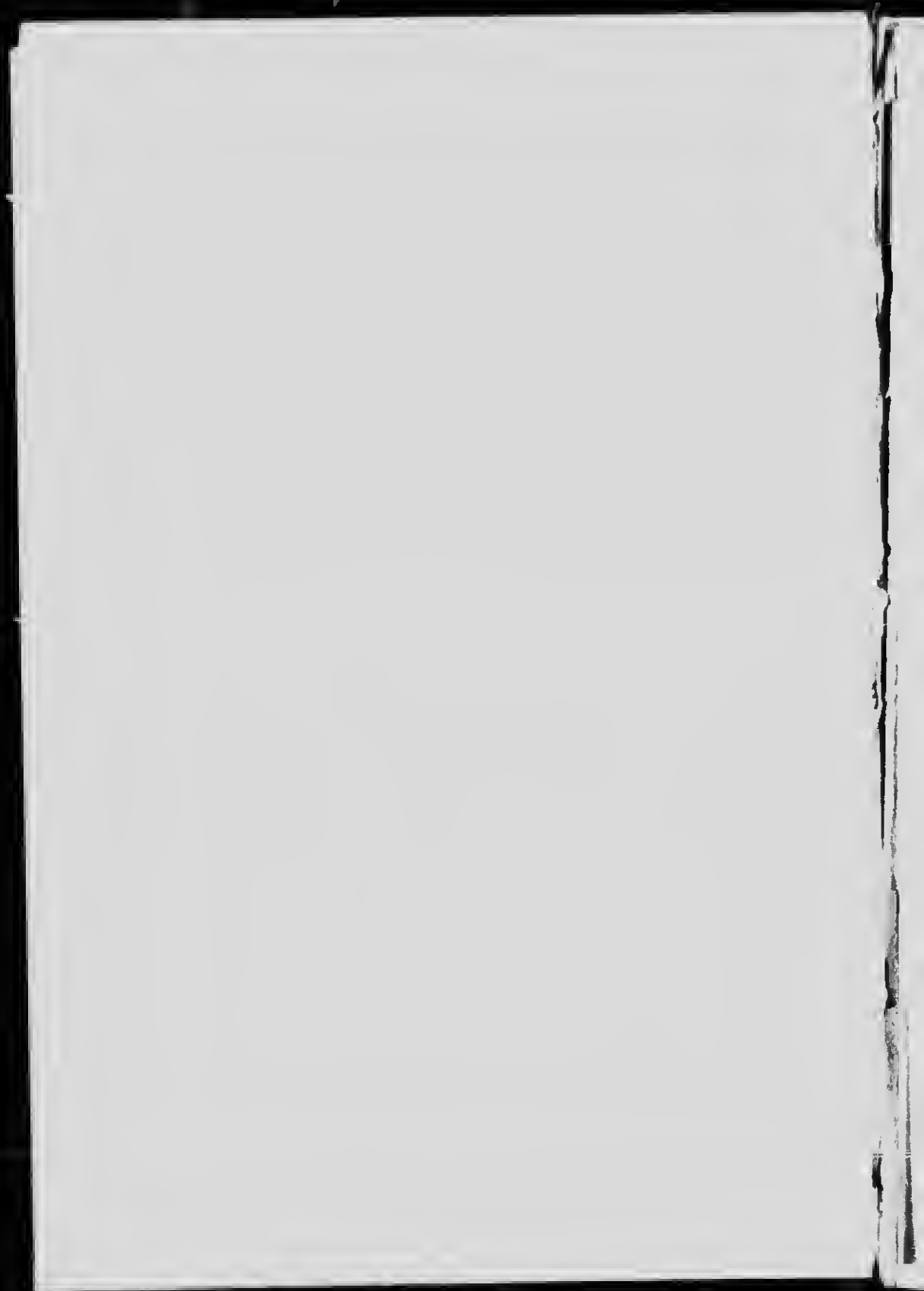
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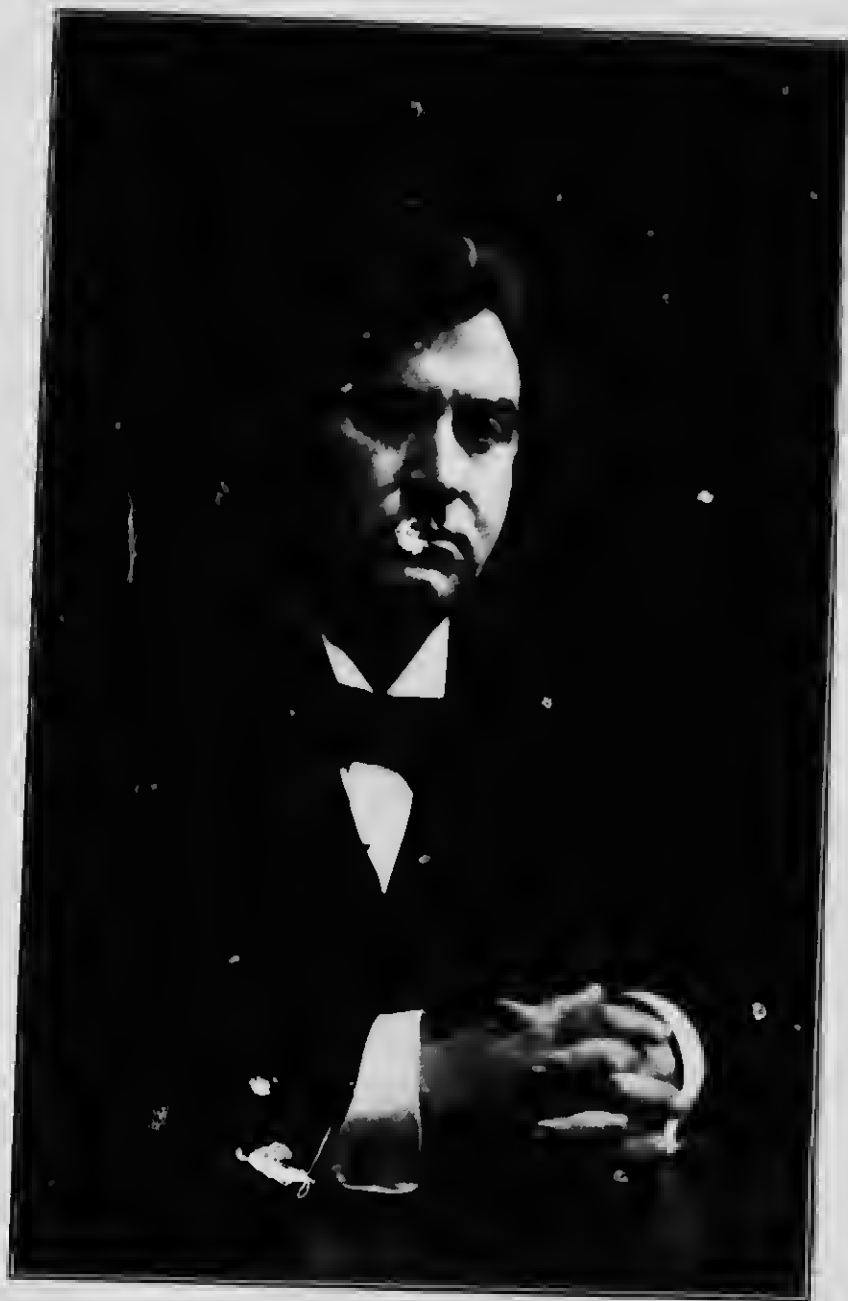


THE BATTLE NOBODY SAW









THE AUTHOR

# THE BATTLE NOBODY SAW

BY JAMES KNOX

IN  
THE SILENT

THE  
SILENT

1917



THE BATTLE  
NOBODY SAW  
*AND OTHER SERMONS*

BY  
BYRON H. STAUFFER

TORONTO  
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1919

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## FOREWORD.

The sermons here given are such as I have delivered to my people in the regular course of my ministry, fully half being Sunday evening messages to audiences largely composed of young men and women. Many have been sketched for *The Christian Guardian*. They are now offered in more complete form in the hope that they may prove helpful to a wider group of readers.

B. H. S.

Winnipeg, Christmas, 1918.

TO THE MEMORY  
OF ARCHIE ORR,

who heard nearly all these sermons  
and, because he loved the preacher,  
thought them good; who, even  
when he knew death to be imminent,  
would merrily declare that  
every day was a picnic; whose marvellous  
memory, ready wit and true generosity  
awakened admiration in all who met him;  
whose veneration for his mother, love for  
wife and daughters, adherence to honor and  
loyalty to the Golden Rule drew my heart  
to him in close friendship,

THIS VOLUME IS  
TENDERLY DEDICATED.



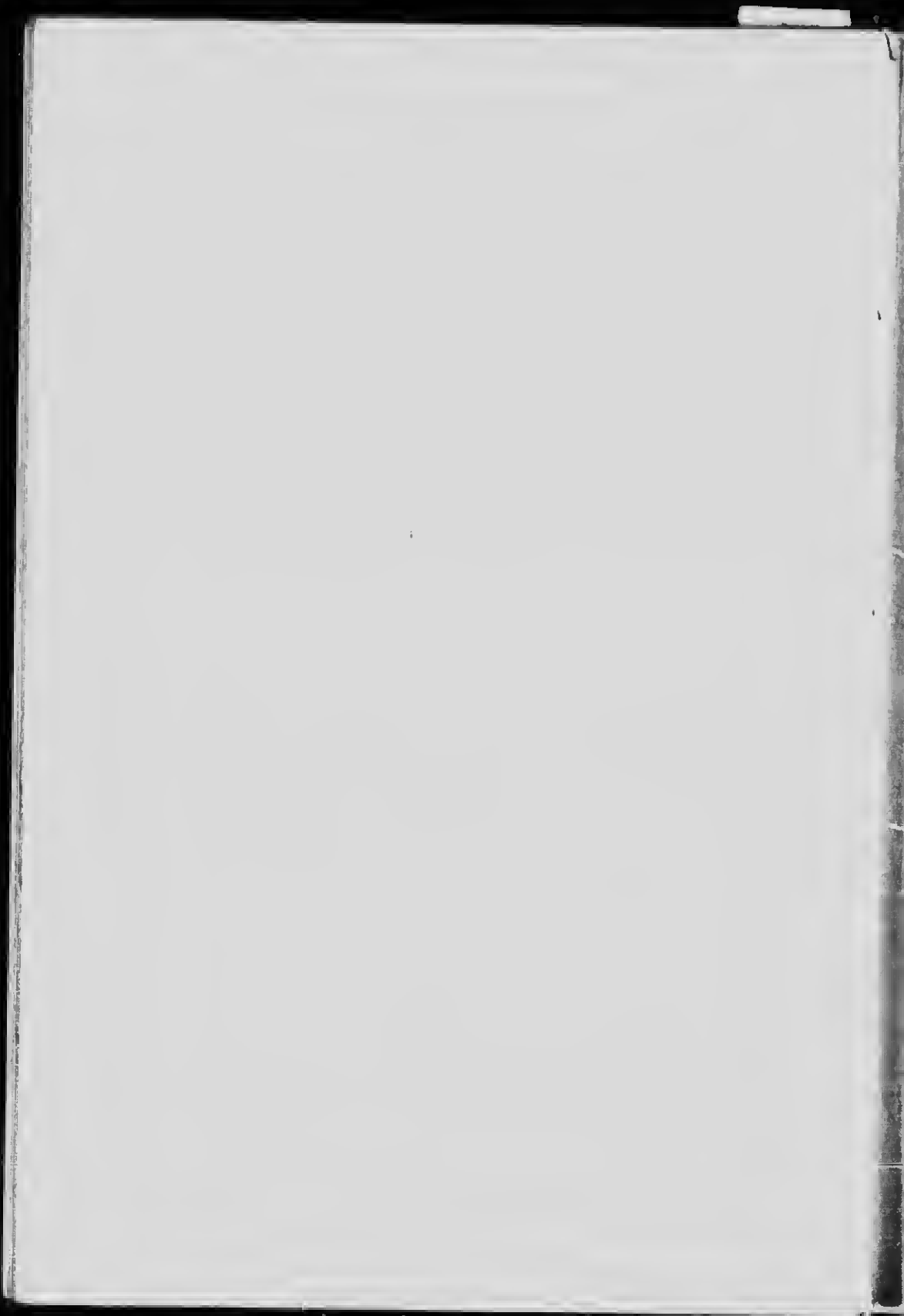
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I

THE PATTLE NOBODY SAW



# I

## THE BATTLE NOBODY SAW

"And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord."—I Samuel V: 4.

HERE was a battle which nobody saw. It took place in an inner room of a heathen temple during the night. When the sexton saw the damage next morning, you might say it was all over but the shouting. And as the friends of the victor were far away, even the cheers were omitted.

The story is crude but intense. Israel's fortunes were at their lowest ebb. It was an age of humiliation, both in government at home and campaign abroad. Eli's sons were vile; their graftings and their licentiousness became a snare to the entire nation. The army had been retreating before a triumphant foe. The only ray of light shone in the secret heart of one humble mother who, in offering her babe unto God, exclaimed in prophetic pæan: "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth." In a godly mother lay the nation's hope.

After a crushing defeat, a war council decided in desperation to bring from its resting place the ark of the covenant, in the superstitious belief that its presence on the battle field would bring victory to their banners. The little chest was received with a great shout. The panic in the enemy's ranks at hearing this news was followed by a grim determination to conquer. The Philistine officers employed the favorite German device of urging forward their men by

depicting the awful slavery that would follow defeat. "Quit yourselves like men," they cried, "that ye be not servants to the Hebrews." Such a slogan has been the hypocritical trick of the Hohenzollerns of the ages. Thereby a war of conquest is made to appear to a trustful populace as one of liberation.

Well, these ancient Teutons believed their masters and fought with fiendish ferocity. Thirty thousand Israelitish footmen fell; the sons of Eli were slain; the ark was taken. The terrible tidings caused the death of the aged prophet, and his daughter-in-law expired in childbirth screaming, "The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of the Lord is taken."

But what could the Philistines possibly do with that ark? What use could a thief make of a mitre taken from a cathedral? He couldn't very well wear it on the street, and it would certainly bring no cash at a pawnbroker's. So that chest proved a white elephant. They took it to their capital city and locked it up with Dagon, their fish god. If the sexton of that god-house was anything of a wag, he must have laughed at the thought of the possibility of old Dagon opening that chest, reading those commandments and becoming a Jew! No; that couldn't happen; the sexton knew that full well; he had never seen that god even eat a morsel of his food.

But something did happen. The next morning that servant of the temple found his deity fallen on his face, prostrate before that innocent-looking box. It might have been an accident, however. Perhaps it was caused by the passing of heavy guns bound for the battle front. The god was set up again, and the incident seemed closed. But the following morning, there lay Dagon again, this time with head and hands broken off! A panic ensued. They dragged out that Jewish box and took it to another city. But pestilence followed wherever they carried it. In their desperation they decided on the humiliating course of returning the

troublesome prize to the vanquished Jews. They loaded it upon a wagon, hitched a pair of cows to the vehicle, put in a chestful of gold as a guarantee of good faith, and sent the whole outfit over No Man's Land, saying in effect, "Take your old ark."

That was the first battle,—a foregleam of the final triumph of a regenerated Israel twenty years later. Then, with that pious mother's son, Samuel, at the nation's head, the army of the Lord went forth to victory. The people had come back to the commandments of that chest, and were strong in righteousness. "The Philistines were subdued, and came no more into the coast of Israel."

Now I do not greatly care whether you deem this story to be history or folklore. Whichever view we take, can we not see in it the towering fact that Truth and Error are in eternal conflict? The ark represented the truth. It contained the Ten Commandments, those unchanging verities which we know to be divine. As some one has said, if we had no Ten Commandments we would invent them. They embrace those really catholic rules of conduct, fitted to the needs of all lands and ages. Why was it then captured, according to our story? Because it was not working in the lives of its votaries. They trusted blindly in it without the personal righteousness which its commands create. Even the truth will do no good if you merely pack it into a box. Truth has to work in lives. Centre-table Bibles avail nothing unless they be read and their teachings practised. Bible truth must go into every corner of business and social life to create a strong nation.

I visited a family that kept a news depot, with the usual stock of wild-west fiction of the objectionable type and cynical, poisonous stuff in the way of coarse periodicals. Behind the store was the little parlor with a Bible on the table. Oh, if they had only turned that Bible loose among those shelves! It would have given those desperado tales and those sex-problem serials a knockout blow. Bring

truth and falsehood face to face, and truth will always win.

This war shows it, and its history will read like an addition to this Book of Samuel. The real battles have been fought far behind the trenches. They were conflicts between fact and falsehood, and fact won. The Germans underestimated the importance which the world placed upon scraps of paper. They did not attach sufficient significance to the indignation of the neutral world over the rape of Belgium, for instance. This fight in Dagon's temple appeared to be of little consequence. I can hear those Philistine generals say: "Never mind this trifling incident; battles and wars are not won by tables of stones in wood boxes, but by big guns. Guns count; strategy counts; but gold-covered boxes and angels, fudge!" But always in the world's crisis argument and reason have shaped the outcome, and these ever travel in gum shoes. Let there once be a clear issue, and the result can be foretold with all confidence. On every page of history it is confirmed that

"Truth crushed to Earth will rise again;  
The eternal years of God are hers;  
But Error, wounded, writhes with pain,  
And dies among his worshippers."

Those books of many colors which the warring nations sent out in 1914 had an overwhelming part in the strife. They were read in the shops of Britain and the farms of Canada, where each citizen at that time decided for himself whether he would lend a hand or not. They were read on the prairies of the United States, where the German propaganda was subtly active. The truth was sieved out, the neutral world became Pro-Ally, first in sentiment and then in deed. Bruce Barton well said: "Germany's foes are twenty nations—and Truth." Yea, this was our great international asset. Truth went marching on, with the hosts



of democracy behind it. It glorified the camps of the Allies; it sanctified the bitter cup of the soldiers; it shed the radiance of Heaven over the foul trenches; it caused men to count not their lives dear unto themselves, that humanity might obtain a better resurrection.

And this is the essential faith of which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks so tersely,—serenely believing that Dagon will, yea must, fall before the ark of the Lord. Never was this confidence in a righteous cause more buoyantly and tenaciously shown than among our people throughout those dark days when the Modern Philistines had their brief successes. Did you ever hear a doubt expressed as to the final result? The most gloomy utterances that punctuated those Teuton drives were usually, "It will take a bit longer, that's all." But never was victory doubted. In June, 1916, I attended a Canadian Methodist conference. It was about the darkest week of all. The first day brought the news of a serious reverse to the Canadian troops. London warned us that there was a heavy casualty list on the way. In three days more came the first conflicting reports of the greatest sea fight of the war, and it looked then as if it had been a real defeat. Lastly the death of Lord Kitchener was announced. It was interesting to note how these blows fell upon that assembly of preachers. There was no hint of panic; not a word of gloom. Some royal old prophet raised the tune to the words:

"His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain."

Never had we heard those words speak with such force. And never had we been so sure that the words of the Most High cannot return unto Him void.

These battles proceed so silently that contemporary observers do not usually note their existence. Rome went on her arrogant way while on the shores of a remote lake a Galilean peasant preached what looked to be a harmless little sermon on human conduct. But he told his few followers the secret of all really great conquests when He said, "The Kingdom is like a leaven hidden in meal." The mighty empire, with all its conquests and all its pagantry, finally fell before that Peasant and His sermon.

Attention has been called repeatedly to the fact that no overwhelming victory, such as Waterloo or Trafalgar, has been won by the Allied forces. In this the struggle against Kaiserism has been like the campaigns of William of Orange against the Kaiser of his day, Louis the Fourteenth. William never won a decisive battle against powerful France. Indeed, he seemed to be continually retreating and avoiding definite engagements. But every campaign was one of education. The people of Holland, and later those of Britain, knew the stakes, appreciated the righteousness of their cause, counted the cost. Facts were the greater guns behind their battalions. Men may fight a while for a delusion or a lie; for the truth they will fight forever. So despite countless defeats and twenty years' endurance of the horrors of invasion, those plucky Protestants fought on until the Grand Monarch was humbled and forced to make a righteous and permanent peace.

I cannot close this sermon without adding that human souls, as well as nations, are often the scenes of conflicts between Dagon and Truth. The fierce struggle that goes on within may not be visible to bystanders. The hero may be far from the trenches in Flanders. His deeds of valor are not reported by generals, nor recounted in the news columns. He carries his medals, not on his lapel but in his

heart. Biography can only record a few type cases of valor; to recount all the great deeds performed every day throughout the world would create a literary congestion. There is a Rahab on every city wall, a Grace Darling on every coast, a Jim Bludso on every stream, a Little Nell in every Curiosity Shop, a Mrs. Wiggs in every Cabbage Patch, a Jean Valjean in every city. To leave a wicked life means a battle of which the outer world knows nothing. I knew a man who fought and triumphed against foes as real as the battalions of Hindenburg. He was an Irish tanner with a periodical mania for drink. He had a fair wage, but his four ragged girls looked like waifs of the slums, though they lived in the healthy open country. He was like the demoniac of Gadara. His children would run away like frightened fawns when they saw their father come staggering across the fields on pay day. When he arose to signify his acceptance of Christ as his Saviour I fear I shared the incredulity of the people as to his ability to hold out. My church officials hardly thought it prudent to receive him at once into the church. The next Saturday evening Drunken Ed (for that continued to be his nickname long after his conversion) went into the village store to buy five coats for his family. He explained to the merchant that he wanted to take wife and daughters to church next day and that he could pay half cash. The storekeeper trusted him for another coat for himself. On Sunday morning the tavern habitués saw a sight to talk about. Drunken Ed and the whole family were walking up the village street towards the Methodist church. I will never forget that sight. Sherman's March to the Sea was nothing grander. The battle he had fought none but the Great Companion saw, but the ground he had won was never lost in the thousand counter-attacks that Satan made upon the citadel of that brave heart.

My chief concern is that we may make the Truth of the ark our own. The Ten Commandments must work in the

lives of the people. With them we will have victory against threatening foes compared to which the German hosts are but toys. That is the call to Canada and all North America to-day. Oh, for some Samuel to say: "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you." A secular magazine contained this short but powerful editorial in an issue just following the entrance of the United States into the war:

"Is it not high time to call the people back to the paths their fathers trod?

"Time to give the Bible the place of honor on the parlor table?

"Time to reenthroned modesty in dress and deportment on the street and in the home?

"Time to demand decency on the stage?

"Time to renew respect for the Lord's Day?

"Time to make universal once more the church-going habits of our fathers?"

Adherence to the Ten Commandments will do all that.

II

THE FIRST SERMON HIS MOTHER HEARD  
HIM PREACH



## II

### THE FIRST SERMON HIS MOTHER HEARD HIM PREACH.

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. . . . And he began to say . . ."—Luke IV: 16, 21.

ALL that He said is not minutely recorded. It is the staging of the event that enthralls us, for here was the first sermon His mother heard Him preach. She was there! Matthew mentions the villagers' cynical remark: "His mother, his brothers, his sisters, are they not all with us?"

Ah, Mary, sweet, confident Mary; this day all her prayers, her ponderings, her hopes, are to be fulfilled. She is to hear Him preach! This Day and That Night, the night when she brought forth her first-born son, are linked by a golden chain. If we live to see another Christmastide, let us grow mystical over That Night—

That Night when in Judean skies  
The mystic star dispensed its light,  
A blind man turned him in his sleep,  
And dreamed that he had sight.

That Night when shepherds heard the song  
Of hosts angelic choiring near,  
A deaf man lay in slumber's spell,  
And dreamed that he could hear.

That Night when in the stable's stall  
Slept child and mother in humble fold,  
A cripple turned his twisted form,  
And dreamed that he was whole.

## THE BATTLE NOBODY SAW

That Night when o'er the newborn babe  
A tender mother rose to lean,  
A loathsome leper smiled in sleep,  
And dreamed that he was clean.

That Night when to the mother's breast  
The little king was held secure,  
A harlot slept a happy sleep  
And dreamed that she was pure.

That Night when in the manger lay  
The Holy One who came to save,  
A man turned in the sleep of death,  
And dreamed there was no grave."

And now that babe is grown, and is beginning His ministry. Mothers ever have much to do with first sermons. From the family pew or from the gallery of Heaven, they hearten the young preacher. For there never was a Christian mother whose heart did not leap when her laddie told her of his decision to preach the Good News. "I've just one other wish," said the dying Scotch mother of Ian Maclaren's painting. "If God calls you to the ministry, ye'll no refuse, and the first day ye preach in yir ain kirk, speak a gude word for Jesus Christ, and, John, I'll hear you that day, though ye'll no see me, and I'll be satisfied." Five years later, when he was to preach his first sermon as pastor, do you recall the struggle he had, how his mother's exhortation was brought to his memory by his shrewd old aunt? He did say a gude word for Jesus Christ, the congregation was stirred, and the overjoyed aunt put her arms about him and whispered, "Yir mither has heard every word, and is satisfied, for ye did it in remembrance of her, and yon was yir mither's sermon."

Humanly speaking, the young preacher at Nazareth had to do the hardest thing. He was to preach in His own town, to His own kindred and acquaintances,—“where he had been brought up.” Do you recall the sensation, brother preacher? During the second hymn the pastor pushed the



hymnal fully into your hands and stepped down into a pew. You had a moment of stage fright. You felt as though you were defending Verdun all alone. There stood the old Sunday-school superintendent; there also were the church officials who had deliberated long before they gingerly voted you your first license to preach. But there, too, was the one dear soul in whose eyes you could not altogether fail. Ah, mother's presence saved the day.

So He enters that village church, the tiny chapel of His boyhood. I am glad that it is recorded. He was not above it; His new message did not separate Him from the old kirk. He must have felt that He had outgrown that little synagogue; yet He attended its services. That church at Nazareth was five hundred years behind the times. The worshippers were performing such worn-out ceremonies. They still chanted the triumphs of the fathers, but utterly lacked the spirit of triumph. They still lamented the exile with penitential psalms, though they had exiled themselves many, many times since the captivity of Babylon. They still cursed poor old Haman in the feast of Purim. Rabbi Hirsch, speaking of the Orthodox Jews' New Year's greeting, "Next year may we all meet in Jerusalem," says that if the Messiah should suddenly come and propose to take them back to desolate Palestine, they would all drop dead from fright. There was nothing much in that synagogue to interest the Prophet of the new Gospel. Yet He went!

The villagers hurried to church that morning. A score or two of town gossips had likely been helping, unwittingly, to advertise the preacher. The widow Mary's son had suddenly become famous. Reports of miracles and striking sayings and bold acts had reached the valley. But the Nazarenes would be the last to believe that their carpenter Joseph's son could possibly be a great prophet. As a rule, the greatness of a community is in proportion to its faith and pride in its sons.

The church is crowded. I like to picture the bewildered

ushers bustling about, carrying in extra chairs. Up in yon gallery are His mother and sisters; in a back pew, perhaps, His brothers. The master of ceremonies hands Him the Book from which to read the lesson. "And when He had opened the book, He found the place——" A dear old Scotch woman told me "Man, it was worth going to kirk just to see Norinan Macleod open the Bible and find the place of the lesson. It was as if he were handling gems." A woman came to me after a service to say: "Sir, I heard you deliver your first sermon." "Do you remember the text?" "No, I don't; but I have never forgotten that you let the pulpit Bible fall." So I had. Somewhere between the hands of the fellow student who helped in the service and my own nervous fingers, down crashed the big volume, and with it all hopes of a fair sermon. And she had carried that grotesque incident across nineteen years! He found the place, and read the lesson. "And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him," for He was about to begin the sermon.

What kind of a sermon did Mary and that audience expect? Likely they were not at all prepared for the real prophet's message. The preaching of those days was of a peculiar type. The higher the dignitary the more understandable he was. The leading rabbis did not deign to address the congregation direct. They whispered their profundities to an assistant, who paraphrased them in rapid, monotoned sentences. Indeed, the very highest rabbi would not even communicate his message to the assistant, but had a student of his own act as a middle-man. The preacher whispered to the student; the student spoke to the assistant; the assistant addressed the people. A countryman went to New York to hear Henry Ward Beecher. Mr. Beecher was absent in the morning, but preached at night. The visitor, however, thought the dark-haired, slender man in the pulpit at the first service was the famous pastor of Plymouth Church, and went home to report: "Beecher's

morning sermon was wonderful. He used such big words that I really understood very little he said. But the smooth-shaven old chap who preached at night gave such a simple talk I understood it all."

The whole sermon is not recorded; we merely have hints of its power. It must have gripped them from the outset, for "all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." He must have spoken naturally and charmingly. There was no mock humility nor arrogance. A manly man was bent on saying something that he felt needed saying then and there. And being in earnest, He riveted their attention. The rabbis made the minutes pass like hours; He made the hours pass like minutes. He took the Word and made it speak of to-day. He opened unto them the Scriptures; He made their hearts burn. That is preaching, anywhere, in all times.

The message was practical. After reading about the Year of Jubilee, that socialistic institution which they had never really observed, and which perchance was not literally observable, He declared, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He released prisoners; He freed captives; He opened blind eyes; He restored lost estates. "The Day, the Day you have long looked for, is here! Enter into it!"

But those Nazarenes were an example of the world's inconsistency. They refused to see an open door. Too often men who profess to long for a Utopia will not receive it when it comes. Many who clamor for reforms are not ready to help usher in the day of healing. What pastor but can recall some dreamer outraged because the church could not see eye to eye with him regarding his particular hobby? And when at last he was given an opportunity to put his theories into effect, how soon his enthusiasm waned! So Jesus says to these hide-bound villagers; "You are like the lepers of Elisha's time; you will not see miracles because of your doubt. I cannot do wonders among you; you are

an unbelieving crew!" Is not that approximately what He told them?

What does that mother in the gallery think of that? Does she exclaim in her heart: "Oh, Jesus, my son, do you have to say that? Can you not do one tiny miracle? Can you not at least say something gentle?" No, she who at Cana bade them have confidence in her son, surely to-day feels that, though she may not understand it at all, whatsoever He says here in this pulpit needs to be said. It had to be said, and Jesus is brave enough to say it. There are times in every preacher's experience when he must say, in the spirit, even if not in the words, of Billy Sunday: "They say I brush the fur the wrong way. Maybe I do, but let the cat turn round."

A young preacher from a small town comes to me to seek advice in a crisis. His community is reeking in vice. Even his church folk are not guiltless. They do not wish him to mention the conditions. They want things to drift along, to have their iniquities covered with a pretence of respectability. Some of them profit by the town's crime. He says he cannot in conscience remain silent. Neither can he! I tell him to show his people his responsibility before God. Let him speak of the new vision the American people are seeing, the wonderful strides we are making over the whole nation in the direction of righteousness, the shutting down of gambling houses, the honest efforts being made to solve the social evil, the great year of jubilee is being ushered in, during this wonderful era of reform. This will enlist the support of the nobler element at any rate. Then let him kindly but firmly adhere to his position. If he suffers the fortunes of a pioneer, he will at least have prepared the ground for the next man. To read the biography of Jonathan Edwards may help him. When the Northampton congregation resisted his manifestly correct position in refusing the Communion to unrepentant members, he went out from among them without rancour or spite and preached

to the Indians. But he soon came back to take the presidency of Princeton College. The young preacher has returned to his post, followed by my prayers that he may be brave and tactful. Not tactful alone, but tactfully brave! If it must be said, let us say it and allow the chips to descend where they will.

That congregation becomes a mob! Mobs are to be pitied, and prayed for. They know not what they do. They usually rage against their own saviours. Some one cries, "Get him!" and the spark is dropped into the powder cask. "Throw him out! He's insulted his own town; get him!" Then men lose their heads, become madmen, perform outrages, commit crimes. When their frenzy is spent, they come to themselves and are ashamed. I have been in several hotblooded communities after lynchings, but I have never heard a man boast that he had pulled the rope.

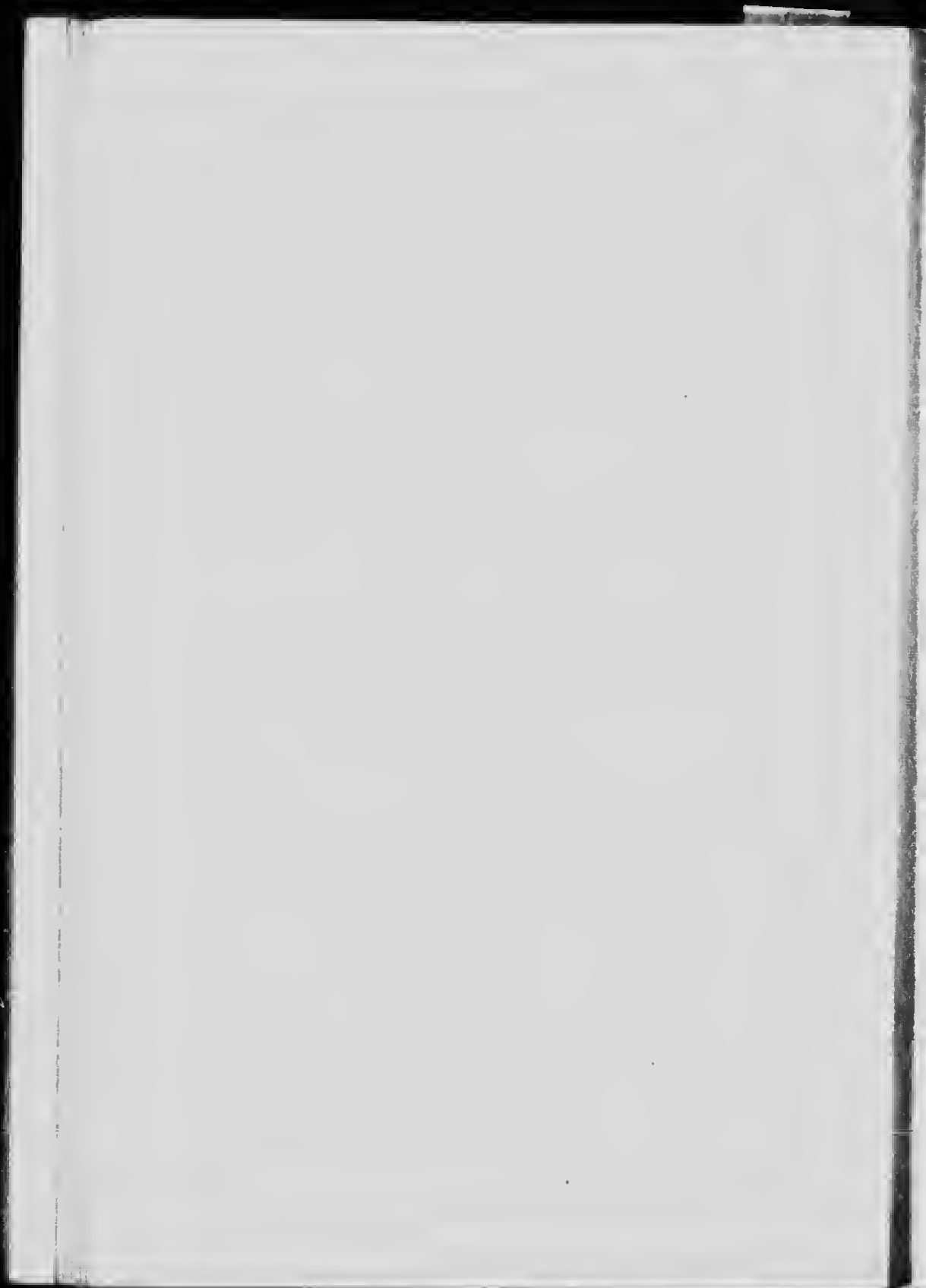
They have dragged him out of the church. The widowed mother hears them cry: "To the precipice with him! Hurl him over the rocks!" Down the street she sees them rush. The surging crowd hides Jesus and His tormentors, but they are plainly heading for the awful hill. But now she sees her other sons coming quietly back. "Oh, Jim, have they killed Him?" "No, Mother; He performed a miracle in Nazareth after all. Just as they were going to cast Him over the edge, they suddenly stopped as if spellbound. He was so calm, so full of dignity and grace, that they fell back and unwittingly made a path for Him. He walked quietly on towards Capernaum."

And in Capernaum they listened reverently to His words. "They were astonished at his doctrine." And He did many wonderful works. He must have made a prolonged stay, for He taught them "on the sabbath days." What a difference between these two communities! Why do Nazareth and Capernaum furnish such a contrast? Lecturing in a certain tiny village, I found myself the helpless victim

of a crowd of young ruffians in the gallery at the far end of the church. They greeted the soloist with catcalls; they punctuated my address with showers of peas upon the heads of the people below; they made rude remarks at the choir girls as they rose to sing before the close. The most terrible feature of the distressing experience was that the authorities of the congregation seemed completely impotent in the matter. Shortly afterwards, I was asked to lecture in another village, not ten miles from the scene of my discomfiture. As the chairman was about to begin the program, I saw a company of some thirty young men enter and take seats on a raised platform at the farther end of the hall. Instantly I recalled my recent trial and the fact that this was in the same township, I asked the chairman in a whisper if we had "anything to fear from the boys back there." "Why, bless you, no!" he replied. "They are here to listen to your lecture." So they were, and they listened with all respect. And at the close, from the midst of the group arose one to move the usual Canadian vote of thanks in a neat speech. Another seconded the motion in even a better speech. Then the chairman said, "You have heard the motion of my son, John, and the second by Mr. Richard Colton." Well, I seized the opportunity to explain to the chairman, right before the audience, just why I had been alarmed at the entry of that group of youths, without revealing the exact location of the neighboring village referred to. The chairman shed some light on the situation by saying: "We have always had a fine type of young manhood here since our village was founded. We began right. Our fathers were gentlemen, and our first pastor stayed with us forty years, and gave the community a distinct flavor of good breeding." That is the secret of good communities: Good blood and the Gospel. That chairman's testimony furnishes a fine plea for home missions.

The Preacher never came back to Nazareth. He had

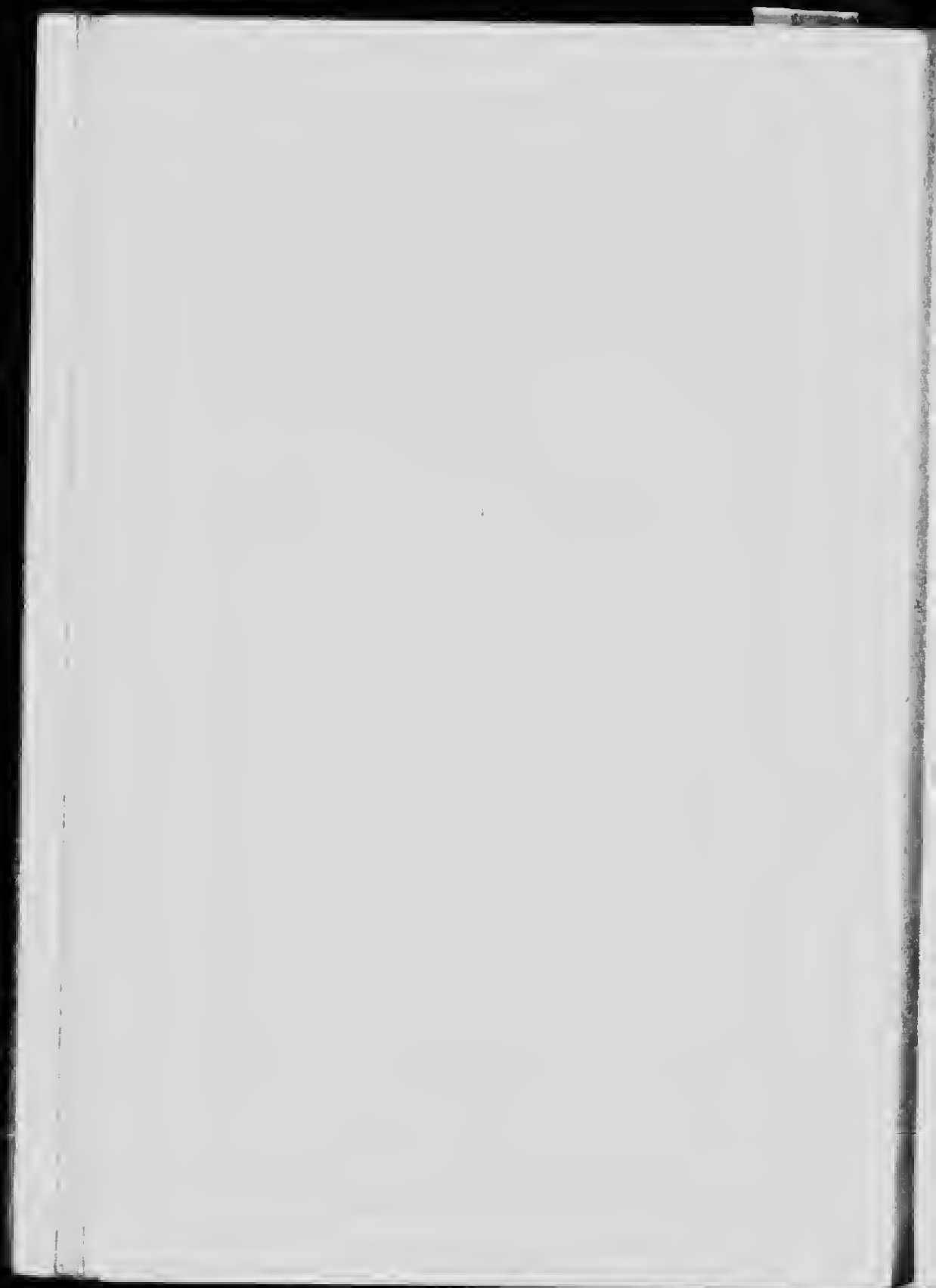
only three years in which to do His work, and he went where the ground was the most fertile. The village had had its chance and missed it. And Mary? It would seem that she moved over to the more noble Capernaum. Roman Catholics believe that shortly after the Crucifixion she died and was carried up to Heaven by a cordon of angels under the command of Jesus Himself. But is it not sweeter to believe that she lived to a beautiful old age, telling over and over with undiminished enthusiasm the heroic acts of her Son? But among them all, none were more vivid in her memory than those of that day in Nazareth when He delivered the first sermon His mother heard Him preach.





III

MY BEST WISH FOR YOUR DARKEST DAY



### III.

#### MY BEST WISH FOR YOUR DARKEST DAY

"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble."—Psalm XX: 1.

Is not that a lovely wish? I couldn't have made it twenty years ago. Then I would have wished you good luck! No, this isn't the flippant message of youth; it is the thoughtful benediction of maturity. Young people never expect the day of trouble. They harbor the thought of serenely living on. They say, "All men are mortal but I."

First, then, let us speak of the darkest phase: that the day of trouble will surely come. The psalmist seems to take it for granted. Let us face the fact bravely, and play the man. Let us not turn our face away. Banqueter at life's table, it is on the bill of fare. The angel carries the cup to thee also. With the sweet, thou must drink the bitter; else miss communion with thy Lord of Gethsemane. So this wish is the most catholic I can make.

Note that no nice distinction is made here as to the kind of trouble. All sorts of human anguish are cast into the same basket. The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble, trouble from whatsoever source. Some people must make perfectly sure that a man's extremity is from entirely innocent causes before they will help him. I asked a rich man to assist a kinsman of his who was flat on his back in a hospital, all twisted up with rheumatism. "Not a cent, not a red cent!" he cried. "I told him fifteen years ago that he ought to save his money and wear overshoes." Charity workers often investigate applicants for relief so thoroughly, they are ninety-five per cent sure to find a flaw in the case

somewhere in the last fifty years. God never does that. He says: "Come unto me, *all ye* that labor and are heavy laden." It is not wise to try to classify sorrows too precisely. We cannot divide all afflictions into three classes and confidently assert that they are self-made or accidental or Heaven-sent. Some may have all these causes present. Others may be parent-made. Still others, the result of misjudgment. And who can tell in how far the error in judgment may have been providential? So the wish is for all sorrowing souls.

The day of trouble may come with frightful suddenness, even as this text is so startlingly expressed. We are entirely unprepared for it. We, too, in our prosperity said, "We shall never be moved." At a Canadian lakeside, a happy wife and her four sweet daughters were enjoying a holiday. Grandma and auntie had also come to join the merry party. Alas! At that moment I was at the other end of the long-distance 'phone, wondering how I could soften the force of the blow they must receive. The dear father and husband had died! That happy circle had to be plunged into their day of trouble.

Well, three days later, I was standing at a street corner, waiting for a motor that was to take me to the hard task of conducting my friend's funeral and comforting that sorrowing woman and those four girls. I, too, needed comforting, for he had been my good counselor and chum. Just then, a man whom I had known for years accosted me. He had been a spry, erect sort of man; here he was, so changed; hope seemed to have gone from his very soul. With husky voice he told how he had an hour before received a cablegram confirming the casualty report that his boy in France had lost both his legs and eyes! Oh, dear brother, the Lord hear thee in this day of trouble. In an instant my own sorrow vanished before this man's terrible blow. My immediate aim had to be to point him to the one Refuge in the time of storm.

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So this is my wish, that you may have the Divine caress in the evil day. The only thing that could make that stricken father's grief tolerable was God's presence. Oh, that I might tell you how sure I am that God answers our cry. "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble." Have we not sensed Him standing by us when our sorrow was crushing us? Have we not felt His hand upon our brow? I know that I am giving your testimony, stricken soul.

We know when the Lord hears us. There is an answer. It comes like the tick of the telegraph instrument in reply to the operator's call. In the terrible hour of anguish there was a certain joy, inexpressibly sweet. In the sob of your heart there was a note of real music. That was the token of God's presence. It was the Divine caress, the crooning of the great mother-heart of God. Said an old man to me: "My mother has been dead these forty years, but I still get comfort from the old song:

'Gently her hand on my forehead she'd press  
And try to soothe me from pain and distress.  
Kindly she'd say to me, Be of good cheer!  
Mother would comfort me if she were here.'

"And I never sing it," said he, "without feeling that I am really getting some comfort, either from her or her God." No man has tasted of life's sweetest joy who has not sipped this drop of honey from his Father's hand.

So I say, this day of trouble is an asset; not a liability. Sorrow is ripening. Henry Ward Beecher interested the English people by telling them of our American persimmon. He told how a visitor to the South would be handed what seemed to be luscious fruit. Biting into it, he would find it horribly bitter. Then they gave him one frost-bitten and unshapely, but sweet as honey. The frost had turned the acid to sugar. Men are like that. Success and brilliancy alone cannot make a perfect character. A lady told me

of her brilliant and eloquent pastor, a young man blessed with fine physique and mind. "All he lacks," she said, "is the note of sympathy. He cannot comfort us as his aged predecessor did." Certainly not. There must come into his life a disappointment, a death or at least a perilously near escape from bereavement. Then the missing note of tenderness will come into his speech. No man can say this text without himself having passed through the dark valley.

With God standing by, sorrow makes heroes. I called on an old preacher friend who is one of the most valiant souls I ever knew. He put on a thick-glassed pair of spectacles and held up a magnifying glass half-way between his eye and my head. After examining my face intently for a full minute, he said, "Yes, it is you all right, Brother Stauffer; how is my old conference friend?" You see he had lost an eye on the fierce field of Antietam. Then he lay seven weeks in Libby Prison without medical attention, so the other eye became infected. Since then that remaining eye has allowed him to see but the bare outline of things. With the aid of powerful glasses, he can decipher the big headlines of the newspaper. After the war he went home to resume his preparation for the ministry. His young wife read to him his whole college course, and after that, the books in the local preachers' and the traveling preachers' courses. He developed a marvelous memory, and acquired an unusual knowledge of the Bible. He toiled heroically in the hardest fields of Gospel labor until his seventieth birthday. "And now I am as busy as ever," he chuckled. "As a superannuate I conduct as many funerals as any pastor in Buffalo, and I am educating my three fatherless grandchildren." He pulled me before a large picture of a handsome woman. "There she is; isn't she a fine girl? She is at Syracuse University. Her brother is there, too." And he told me all about their cleverness, the scholarships they had won, and their courses. Then he drew me up to a long panoramic picture of Antietam. Putting his finger on a

## MY BEST WISH FOR YOUR DARKEST DAY 37

valley, the location of which, I noticed, he found by taking measurements from a notch in the frame with his thumb and forefinger, he shouted with the gladness of a school-boy, "I fought down there!" A thrill shot through my frame. Glorious old hero of the sword and of the Cross! May you and I look over the balconies of Heaven to cry, "I fought down there!" And may we know that we fought well. That is what we will remember, the struggle, the victories; not the easy-going days of comfort and pleasure.

My wish is that you may be a wisher, too. The chief thing about this psalm is that somebody wished this towering blessing upon the head of one going out to conflict. Will we also carry this benediction to those who need it in the days of war's desolation? If you have been comforted of God, it is that you may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the same comfort wherewith you yourself are comforted of God. Have you seen the Master come walking on the water to your tempest-tossed boat to bring peace? Then tell it to some one in affliction. Say that the Lord will answer his S. O. S. also. Have you looked into the tomb to see an angel, as Mary did on that first Easter morning? Go quickly and tell that He is risen! Did One walk with you through the fiery furnace? Run to where another is traveling on the seething coals, and say: "Lo, I see one like unto the Son of God walking with thee."

Somebody in this city is trying to convert me to Roman Catholicism. He is constantly sending me tracts for my soul's cure. Occasionally there is written on the margin: "I am praying for you, that you may come into the light." It makes me feel strangely sympathetic with his efforts; I am always on the side of the solicitor anyway, and this dear soul seems so sincere and earnest. The tracts are all on this thought of getting the presence of God in devotion. They are fine and, if shorn of their Roman Catholic verbiage, would pass for the fine work of R. B. Meyer. I

would like to see my unknown well-wisher and tell him that we are both feeling after God, and that we believe the same blessed truth that God hears and comes to the man who earnestly calls on Him. Ah, there can be no ecclesiastical gulf between me and the heart that wishes me God's ear and wants to help me reach Him.

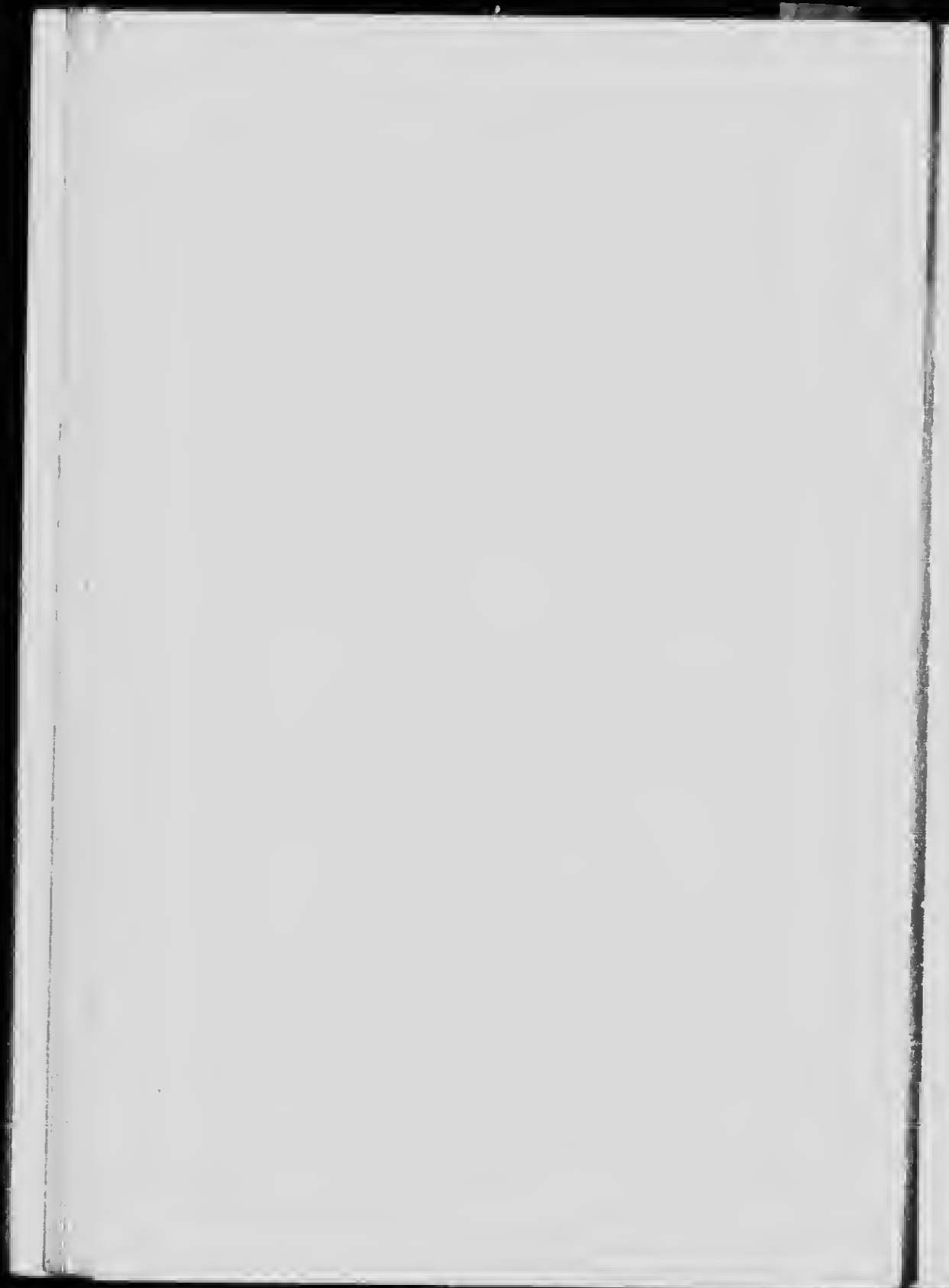
Neither can there be much heresy in the soul that blesses another by helping him to the Mercy Seat. In a preachers' meeting, they were saying hard things about R. J. Campbell on account of his theological variations and his ecclesiastical migrations. My only contribution to the discussion was to relate how the famous pastor of the City Temple came to my Toronto church to lecture. His secretary had told me that Dr. Campbell was on the verge of a breakdown, and I should keep him quiet during the day. But we were at a public luncheon at noon, and later attended a reception given him by a Congregational preacher. At the latter function, a letter was handed Dr. Campbell, and he called me over and said: "Here is a note from one of your older ministers saying that a sprained ankle prevents his coming to the lecture to-night. He doesn't ask it, but I wonder whether we couldn't go and see him." I reminded him of the mandate his secretary had put upon me, but he answered: "Oh, call a taxi; it will do me more good to make the call than to sleep." We went. Dr. Campbell was so pleasant in that snug home. He picked up a Testament from the table, read a few verses and offered prayer. We left that old servant of God profoundly happy. He never forgot the day when the man he deemed the leader of his denomination came to see him in his day of disappointment. Well, when I finished the story, I don't think there was a person present that cared a straw whether R. J. Campbell was heterodox or orthodox, Congregational or Anglican. The principal thing is: Are we believers in, and wishers of, this supreme blessing, the presence of the Lord with a praying soul in the day of trouble?



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#### IV

### THE GREATEST MAN OF TO-MORROW



## IV

### THE GREATEST MAN OF TO-MORROW

"But I am among you as he that serveth."—Luke XXII: 27.

THUS Jesus gave the world a new standard of greatness, a new brand of eminence, a novel yardstick for measuring honors, a unique scales for weighing reputations. The old notion of distinction was to sit on a throne and have things brought to you. The All Highest of the older sort must have one menial read to him, another fan him, a third bring a pipe and strike a match; four men carry him in a palanquin, while four more cover him with a gold-fringed canopy. But Jesus was the pioneer in real Democracy. His conception of preeminence was not being served, but to serve. And not to serve some princelet, but humanity.

With His wonted tact, He seized a strategic moment to instill the thought. The disciples had been quarreling over this very matter of preeminence. Who should sit on His right and on His left? Not who should be the most efficient, but who should lord it over the others? Who should receive the kotows of his fellows? Who is to go in to dinner first, the governor of Massachusetts or the newly-made cardinal? That stirred up a hornet's nest in the old Bay State some years ago. Who has precedence, the minister from Greenland or the ambassador from Timbaktu? These pestiferous little problems of diplomatic corps shed some light on the strife among the Galilean's followers.

Meanwhile one has been sent to secure a room for the Passover meal. The messenger sees a man carrying a pitcher and asks: "Have you a room to spare?" "Why

yes: the very thing for your company." "And is it well furnished?" "Yes, indeed; it has table and lounges, fine linen and tableware and finger bowls." No; that is not what he said at all. He said Foot Bowls,—vessels in which to wash the weary, travel-stained feet of the banqueters ere they sit down to dine. Who is to wash feet to-day? Since no servant was there to perform this menial task, the youngest or the humblest will likely essay to do it. But no; since each desires to be recognized as the highest, the foot bowls are unused.

It is the Master's opportunity. He takes the towel and girds Himself; He pours water; He washes the feet of all, as He seats Himself again. He preaches His sermon. "Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also should wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Luke reports Him as adding: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them;—but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth." No longer shall a display of frills and ruffles, of badges and titles, be the standard of greatness, but intrinsic worth in serving. Talent and goodness shall lock arms and go on an errand of helpfulness. It is coming to pass! Bombs have wrecked the doctrine of the divine right of kings.

The measure of statesmanship is to be service. Strategy and intrigue used to be. He who could most cunningly out-flank his rivals got the ear of a Stuart king for a brief day. He who could devise a way to rid Henry of an

undesirable wife was made chancellor. Francis Bacon unflinchingly confesses to having furnished Essex with a fund of flattering remarks and pretty speeches for use in the presence of Elizabeth. Bribery and falsehood were the keys to power in Walpole's day. But now new kings have risen, crowned only by the confidence of the people. Lloyd George is among us as he that serveth. The Wilsons, the Borden, the Hoovers,—all who have really helped to steer the ships of state through these most troubled waters—are at their posts solely because of the service they can render the public. Greatness will never again consist in hauling away emoluments, but in giving away trained talents.

Serving is also becoming the test of business and professional success. Brains must be bent on something worth while. No longer is a man pointed out simply because he is a logarithmical expert. Charles M. Schwab has become an object of interest because he has submitted to have his remarkable talents drafted into the service of his country. A subtle but wholesome change is creeping over big business. It may be too early to prophesy, but thinking men know full well that the day of mere profiteering monopoly is past and that something far nobler and altruistic is on the way. The laboratory, the study, the lecture-room, the counting house, must be centres of the new evangel of service.

The test of art is serving. When does the painter reach the summit of fame? When his canvas preaches Jesus. When Peter Paul Ruhens moves us to pity in his "Descent from the Cross;" when Leonardo da Vinci preaches from this same incident of our text in his "The Last Supper;" when Michelangelo paints Matthew Twenty-Five in his "The Last Judgment." When does the singer seize the citadel of our hearts? Not when he displays his technique, but when he consoles and blesses us. P. T. Barnum said that Jenny Lind never sang so sweetly at any \$1000 concert as she did in the

corridors of the soldiers' and sailors' hospital in New Orleans when she raised her sweet voice in "Come, Ye Disconsolate."

We have a new kind of actor to-day. A hundred years ago the ability of the tragedian was measured by his power to portray human passions. When Kean played the part of Sir Giles Overreach he became so completely possessed by the spirit of fiendish vengeance that screams of terror rang out from the boxes and galleries of Drury Lane. His fellow actors were themselves horror-stricken. That brand of acting is no more. Forbes Robertson and Tyrone Power are more than interpreters; they are preachers.

He who is taught the art of healing in our great schools impliedly signs a contract to wash humanity's feet. Every free clinic is the voluntary tax that talent pays mankind. A surgeon, operating on a woman without using an anæsthetic, said: "You quit screaming or I'll quit operating." She couldn't stop, so he did. A jury gave her \$5000 damages, the court stating that scientific skill could not go on a strike at such a time. Genius must bless the world.

There has dawned a new day in our social life. No longer will mere splendor of appointment and lavishness in outlay on gowns and menu be the tests of eminence. Side by side, Mrs. Philip Snowden and Lady Drummond have labored among returned soldiers. Caste has been forgotten; the distinctions of rank obliterated. My dear friend, Major William C. Michell, wrote from London, where he was convalescing: "Nothing is deemed too good for the wounded soldier here in old England. We are welcomed to the homes of dukes and artisans alike. Sympathy is universal." A quarter of a century ago Chicago's society leader was Mrs. Potter Palmer whose lavish hospitality was a feature of the World's Fair. She set the pace in entertaining for the whole of America. Ask any Illinois schoolboy who is the first woman of the state to-day, and I will venture that he will name Jane Addams. She is the Queen of Hull

House, the refuge of the weak and erring. She is in Chicago as she that serveth.

Serving is the pivot on which church success swings. The efficiency of a congregation is not measured by its revenues, but by the number of people who are willing to gird themselves for useful service and seize a towel! A philosopher's advice to the young was that they spend some time every day with somebody more intelligent than themselves. Jesus' motto to the church is: "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." He would advise us to spend some time daily with those who have little opportunity for culture. The strong must touch the weak, not by a cheque, but by personality. The salt of good society must prevent the slum. Neighborhoods with a surplus of salt must come to the help of such as have a deficit.

The badge of goodness is the towel. In Jesus' day religion was deemed to be ostentatious devotion. The church leaders prayed on the streets, to be seen of men. But His disciples were told to perform their devotions and give their alms quietly. Then He held up a man of alien birth and heretical religion, but who gave succor to a wounded man by a lonely wayside, as His ideal of a good man. After telling this story of the Good Samaritan for the benefit of him who had inquired what he should do to inherit eternal life, He added: "Go, and do thou likewise."

In the Middle Ages they imagined it a sign of piety to be divorced from active life, to wear peas in one's shoes, horse-hair undergarments in midsummer, chains with barbs to cut deep into the flesh. That was a sham religion which went nowhere. It still obtains among us, however, despite all the light of our century. A San Francisco newspaper quite seriously announces that a young woman of prominent family is to be received into the Carmelita order of nuns, the ceremony of reception to be conducted by an

archbishop with a reputation for intelligence and broad-mindedness. She will join a sisterhood which is absolutely shut out from the world. Even at church, an iron grating completely separates them from all other worshippers. Behind this grating she will be seen prostrated on a bed of lilies, a symbol of her death to the world. Never again will her friends be permitted to look upon her face. Now it does seem as if we had need of one more society: one to prevent dreamy young women from making such an irrevocable decision, or to afterwards rescue from these institutions such as regret the awful step. No, no; such suicidal antics are not, nor ever were, religious living. Men are returning to Jesus' standards. Nobody is good, really good, who merely does no harm, or starves himself once a week, or prays so many hours a day, or takes his turn at keeping vigil before some altar. Goodness is the spirit of kindly concern for others. That is morality in its broadest conception; that is religion; that is Christliness. And this religion, after we have caught His spirit, becomes so natural, so easy of fulfilment, so universally possible, that men are apt to miss it on account of its very simplicity.

Serving is the one key to Heaven. Listen to the Master's words:

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

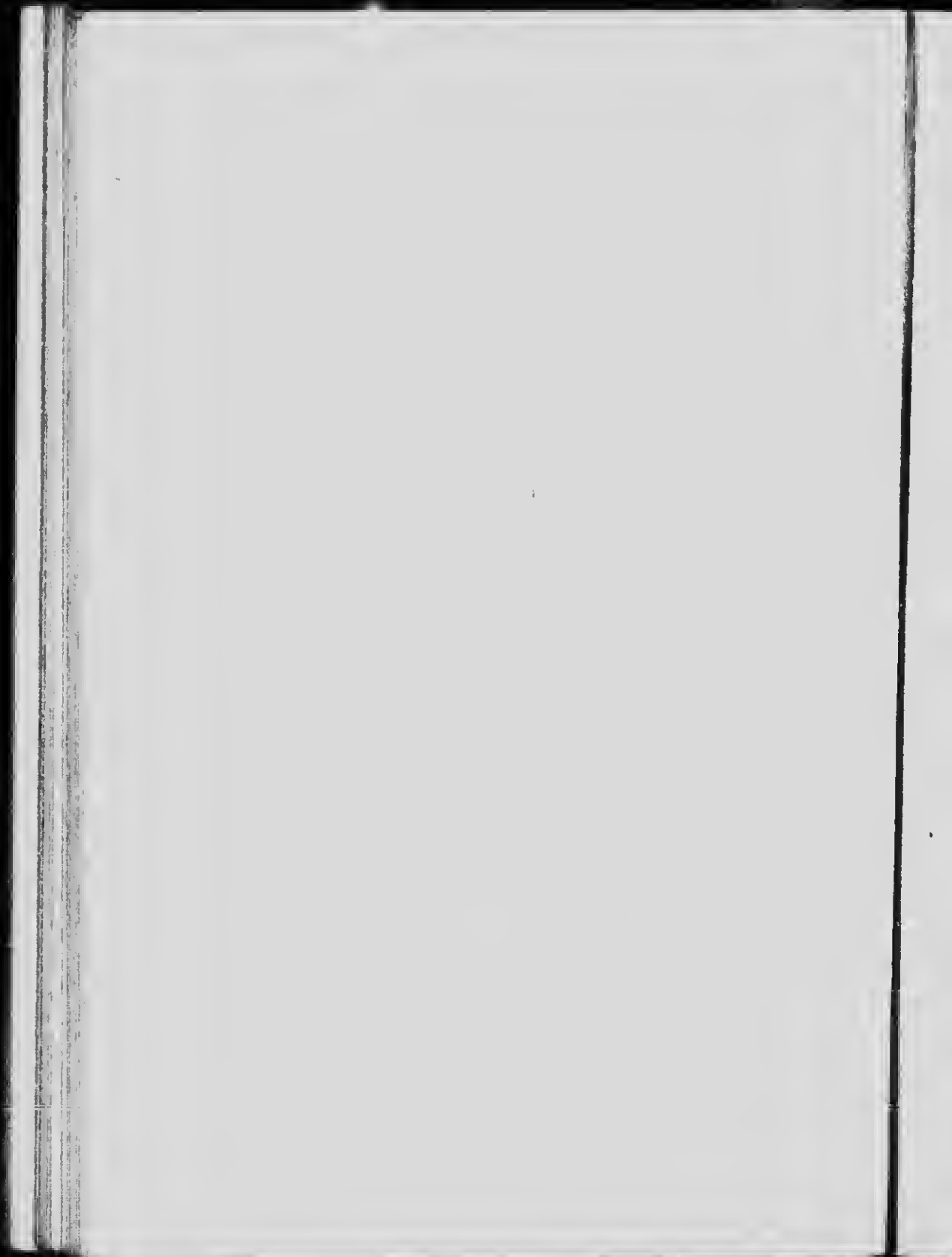


I write these words while the whole world is waiting for the world of peace. The armistice between Germany and her victorious foes, is it signed? The crowds before the bulletin boards,—ah, the crowds that have stood before those boards four long years,—are ready to cheer. Rockets have been carried to the summit of nearby Mount Tamalpais so that, if the message comes during the night, this whole Bay region of California may be told that the sword is sheathed! The sword is sheathed forever! And now the Towel! The Master's Towel!



V

WATER FROM YOUR OWN WELL



## V

### WATER FROM YOUR OWN WELL

"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well."—Proverbs V: 15.

My cousin Sam needed that advice. He never dug a well in his yard. During thirty-five years he (or, more likely, the women folk) made a half-dozen trips a day across the highway to his neighbor's well. In all that time he was constantly promising himself the luxury of a well of his own. His friends estimate that Sam and his family have made 76,650 journeys to that far-away pump, with a total of about 13,000 miles, lugging brimming bucketfuls that would have flowed just as readily from a spout before his own cottage door.

Moral: Dig your own well, develop your own springs, patronize your own pump. Have some springs of satisfaction, some reservoirs of happiness, some wells of contentment, within your own soul.

But why not use the neighbor's well? Does not the Bible say that the folks next door will be blessed by giving a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple? Is not Christianity altruistic? True. And herein lies the ethical balance of Scriptural teaching. It exhorts the man with a pump: Give of your water to thirsty souls. But to the shiftless user of his neighbor's cistern it declares: Have a well of your own. The exhortation for a strong-armed man is: "Bear ye one another's burdens" the word for the indolent is: "Every man shall bear his own burden." The

best life is a compromise between socialism and individualism. Look out for Number One that you may really assist Number Two. Charity begins at home, and then goes abroad. To give something, we must first possess something. To help a borrower, you must first have somewhat to lend. To bless the crowd, you must first, for a term of years, renounce the crowd. A certain apparent selfishness must precede the best generosity. To give a cup of cold water, have a well!

Had the writer of Proverbs lived in our day, he would have changed the figure and said: "Do it off your own bat." Elbert Hubbard defines Initiative as doing the right thing without being told. Every man should be the architect of his own building, the engineer of his own locomotive, the conductor of his own train, the timekeeper of his own work-day, the captain of his own ship. The thought that we are the children of our generation, colored by the soil of our environment, may be good enough for the sociological professor's class-room, but for me, Sovereign Me, the slogan must be: I am the Master of my Fate. When a speaker declared that men had but little to do with their own intelligence, that the fertility of the soil had more to do with it than school books, an old Scotchman cried out: "Then hoo did the porritch of barren Scotland mak' a Tammas Carlyle?"

Every man should have a vocational well. Wise the father who kindles a desire for some definite life-calling in his son's heart. Some day, to whatever height he climbs, it may prove an unfailing spring in a dry spell. A deal of the wage slavery we hear of could be avoided if men did not set out with a willingness to be slaves. There is nothing like the pump of a vocation, just one little specialty acquired, some one thing a man can do well, a nook of life which he can snugly occupy. Edison says that, during his earlier years as an inventor, he valued his ability in telegraphy as a parachute. Charles M. Hays started as a stenographer; Charles M. Schwab, as a machinist.

The well for a livelihood should be dug along the lines of the least resistance. Dig where you can get the best flow. Somewhere, away down under your lot, is water for your needs. With a little observation, parents may easily note a child's leanings in the matter of a trade. We had five ten-year-old boys at our house for tea. Two could tell all about the war, how the quarrel began, how each warring nation happened to enter the fray. The third could not talk about it very well, but he drew a very fair map of Europe, locating Germany, France, Belgium and Serbia. The next lad knew nothing of the struggle in Flanders, but how he could spin off psalm after psalm! The last boy sat silently through the meal. He didn't seem to know exactly what was going on, either at the table or in Europe. But as we were rising from our places, that boy was busily folding all the little visitors' napkins and gathering them on one pile. Then he offered to clear away the dishes. His forte seemed to be in the realm of the kitchen. But afterwards, I noticed that he knew the names of every flower in the garden. And now his mother writes that he is working for a florist!

Hats off to the man who has dug a well of prodigious flow! I was invited to see the Duke of Connaught go in state to the races. He was to have fifty outriders in livery and powdered wigs! That was before the war, it should be remarked. Doubtless His Royal Highness has been busy in nobler tasks these last four years. Let us hope, and do all we can to fulfill the hope, that such silly exhibitions will never again be seen on Canadian soil. No; I cannot enthuse over seeing a duke drive in state to the races. I will save my plaudits for a Haig or a Lloyd George. But I will travel far to see the man who has gained regal power through self-reliant achievement. The man who, even for the lure of gold, has gone into the wilderness, endured untold hardship, slept out in zero weather, advanced when his companions refused to go another step, keeping on, on until he has

found the vein,—for him I will stand at the curb with uncovered head. And as for a Grenfell or a Jane Addams, I shall fall down and give them the obeisance due a Cæsar.

The greatest purely secular trait to kindle in youth is self-reliance. The world overawes some people. Kathleen Norris says that until she arrived in New York, she imagined that magazine writers must be of a superhuman species to which she could never aspire. "At a dinner given by my publisher," she says, "my chief sensation was one of shock to find that after all writers were merely people not unlike myself. From that moment I made progress." Two thousand years ago Plato defined courage as a knowledge of the things which a man should fear and those which he should not fear.

Your well, if the digging be carefully done, will doubtless give forth as pure a drink as your neighbor's. Too often the well diggers spend much time lamenting that their land is rocky and their tools poor. Even ill health need not prove an insurmountable handicap. Samuel Taylor Coleridge remarked that the three greatest work of eighteen centuries, Spinoza's "Ethics," Bacon's "Novum Organum," and Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," were all written by men in feeble health. Sir Isaac Newton was frail and of poor eyesight in his boyhood. But one day when a stronger lad kicked him, he resolved to retaliate by beating the bully in the class. That was the beginning of his life-long assiduity. Do you wish for a better equipment? Do you say, If only I had a quiet room, a well-stocked library, a stenographer, I too could write a masterpiece? Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin" on a kitchen table. Robert Bloomfield wrote "The Farmer's Boy" on a shoemaker's stool. Robert Browning's best two poems were written during a storm on the Mediterranean while he was cooped up in a miserable cabin. Cowper lay abed while writing "John Gilpin." Bunyan wrote "Pilgrim's Progress" in Bedford Prison. Your tools are all right; dig your well.



Happy the man who draws his pleasures from his own well. Quiet joys are best. Some are so dependent on the fun they have on very exceptional occasions that they have no zest for the simple satisfaction of their own hearths. I should like to see Switzerland again, and I often pine for Algonquin Park, but I recover when I recall Dr. Johnson's unique way of rebuking the ravings of his friends over the advantage of travel: "Take a walk down Fleet Street, Sir!" Some one says that Dickens's power lay in seeing so plainly the joys of the lowly. He did not give his poor merely oppression and despair. He gave them roast goose and plum pudding on Christmas Day; he gave them faith and hope and love. Aye; the cotter's Saturday night may be as joyous as the millionaire's whole week.

Charles Lamb suggested that men should say grace over a table spread with good books. What a spring is the habit of good reading! The water will flow in increasing volume. Biography will do much for the young. Great men have the mature powers which all of us possess in embryo. Get acquainted with David and Paul, Franklin and Bacon, King Alfred and St. Louis, Raphael and Michael Angelo, Gladstone and Bright, and your room, though it be the third floor back, will never be gloomy. You will have a group of companions who need no chairs, but who will give you constantly a feast of reason and a flow of soul.

But the chief thing I urge upon you is to have your own well of religion. Each must face his own problems of right living, even though a general standard is set before him in the New Testament. But the code will be simple. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. He who has the Golden Rule in his heart need not carry a copy of the penal code in his pocket. Do your own thinking. We need not run over to the neighbor's house every time we want to know how to act in a moral emergency. Neither should we allow others to come in and arbitrarily tell us what to believe and

do. Think your own thoughts; investigate, collaborate, reach a verdict. A man who thinks well need never to be feared. He will not be apt to fall in behind a mob. Most people are bad because they are in too great a hurry, says the author of "Crowds." Do not allow a man to convince you that your salvation depends upon a mental acquiescence in some obscure theory. A reporter called me up to ask what I thought of the proposition to shorten the Ten Commandments. I said they are too old to shorten. He didn't understand my baby-clothes joke, so I added that they were not too long to keep. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Have your own well of prayer. We need no man's formula for admission to God's waiting room. We may talk to our Father in our own way, whether that be the prayers of ancient saints or the cry of our own heart, voiced in our own vernacular.

Thine own well! How secure the pioneer feels when he has found an ample supply of pure water! Thine own well, yet Christ's well. Every real Christian develops his own personality. Jesus is the only character we can copy and still be ourselves. Let us be the echo of no man save the Man Christ Jesus. The beauty of our own individuality comes out when we abide in Him, even as a sensitive opal responds to the warmth of the human hand. He who has the Master for his inspiration has a well. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

VI

THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE FAMILY



## VI

### THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE FAMILY

"And Esau hated Jacob, . . . and said in his heart, The Days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I kill my brother Jacob."—Genesis XXVII: 41.

BUT he never carried out the threat. And that is the redeeming feature of most of those rash, revengeful vows of early days; we forget them. Only a small-souled man clings to spites. Dr. R. J. Campbell tells of the shock that came to him when an old friend said: "There was a man who once did me a wrong, and I waited twelve long years, but I waited until I had the chairs sold from under him; and when the chairs were sold from under him, I drew a long breath and said, 'My God, but that is conquering!'" So let us put this down to the credit of Esau; he forgot his vow to "get even."

Esau has been regarded by theologians as the black sheep of Isaac's family. If then Jacob is the white sheep, we must take the viewpoint of the colored man who, after describing his brother's excesses, said, "Yaas, he sure is da white sheep of ouah fambly."

These boys were twins, but astrologers would say they were born under opposite stars. They may have slept in the same bed, but a gulf yawned between them nevertheless. And it is easy to guess which lay square in the middle of the bed and monopolized the covers. Esau was a burly fellow. He was a fuzzy-wuzzy baby, and the woolly hair never left him. He was strong and dexterous; a rover of the forest; knew the runways of the deer. His joy was to

carry home a buck on his shoulders. Jacob was a dainty fellow, an indoors man. He "dwelt in tents," you will recall. No tan was on his cheek, no brawn in his limbs.

Esau was his father's boy; Jacob, his mother's. Question for debate in a Young People's Society: Which turns out the better man, mother's boy or father's boy? Question Number Two: Should there be a mother's boy and a father's boy?

Rebecca idolized Jacob. In her eyes he could do no wrong. Some one has well said that Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son to duty. Rebecca was always ready to sacrifice truth and duty to her son. Her husband, her elder son, her principle, her soul,—all were offered on this idolatrous altar. Some good people are hypnotized, thinking they are loved. Nothing can shake their confidence in the hypnotist. Nobody has any rights but Jacob. By the tactics of the Jacobs I have met, I should imagine Rebecca's spoiled boy to have been surly about the house, assuming an injured air and thereby stimulating the maternal humoring. Thereby also she was the more likely to tell Esau that he "might have given in." Did you ever know a weak mother to tell her Jacob that *he* might have given in?

Then, there was a temperamental contrast between these brothers. Jacob is shrewd, cool, patient. He can wait. Esau is impulsive; he must have what he hungers for, and have it instantly. "I am dying of hunger! What good is a birthright to a dead man?" Of course, he is not really dying. A few minutes' wait would have furnished him a dish of his own preparing. Some people commit the Esau blunder daily. They are canned-goods folk. They pay five prices for a ready-to-eat dish from the delicatessen shop at the corner. The impulsive spirit is always expensive. It means forty cents for a long distance 'phone conversation where a three-cent stamp would have done as well. The revelation that a telegraph company was sending its night letters from Buffalo to New York, for instance, by mail,

contained a moral for the patrons. The Esaus are poor judges of relative values. They eat greedily; then regret the price of the meal. The price of that succulent steak would buy the young fellow some needed item of apparel. And alas! some purchase the gratification of baser appetites with the sacrifice of moral fibre that includes all of real life.

This then is the outstanding warning of Esau's folly. It is symbolic of the error of all who choose the immediate but the lower and the temporary for the slower but the higher and the permanent. We were tempted to sell our chance for honors at school for the pottage of frivolous evenings. Many a youth for the moment prefers immediate marriage and an unskilled position to the diploma which necessitates a year's postponement of the wedding. Graver still,

"We barter life for pottage; sell true bliss  
For wealth or power, for pleasure or renown;  
Thus, Esaulike, our Father's blessing miss,  
Then wash with fruitless tears our faded crown."

And yet I like Esau. For steady company, I would rather chum with him than with his brother. Perhaps it is that I know how tempting the dish of ready-to-eat food is. Coolly Jacob requires the oath; calmly he passes the dish. Martin Luther says, "Had it been myself, I would have dropped the dish!" To-morrow Esau regrets, but Jacob does not relent. "You promised!" cries a Jacob; "I'll hold you to your bargain!" A bargain, said Earl Chatham, should be profitable to both seller and buyer. When a man is so insistent on holding another to his word, he usually means to say: "I hypnotized you, and now I insist on taking the profits of my art." A Jewish commentator says: "Had conditions been reversed, Esau would have released his brother from the bargain."

Isaac ignores the contract, but Rebecca and Jacob are resolved to make it hold, even by base deception. So, when

the father bids Esau to bring him venison and receive the blessing, the mother directs her favorite to resort to the easier task of slaying a kid of the nearby field and with it deceiving the blind old man. As Esau enters with his hard-won trophy, Jacob emerges with the blessing, fraudulently obtained. My heart goes out to that elder son as I read: "And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said, 'Bless me also, O my father'." Surely our pity is aroused when he declares: "Is he not rightly called Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright; and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing." Dr. Marcus Dods has no pity for Esau in his lament; he says the dullard ought to have "given in." But to the reader who has no theological theories to square Esau seems quite natural when he clenches his fist to hiss: "When the days of mourning for my father are past I will kill him!"

Note, however, that Isaac does give Esau a blessing. It is this: "And it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

Twenty years have gone by! We have heard nothing of Esau, but of Jacob, much. He is coming home rich. He has driven many a shrewd bargain since that pottage deal. He has been plodding, not so much in hard work as in scheming. Withal he is strangely, perhaps we might say inconsistently, prayerful. The inconsistency of some lies not in their sin but in their prayers. He is coming back with a great fear haunting him. He must drive one more bargain now; he must purchase his brother's forgiveness. "Esau cometh to meet thee, and with him four hundred men!" is the alarming message he received. He will buy him off! Like Dombey, he is quite sure that money can do anything. Now for a present that will make this impulsive fellow's eyes stand out, one he will grab at, as he did at the mess of pottage. Here is a fine gift; goats, two hundred and



twenty; sheep, two hundred and twenty; camels, thirty; cattle, fifty; asses, thirty. Drover, put plenty of space between the various sections, so as to make this royal present look still larger. Go, tell him all these are for my Lord Esau.

Foolish Jacobs! This is ever their hallucination, that they imagine the Esaus to be as they were in the old days. Men who have not made progress themselves can never realize that others have. When the fabric of personality is too closely woven, the happenings of twenty years ago may be remembered too well. Jacobs are apt to be tenacious in grudges as they are in bargains. Esaus are more likely to forget and forgive; they let go their anger as they did their birthright.

Now read the beautiful description of the meeting. "And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men." So the present was ineffectual after all! This mess of lentils is left untasted! ". . . And Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept."

As we approached Munich, an English artist in our compartment said: "Be sure and see Rembrandt's 'The Reconciliation,' and then write and tell me what you think of Esau." The moment my eyes rested on the large canvas, I realized what my traveling companion meant. What a noble face! Rembrandt's genius never served the world better than when his brush painted a real Esau, not the denounced, black-sheep Esau of the theologians, but a big-hearted, magnanimous fellow, a manly man with generosity and self-respect blended. In that masterpiece he holds the centre of the stage. He is the hero of the hour. Rembrandt's Jacob, it should be remarked, has somewhat of penitence in his countenance. That is true to fact, for he has passed through a struggle. The wrestling with the angel has changed his heart. In his old age he refers to that night's

experience to say that the angel redeemed him from all evil.

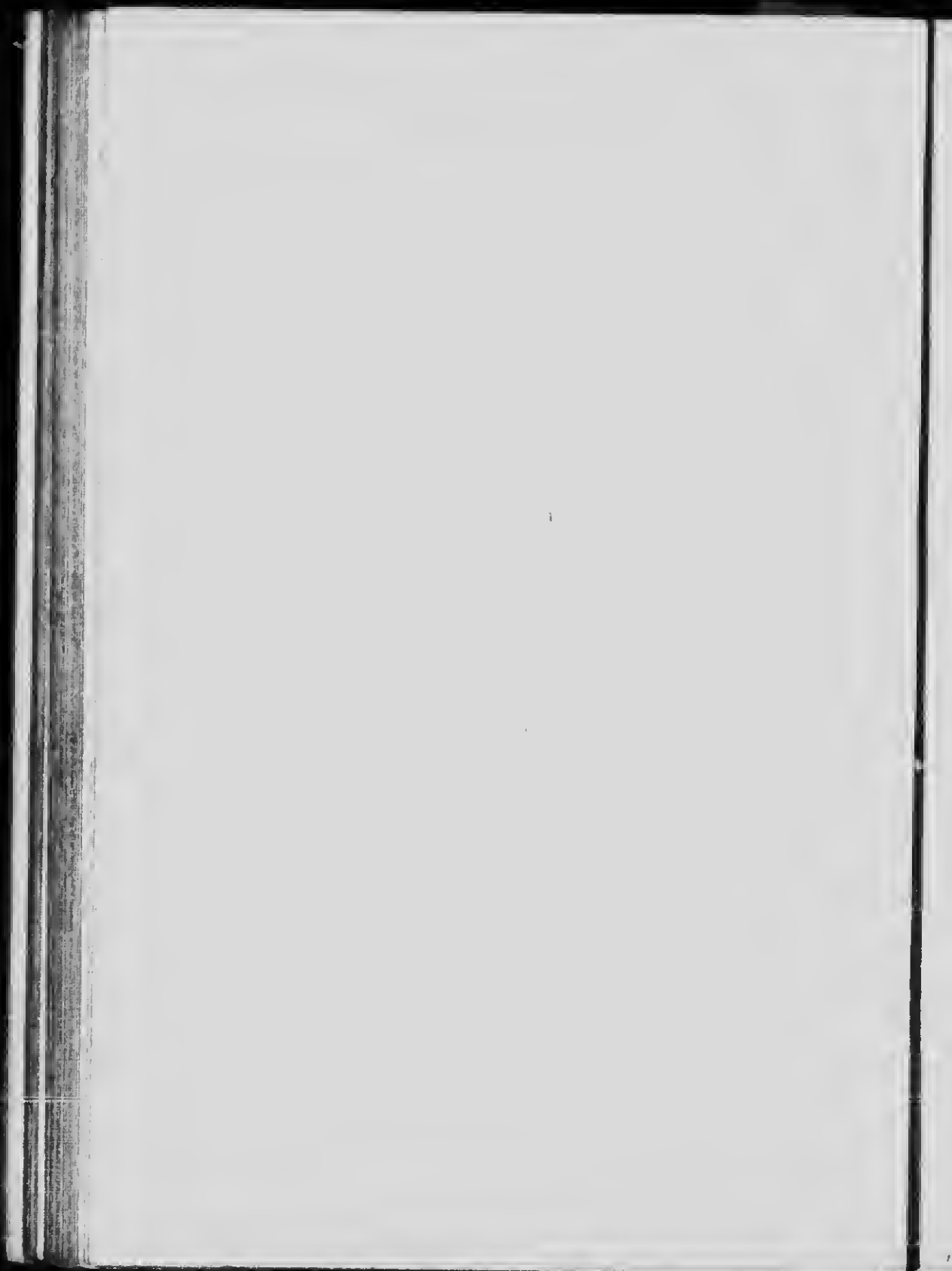
The brothers have mingled their tears and relaxed from their embrace. Now follows a genuine touch of nature. "Who are those with thee?" asks Esau. Jacob answers, "The children which God hath graciously given thy servant." Esau also forgets that twenty years have sped. To him Jacob is still the youth of the old home, with neither wife nor child. So all the children, from Reuben to little Joseph, greet their uncle Esau.

Now for that present of yesterday, that mess of pottage sent ahead to purchase forgiveness. "Brother, what meanest thou by all this drove which I met?" There must have been a blush on Jacob's face as he answers, "These were to find grace in the sight of my lord." "I have enough, my brother," replies Esau; "keep that thou hast unto thyself." What? The disinherited brother has enough? Yes, he has made good. With him, inheritances do not count. He didn't sulk for a lifetime over his mistakes or his family's injustice. He did not put forth his early disappointment as a chronic excuse for failure. Said an old man selling papers on San Francisco's streets: "Yes, I went busted in the Chicago fire of '71, and I've stayed busted ever since." Strange that in the same block another old man lamented, "I might be rich if my dad hadn't lost a hundred slaves by the civil war." There will be many such who will say, "I would have been wealthy had the great war not shattered my prospects." And they will repeat that assertion so often, they will believe it themselves! No; Esau made his way. Now note Jacob's words: "Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; for therefore have I seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast well pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee, because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have

enough." The bribe has changed into a blessing! "And he urged him, and he took it."

So the brothers go home together. The details of the reunion are not given us. We know that they did not live together permanently. They went their respective ways, each to plough his own furrow. The Jacobs and the Esaus are not meant for constant companionship, though born in the same house. That need be no reflection on either. There is but one more scene, one full of tenderness even though given with scriptural conciseness. "And Isaac died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

I love to point to Esau when parents tell me of their impetuous, heedless children. Not downright bad children so much as rash in decision and impulsive in choice. So often, too, their shortcomings are brought out more vividly because of the contrast between them and their prudent and judicious brothers. The father is sure Aleck will never amount to a hill of beans; he is so thoughtless, so spend-thrifty. He would give away his last cent. Jim is altogether different; careful, farseeing and calculating. And yet, I am inclined to stake Aleck. Give him a chance. Time is the doctor; time is the teacher; the years have a healing, improving process of their own. Come back in twenty years, and you will likely find that Esau has gained the dominion over his faults. He will kiss Jacob in magnanimity and announce his triumph over youthful faults by quietly saying, "I have enough."



VII

GLAD SIGHT FOR STORM-TOSSED CREW



## VII

### GLAD SIGHT FOR STORM-TOSSED CREW

"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship. . . . But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves. . . . And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea."—Matthew XIV: 22, 24, 25.

It is predicted that the Bible will soon be given us in moving pictures. In that event this incident may be portrayed in five reels. First reel: The Master, at sunset, is urging twelve men into a boat. Second reel: He is seen in a mountain, alone, at prayer. Third reel: A storm scene on the lake, with the twelve men rowing hard. An inset shows Jesus still praying. The storm scene is again flashed, with tempest raging more fiercely. A second inset, revealing the Master still praying, but plainly perturbed and repeatedly gazing out across the sea. Fourth reel: Jesus walking on the water; storm unabated. Fifth reel: A calm sea; the Lord sitting with the twelve in the boat.

First, then, Jesus is urging these men to embark on a voyage. Let us pin that down; it is a sweet thought which we are apt to overlook. He fairly pushed the disciples into that boat. They did not want to go; they wanted to stay with Him. There was a movement on foot to make Him king; perhaps that was the why of their unwillingness and His insistence. He did not want them to abet the plot. So He sent them away, dismissed the multitude and went up into a mountain to pray. Lord, do Thou help us to see this thing,—a crown-threatened Jesus going to pray, alone. When honors and praises come, dangerous honors

and treacherous praises perchance, may we, too, go aside and pray!

They were on the sea by the command of their Lord. It was Jesus who had sent them to row into the teeth of the storm. Storms may arise on duty's errands. Not all our troubles are of our own making. Some come from the pushing out by the Almighty Hand. Our tiny bark is sent swirling into a sea of anguish. Over and above the troubles of our own making are those of God's making. All failures are not the result of misjudgment. All accidents are not the harvest of carelessness. All disease does not come from error. The tempest which tosses us to-day may be by the will of the Lord. And you may expect Him to come to you, walking on the water. Then pick up the oar!

And yet we must sympathize with their terror in that hurricane. That boat was tormented, tossed like a chip. They knew the symptoms of shipwreck. Have you experienced the sensation? Now the bow of your canoe is pointing to yon clouds; now it seems about to dig its way to China. Your hands on the gunwale is wet; a dipperful of water splashes over your lap. Now the boat ships a gallon or two, and you wonder how soon you will be told to bale out a bit. The eyes of the sphinx-faced guide range the deep-furrowed acres ahead. His countenance tells you little of the situation. "Any danger?" you ask. "Oh, not what you'd call danger exactly," he answers; "not that yet. I'll get you to shore all right, all right. If we must, we can always hang onto the canoe and float to shore with the wind." Humph! So that may be the program, eh? And when he quietly requests you to move over that minnow-pail and shove back that bag, you are about ready to see matters culminate. What a relief when he says: "We're over the worst of it now. We're getting under the lea of the island." The waves do appear smaller, and soon you see the people on the shore. Then you hear your wife saying: "We were just beginning to worry about you." And your



little son adds: "I was getting ready to come and get you, Pop."

How comforting it is to know that somebody is solicitous for your safety! So see the inset of the storm scene: a Jesus praying for the struggling men. He awaits their S. O. S. call. I love to dwell on this, that the needs of His loved ones trouble Him. By His wireless, He receives the vibrations which your agitations create. His heart is disturbed by the agonies of His friends. A weeping Martha at Bethany, a mourning widow at Nain, a solicitous centurion at Capernaum,—all such move Him to compassion.

He arose from prayer to look out over the dark water. He left the mossy kneeling-stool for the shifting raft of rescue work. He did not come down from the hill next morning to have somebody ask: "Did you hear the news?" "Why, no. A boat was swamped, did you say? Never noticed that a storm was blowing. Fact is, I was so immersed in prayer that I was unconscious of all else." No, not that. He adjourned formal worship for the more insistent work of the hour. There are times when the church is called upon to do that. Indeed, we have been doing something akin to it of late. The mediaeval notion of religion we have cast from us. We no longer imagine that it is religious to pray in a damp cell the livelong day, and sleep at night with our coffin for a bed. More and more we are adopting the Good Samaritan brand of goodness. In parenthesis let it be added, however, that the pastor would feel safer concerning the Wednesday evening absentees if he were perfectly sure that they had left the prayer meeting to walk upon some storm-tossed Galilee to rescue perishing voyagers.

The concern of Divinity is for humanity. I care not how devastating the fire of the foe upon your sons in France. Let every anxious parent know that it is still true that "He that watcheth over Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep." "Ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid, for the

mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." A dear old friend,—my first presiding elder, God rest his soul!—went with me to hear Harry Lauder. I wondered just how Harry would impress this grand old Methodist statesman, and when the lighter parts of the program were being rendered, I asked myself, was it just what a preacher might enjoy, forgetting that I, too, was a man of the cloth. But my friend laughed till he cried. The climax came when the prince of entertainers,—who, by the way, has always refused to entertain on Sundays,—came out to answer a final encore by sweetly singing:

"Rocked in the cradle of the deep,  
I lay me down in peace to sleep;  
Secure I rest upon the wave,  
For Thou, O Lord, hast power to save.

I know Thou wilt not slight my call,  
For Thou dost mark the sparrow's fall;  
And calm and peaceful is my sleep,  
Rocked in the cradle of the deep."

My friend put his hand in mine, and we worshipped together. The days of superannuation and eventual death were close at hand, but in the promise of that hymn he was resting.

But what is the central feature of this story. Why this: "And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea." You know He did, *for you have seen Him!* When I was a lad I had difficulty in comprehending how He could surmount those waves. I could not imagine how He could avoid being lashed by the billows. Was He on the crest one moment and in the trough the next? Would His body not be at right angles to the continually changing line of the surface? So I devised the plan of visualizing Him in the middle of an acre of calm water. In an art gallery of Brussels I found that a Flemish

painter of four hundred years ago had employed this same expedient. His Jesus stood upon a perfectly smooth surface. A couple of boat lengths away the waves curled angrily, but they could not come nigh Him! The thrilling thought of that painting was that He is the Master also of storms. He put His feet squarely on the billows that threatened me. O Jesus! What manner of man art Thou, that even the winds and the sea obey Thee? He who placed His heel on the serpent of sin also put His feet squarely on the curling, lashing waves of tribulation. Not a sorrow we face but He walked upon it long ago. Master, help me also to make progress upon the very calamities which would engulf me! And may I ever hear the glad-some message of Thy voice: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

"The wind ceased." When? Why, when He was come into the ship. With Jesus in the boat, the storm is past. It matters not if the ship goes down; if He is with us, there is a great calm. Before the United States Senate committee, the Titanic's second officer testified that the ship sank from under him. "I did not leave the ship," he proudly declared; "the ship left me." With Jesus with us, does it matter whether this poor body survives? Jesus is the safety of the sea. Not the ship, but Jesus.

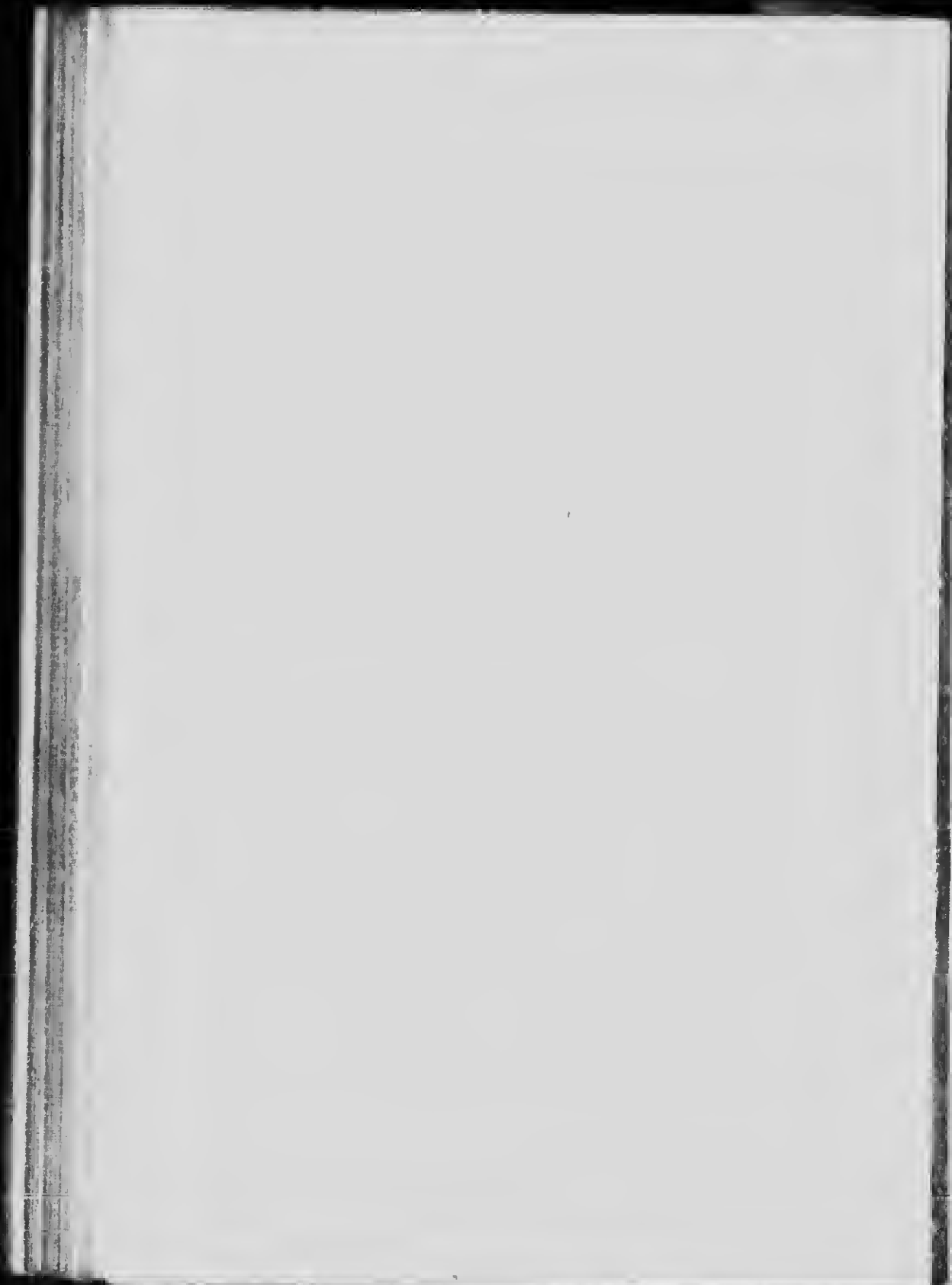
I wish some artist would give us a picture of this last scene,—of the thirteen sitting in the ship. Never say again that Thirteen is an unlucky number, for here it needed the thirteenth to bring luck! How their countenances must have changed in His presence. With the Lord's advent, the voyager forgets whether the winds blow or not. My father had a favorite nephew of about his own age. Like David and Jonathan, like Damon and Pythias, were they in their lives. I recall a stormy winter day of my father's old age. We could not get to the post office for the paper, and with the moaning of the wind the dear old man became gloomy. With groanings over his rheumatism he retired

early. We boys at our lessons heard him toss restlessly until we closed our books for bed. Just then a voice in the yard called, "Bring a light!" There was Isaac Master, our father's Jonathan, his tired horse nosing the stable door. When we returned from the feeding and bedding of the steed we found the two old cronies jesting and laughing. Father, spry as a cricket, answered mother's call to the dining room and helped himself liberally of the ham and eggs. His rheumatism was forgotten in the presence of his chum. The friend had arrived; the wind had ceased.

I doubt not that I speak to many who have felt the thrill of the Master's entrance into their wave-rocked vessel. Then may I close by reminding you of the sequel of this incident. "Then they came and worshipped him saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." They acknowledged His Divine errand; they owned Him as their Saviour. Undoubtedly they told men of the marvellous event. Let us speak of Jesus as our Lord. It is the sore need of our day. Christian testimony is necessary to the advancement of our Gospel. Confession of His power to save must follow our rescue.

VIII

WHO CUT THAT MAN'S HAIR?



## VIII

### WHO CUT THAT MAN'S HAIR?

"And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."—Judges XVI: 20.

I ADMIRE Samson. It will be no sin if we love and pity this big fellow, this Biblical Hercules, whose fantastic capers cause us at first glance to stagger in unbelief. His wild adventures, the boyish wagerings of his middle age, his reckless going in and out among enemies, flirting foolishly with the women of his country's foes, his queer weapon for slaying a thousand men, his going to the trouble of catching three hundred foxes and tying firebrands to their tails to do what could have been more easily accomplished with far less effort and danger, his final overthrowing of what must have been a veritable Colosseum,—all these strange incidents prompt us to look beyond the literal story and try to see in it the picture of some great spiritual truth. And this is what I conceive to be the lesson of his biography: THE CATASTROPHE OF UNBALANCED GENIUS.

Samson is the eccentric genius of the Bible. Emerson said that genius is a ship afire at sea for the diversion of the spectators on the shore. Genius is lawlessness in talent, brilliance with a blemish, a comet without an orbit, a ship without a rudder, a cargo without clearance papers, an engine without a governor, a train without a time-table, a locomotive without an engineer.

You can never be quite sure of a Samson's next move. He is not conventionalized. You cannot study one day of

his life and then anticipate all the curves and straight lines he will take during the rest of the week. Conventionalized people have a pattern in their make-up, like the wall paper in your dining room. You know with mathematical certainty what they are going to do to-day. A Macaulay will write so many words in the forenoon, walk just so many miles in the afternoon and play exactly so many games of whist at night. But you can never tell what a Lord Byron will do to-morrow, whether he will be in Scotland or in Greece, in exultation or in depression. The Samsons will never "stay put" very long.

And yet we cannot help liking Samson. That shaggy head of hair, in the picture language of the Old Testament, represented assets. First, good parentage. His father and mother were God-fearing people. When his father heard from the angelic messenger that a baby boy was to be given them, he knelt in prayer to ask that an angel be sent to teach them how to rear the child. Ah, young fellow of pious parentage, that inheritance is your head of hair! Don't let the devil shave it!

He was a handsome youth, too. He kept on growing till his father was a pigmy beside him; till he could lift up his mother and carry her as he would a baby. Isn't it glorious to see a big man kind and tender to a little mother? That physique, young man, is your head of hair!

He was mentally alert, too. He had the wit of a Franklin and the repartee of a Disraeli. I will warrant that he could get up his lessons with a lick and a brush; could make a note or two on his cuff, then reel off his conjugations, having the balance of the day to play pranks. My boy, do you learn easily? Do you see through an argument quickly? Can you decide on the next move in a game of checkers without a second's delay? You have a wonderful head of hair! I pray you, don't let a drug or liquor shear it off!

And it pleases me so much to note that he kept up his



enthusiasm far into middle life. After he had judged Israel twenty years he was still a big, jolly boy. While his hair was turning grey, he kept his fund of puns and stories well stocked. He could come into an office and cause all the fair typists to giggle over a new one. How the world likes a cheery boy of fifty! Ah, middle-aged man, your head may not furnish much work for the tonsorial artist, and the thin fringe that is left of its early crop may be as white as snow, but if you are still fresh and jovial, joyous and sparkling, you have a fine head of hair. Don't let the demon of fretting cut it!

So we can easily imagine such a man to be a popular hero. He was exactly the kind of leader that Israel had need of in the day of national adversity. There are great extremes of individuality among God's heroes of the ages. God uses all kinds of temperaments. He enlists a rough John Knox and a gentle John Wesley, a burly Oliver Cromwell and a tender Richard Baxter, a fighting Peter Cartwright and a scholarly Charles Finney, a quaint Father Taylor and a dignified Phillips Brooks. On that particular day, a Samson was needed. The Philistine was in the land, and the Hebrew youth must have a martial hero, a giant, an optimist, to follow.

But if the Samsons have tremendous advantages, they also run great risks. They make or break in a big way. They are Napoleons, either ruling half of Europe or dying on a rocky St. Helena. They soar in the heavens like a blood-red Mars or fall like Lucifer into the dead of night. Like a Quebec Bridge, they carry humanity on their strong-arched bodies or crash into the stream to engulf a multitude with them. O man of handsome hair! Your very strength is your danger.

This genius had an ill-balanced code of morals. His conscience was badly regulated. He belonged to the Nazirites, had taken their vows, and his religion was like that of some modern men whose first and only conception of duty

seems to be loyalty to some fraternal order. His vow made much of sobriety. He never trembled when his sweetheart said, "The lips that touch wine shall never touch mine." But his oath did not include chastity. Milton expresses it graphically:

"Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,  
Which many a famous warrior returns,  
Thou couldst repress! Nor did the dancing ruby  
Sparkling outpoured, the flavor or the smell,  
Or taste that cheers the heart of gods or men,  
Allure thee from the cool crystal-line stream.  
But what availed this temperance, not complete,  
Against another object, more enticing?  
What boots it at one gate to make defence,  
And at another to let in the foe, effeminately vanquished?"

So a vampire beckons. Ho, Samson! Come out of that house! It is the vestibule of death, the gate of hell. Tut! Don't you fear me. I am as strong as a lion, and my will is just as powerful as my right arm. And the old jester has his little joke ready for Delilah. "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth." "Why, if they bind me with seven green withs, then shall I be weak." But he broke those withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. But she pressed him daily, and at last *he told her all that was in his heart*. At last

"The fool was stripped to his foolish hide  
(Even as you and I)  
Which she might have seen when she threw him aside—  
(But it isn't on record the lady tried)  
So some of him lived, but most of him died—  
(Even as you and I!)"

"Most of him died!" Isn't that true to life? A cub reporter on a New York paper was sent over to Paterson to write the story of the murder of a rich manufacturer by thieves. He spread himself on the details, and naively concluded his account with this sentence: "Fortunately for the

deceased, he had deposited all his money in the bank the day before, so he lost practically nothing but his life."

The barber is at work! The barber has finished! "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" "That's nothing new. I will go out and shake myself as at other times." "How are you feeling, Samson?" "Fine as split silk! Fit for a fight!" What? Is that arm lame this morning? Then he will strike them down with the other. But that arm is palsied, too! He wist not that the Lord had departed from him!

The Philistines have him down! He is bound! His eyes are bored out!

"Ask of this great deliverer now.

Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves!"

It is healthy to note in passing that these dire experiences of eccentric Samsons may occur in middle age. Paul was well along towards fifty when he wrote: "I keep my body under; I bring it into subjection; I smite it between the eyes; lest having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

What a sad scene this is of a blind Samson grinding at the mill. Oh, the crushing sight! A giant, a genius, a God-touched dynamo, furnishing power for the Devil's grinding! A Boston clergyman, a handsome and talented man, ran away with a silly woman, leaving wife and children, duty and responsibility, behind him. His "soul-mate" was not long in leaving him, forsaking him just as he had deserted another a thousand times more worthy. A year later a reporter found the poor fellow working in a New York saloon, washing beer glasses and cleaning cuspidors—grinding at the hard mill of retribution.

"Howbeit. . . ." Thank God, we need not close the book yet; there is another chapter. "Howbeit, the hair of his head began to grow again." I can see him groping, and reaching through the bars. A countryman of his has stolen

down into Gaza with somewhat in the way of good cheer for the captive. "Farewell, Samson, farewell forever!" says the old chum. "Not yet!" whispers the blind giant. "Stay a while, for my hair is growing again. Come back by and by. It will be worth while to see me die!" Ah, when the ship of genius is burned to the water's edge, let not the spectators turn away too quickly. They may witness one last spectacle. The magazines may be about to explode!

Samson must grace the great celebration in honor of his own capture. The lords of the Philistines are all present. The great blind giant is led out, like a captive elephant. There he is, in the centre of the Colosseum. His lips are moving; he is praying: "Only this once, O Lord; only this once! Remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." Then he whispers to the boy who is leading him: "I am weary, lad-die; lead me to the big twin pillars in the centre, yonder, that I may lean on them."

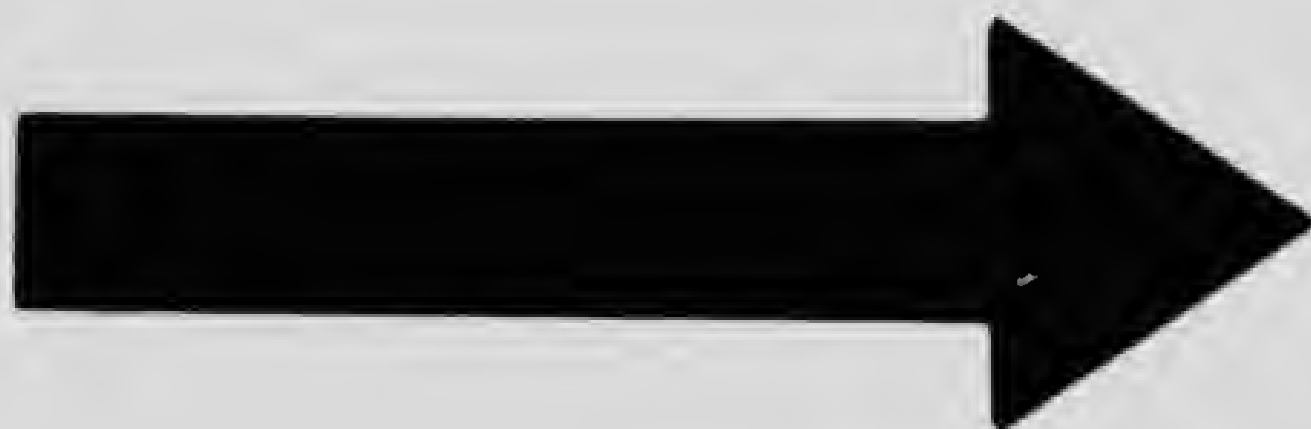
He grasps the columns. The shaggy head bends down; the muscles swell; the veins stand out. "Let me die with the Philistines!" he roars. The pillars quiver and fall; the walls cave in with a crash! The assembled thousands are crushed beneath wood and stone! "So the dead which he slew in his death were more than they which he slew in his life." And his brothers come and bear away the body of the dead giant, to give it decent burial beside the pious father who had prayed so earnestly for his son.

Old Samsons, toiling at the mill, I speak to you. Is the old body forespent? Is the nerve shattered? There is yet time to smite the foe which conquered you. You may even now snatch a victory. God will vouchsafe you this last melancholy opportunity. It will be a dying triumph, true, barren to your earthly interests, yet one of preventive or corrective value to many who have gazed upon your orbit-

less life. Do all the damage you can to the Devil's cause. Let all know that you deeply regret past errors. Let all see that you fall with your face towards the Father's House.

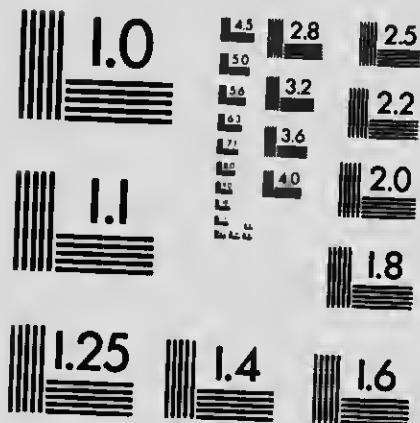
O young Samsons, full of possibility for good or evil, let me speak to you. There is no chance like the first chance. Do not forfeit that. Seize it! We are all given opportunity to triumph over temptation. Life is a great country which we are to explore and possess and cultivate. There is still on record the curious deed given to Sir Philip Sydney, by Queen Elizabeth, settling upon him three millions of acres of land in North America, "to be by him discovered." But Philip never went out to claim his unique gift, and the glories of exploration slipped from him. But a century later Charles II. gave to the Quaker William Penn a similar deed, and he came out to America and took possession. So it is William Penn and not Philip Sydney who stands in stone effigy upon Philadelphia's City Hall. And the great state is called Pennsylvania.

The trophies of moral enterprise are before you, young man. Rise in God-given might, and take possession.



# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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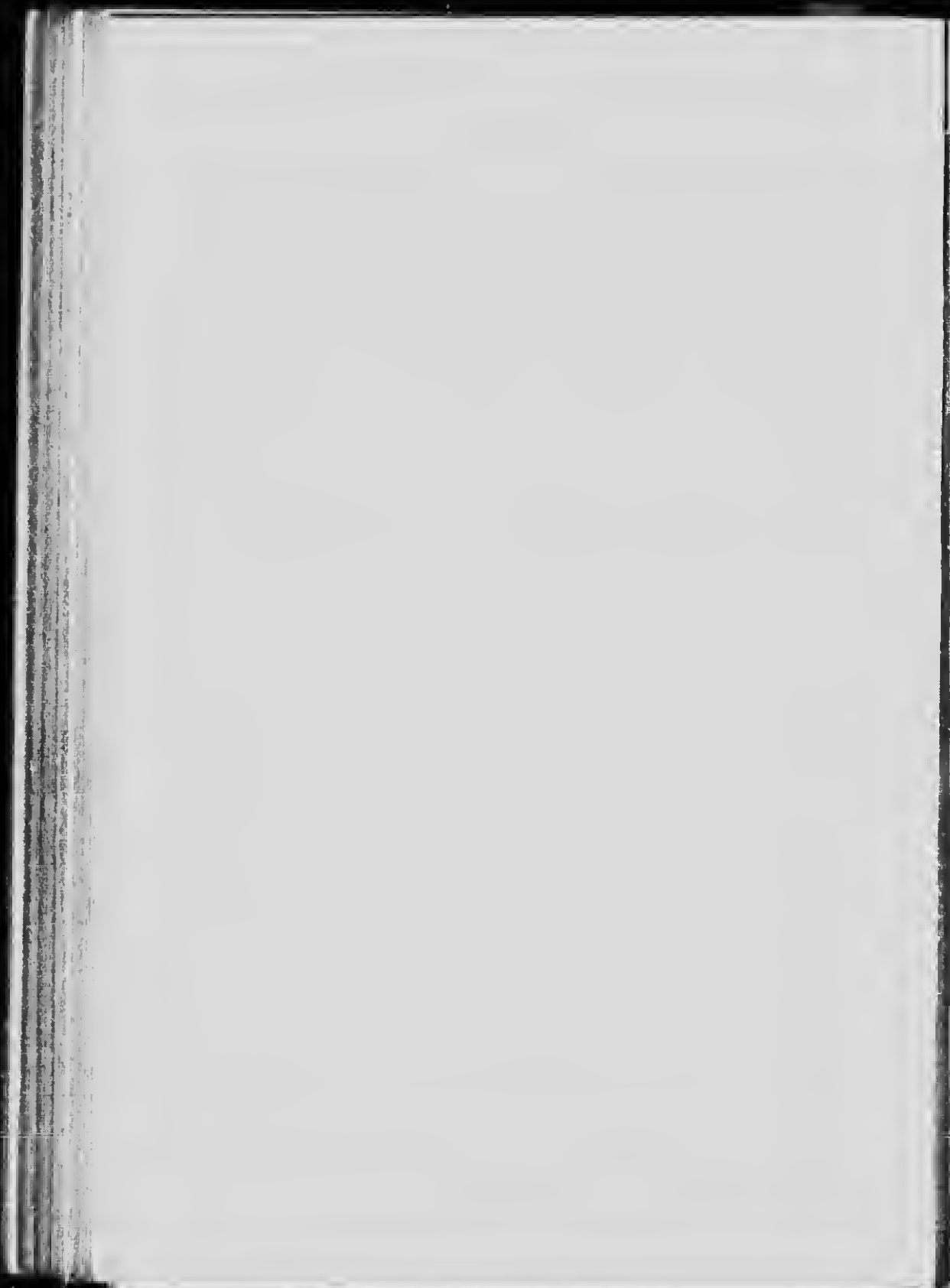
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IX

THE RELIGION OF WRITING LETTERS



## IX

### THE RELIGION OF WRITING LETTERS

"And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter."  
—II Samuel XI: 14.

AND a bad letter it was. It spelled ingratitude, lust and murder. It makes us blush for David; it caused him to blush for himself next day. There on the sacred page is the awful story, teaching us that written words are the unalterable testimonies of men's innermost thoughts. Long after we have passed from the stage of earthly life, a stray missive of ours may reveal to posterity our real selves.

If only David had not sent that letter! Your document is your own until it reaches the mail box; then it becomes the property of the man whose name is on the outside. The old proverb says: "We are the masters of the unspoken word, but the slaves of the word which is said."

Letters have been the instruments of mighty deeds. The Junius letters shook Britain to its centre and overthrew its government. A letter from Austria's chancellor to the Servian government precipitated the Great War. Victoria's tactful letter in 1862 averted hostilities with America.

Men and women have gained deathless fame through their letters—letters which they never dreamed would be prized by coming ages. In the famous Père la Chaise cemetery of Paris is the double grave of Abelard and Heloise; he the greatest teacher of the twelfth century; she the writer of the sweetest love-letters of all centuries. Because the loyal though secret wife of the young monk could not allow even her love to ruin him in the eyes of the Church, she

shut herself up in a convent, and during many tedious years encouraged him by letters which have ever since made He-loise the ideal of womanly modesty, fidelity and affection. No wonder that the sentimental Parisians even now throw their love-letters to lost sweethearts over the iron fence that protects the lovers' resting place.

Men and nations have treasured letters as their priceless possessions. The British Museum contains the correspondence of Queen Elizabeth and of Bloody Mary. And you very likely prize some crumpled, faded paper quite as highly. I would not take any price for two letters which a humble file contains—my little child's first sweet note to me, and my father's last word to his son. Letters form important parts of our Bible. The epistles of Paul are the messages of a faithful pastor to his converts; The Book of Proverbs contains the letters of a father to his son; in the Book of Revelation we have the words of the ascended Christ to His churches.

A letter is our connecting link with the distant world. By it we annihilate space. Think of it; for two cents, in times of peace, you may have your thoughts carried across the ocean and delivered to your friends by liveried messenger. So for a paltry outlay we are enabled to keep our friendships with those whose faces are lost to us a while. What a privilege! Robert Louis Stevenson in far-away Samoa, even though the blight of disease is upon him, keeps in touch, by his marvellous letters to his kinsfolk and to the London Times, with that Land of the Heather which he can never see again. Loneliness and grief do not rob him of his humor, and even now men laugh over his advice to his young correspondents in old Scotland to go down to the cellar and listen for his signals from the other side of the earth.

All governments have made correspondence easy. And the very first sign of reconciliation between warring countries is the resuming of mutual postal arrangements. Think

or it! The world's post is ready to serve you. The midnight mail train will carry your message of love; the railway mail clerk will put it into the right bag and cast the pouch from his train at the right second, so that the stage-coach man can find it and carry it to the little prairie post-office; the rural-free-delivery man will take it to the Saskatchewan homestead of your lonely chum of other years. What a ministry is at your disposal! The farthest ship on the wide Pacific, the most distant caravan of the desert, the most northerly dog-train within the Arctic circle, will carry your letter.

Why, then, do men so often neglect the duty and privilege of letter-writing? The carelessness of some in failing to answer correspondents almost approaches criminality. Cardinal Richelieu speaks across three hundred years: "I shall write to all who write to me. No one, not even a Knight of the Order, should be excused from answering a correspondent, no matter how far beneath him in station the writer may be." Gladstone, Lincoln and Roosevelt have all been able to boast that they have never failed to answer respectful letters.

Some are simply selfish in their silence. As they never expect to return to the old place, they cast aside the friend back home as they would a pressed-out orange. But, it is protested, we cannot burden ourselves with too many correspondents; so why begin what cannot be continued. Let time and its developments take care of that. The friends in the old town may continue to love and help you through many years, even though separated from you by thousands of miles. Meanwhile do not be too hasty in closing friendship's ledger. Answer the letter from the friend who has gone from the old town where you still remain; he needs you during his homesick days.

There are some who are ashamed to write because they are rusty in penmanship and spelling. Many who make a feint at brilliant conversation show their limitations when

they seize a pen. Even in this favored land of good schools, quite a proportion of the population rarely have occasion to set their thoughts on paper. Some people have brothers and sisters with whom they played in childhood days, but who are now entirely estranged from them because letters remain unanswered from sheer dread of the ordeal of writing. Yet such folks can even now renew their school-day familiarity with pen and paper, and learn to become good spellers, if they now set about it.

Many do not keep the tools of letter-writing handy. Any writing paper in the house? No; the children used it for drawing pictures. Envelopes? Wife used the last for her flower seeds. Ink? No; it was spilled over the carpet. Pens? Martha used the last to pick a dime from a crack in the floor. There is a shelf up on the wall; say you use that for your writing material if there is no better place. Keep a pad, a package of envelopes already stamped, some postal cards and pen and ink. Very likely you own a victrola and, perhaps, a player-piano. Let me suggest a typewriter, one of the tiny kind if you prefer it, as the next luxury to purchase. What a spur it will be to any latent literary talent in the children's brains, or even in your own!

Letters are none the worse for being fragmentary. Many have a wrong conception of the requirements of correspondence. Some very formal people, especially if they were taught by a stilted teacher, imagine that every letter must begin and end like those given in the "Complete Letter Writer" which the book agent sold them. You need not even go through the empty formality of saying, which sometimes is not really true, that your wife wished to be remembered to him and her and all the others. A letter may be entirely on one theme. It may be about something that you had under discussion when last you met; it may be a sort of postscript to a previous argument. Why not write one pleasant thought as it occurs to you? Why not liberate a bit of love as you would a carrier dove? I knew a woman,

the widow of a Methodist presiding elder, who was called the Angel of the Postal Card, because of her habit of carrying with her a supply of postal cards and an indelible pencil. If, on gliding train or crowded street, her thoughts reached out toward absent friend, out came the postal and pencil. A verse of Scripture or a stanza of poetry was dashed off, and the next letter-box soon held her word of cheer. One of these messages read:

"When all the stars have lost their glow,  
And not a shell gems any shore;  
When fragrant breezes cease to blow,  
And evening follows day no more;  
When limpid streams no longer flow;  
I may forget you—not before."

Never write a harsh letter. A telephone manager says that we should speak more gently over the 'phone than we would face to face, for we should remember that the hearer has only our voice by which to judge our feelings. The same may be said concerning letters. "Write your letter to-day," says a famous adviser, "but don't mail it till to-morrow." Perhaps it would be better still not to write the resentful note at all. I wish I didn't need to advise the young never to send an anonymous letter, and yet I presume the temptation to do so has at some time or another come to most of us. What a cowardly thing an anonymous letter is. It is like the javelin which Saul had ready to hurl at David. It is like the vitriol which some villain dashes into his victim's face. It is like a poisoned bullet in a soldier's rifle. Whatever the criticism contained in an anonymous communication, however just it may appear to the sender, the fact remains that the person addressed is altogether unable to answer.

Now the supreme requisite in correspondence is a conviction that our writing is important. Emerson said: "I have no expectation that a man will read history aright who

thinks that what was done in a remote age, by men whose names have resounded far, has any deeper sense than what he himself is doing to-day." You cannot tell how far your words may go. A young woman wrote to another a seasonable word of encouragement. The receiver of the note showed it to her pastor. He recognized it as a classic and had it printed. The religious papers of a continent copied it and a million people were cheered by it. Write, then, as if your words would be read by all men. The letters of Samuel Johnson show how important he felt his words to be. John Wesley's journal and letters give us a wonderful insight into his generation.

There are the pen and ink, the paper and the envelopes; what a marvellous opportunity they offer! A sculptor, looking at a block of marble, exclaimed: "What priceless beauty thou hidest within thee!" There is the blank sheet; what a glorious message may be written upon it! Paul wrote six of his epistles as a prisoner, and at least one in a dungeon. You and I have a well-lit room, a table and a comfortable chair.

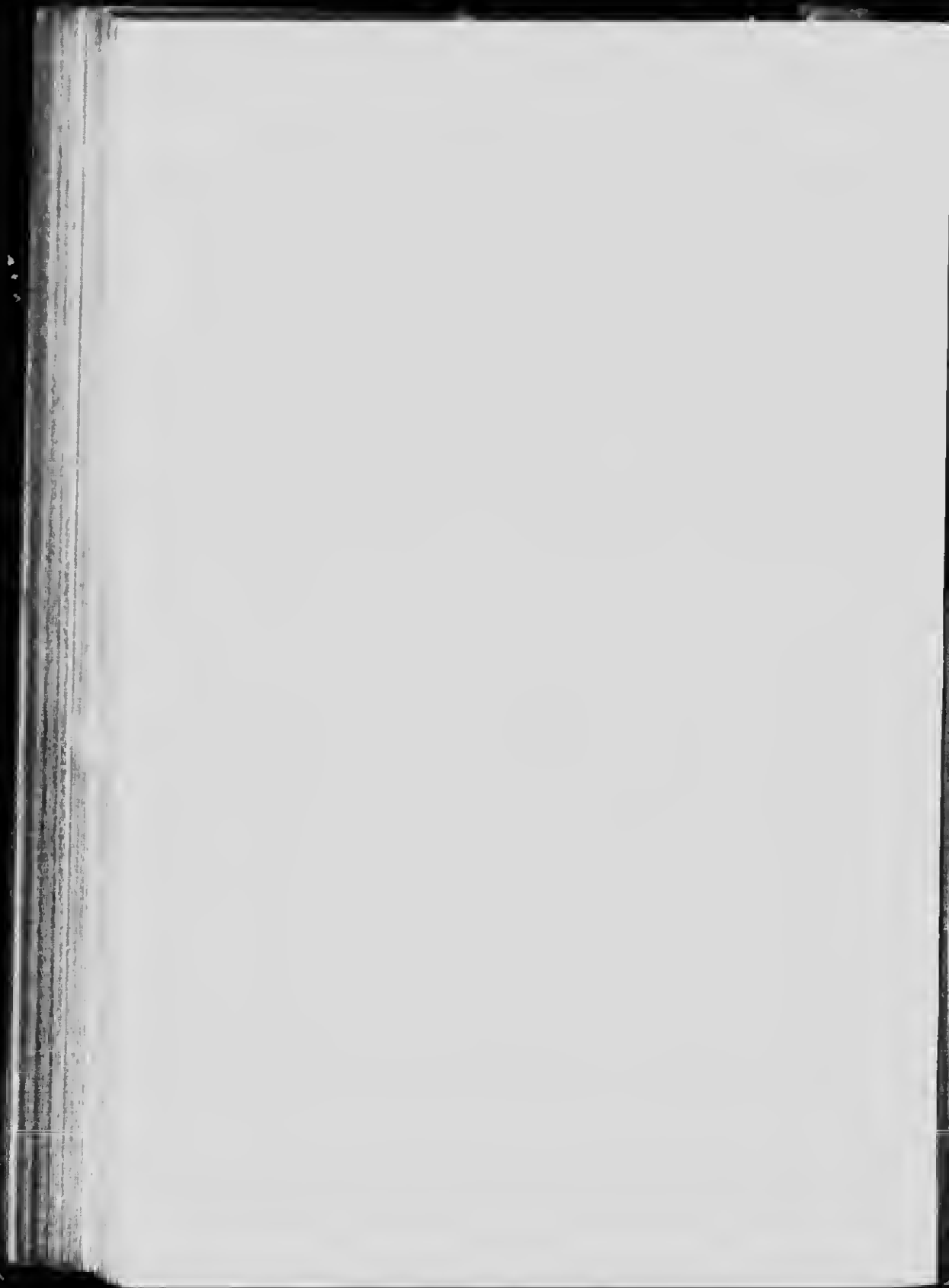


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## X

"SUPPOSING HIM TO BE THE GARDENER"



## X

### "SUPPOSING HIM TO BE THE GARDENER"

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith . . ."—John XX: 15.

THAT erroneous supposition on the part of Mary Magdalene changed the course of the whole conversation. To the supposed gardener she said: "Sir, if thou hast borne hence, if you have had a hand in this body-snatching business, tell me." But to Jesus,—when His familiar voice said, "Mary!"—she cried, "Master, O Master!" and rushed to embrace His feet.

One word for Joseph's gardener; quite another for her great Friend. Certainly; one word for Audience Number One, and an altogether different word for Audience Number Two. That is not hypocrisy, but adaptation. I walked into my church auditorium one week-day afternoon to see a stranger standing in the pulpit and hear him say: "If I were old man Stauffer, I wouldn't preach in a closed-in box like this. I'd have this parapet sawn away in short order." Then seeing me he stammered: "Oh, beg pardon, my dear sir! A thousand pardons! I thought I was speaking to my friend who came in with me to have a look at your church. He must have stepped into the hall. I just saw you out of the corner of my eye. I didn't mean to reflect. . . ." "Why, of course not! Don't mention it, please. Every one does not fancy such a pulpit as this, though I do." He was not to be blamed. Nor was Mary. An evangelist used this incident in a sermon on the sin of

slighting Jesus, for he insisted that Mary was very, very careless in looking at Jesus,—as many people doubtless are. No, it was a most natural thing, making Mary Magdalene appear human to our eye. She had just spoken to two white-robed strangers (angels, though whether she knew them to be such, we are not told) and now appears to her tear-welled eyes another enquirer, one in quite ordinary apparel,—very likely the gardener.

I. She supposed Him to be the gardener because she did not expect to see her Master alive. We recognize with difficulty or ease according to the decree of our expectancy. I see a faithful deacon in his pew on Sunday, and I am not surprised, for he comes every time the church door is unlocked. But in Westminster Wesleyan Chapel I spied what appeared to be a lady of my own congregation, and I rubbed my eyes, looked again, rushed across the auditorium to say: "You over here? I never expected to see you here. I supposed you were back in old Toronto to-day." And when we awake to find ourselves in the House Not Made with Hands, I suppose we shall light on some loved one to exclaim: "What, you here? I supposed you were where we left you, —down in that lovely, quiet cemetery."

And after all, it was no culpable unbelief on Mary's part to doubt His rising, for none of His friends really looked for this great event. They had indeed heard Him declare that He would arise, and very likely they had repeated the declaration as if they believed it, but in actuality it was too great a strain on their imagination. We are all believers in theory, but too often doubters in practice. I asked a Toronto Methodist preacher: "Have you heard from Doctor W. F. Wilson's bedside to-day?" The veteran pastor's countenance was radiant as he answered: "Dr. Wilson has been in the Glory Land these last six hours!" Then, after a long silence, he added drearily, "I suppose I shall be the next to go." Oh, how hard it is to lay that phantom, death! How difficult to maintain the triumphant spirit al-

ways and say, "He is in the Glory Land!" and rejoice in the expectation that "I shall be the next to go!" In theory we say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," but in practice, "They have taken away my Lord." In theory we expect a risen Christ but in practice we go right on with our embalming preparations. Theoretically we sing "Sweeping through the Gates," but in practice we don crepe, weep and say, "He sleeps the sleep that knows no waking."

So Mary came with spices to do honor to the dead body of the prophet. She was in love with a body! And even that is a holy thing. To pat the cold brow and moisten it with your hot tears, to say, "Good-by, Daddy, good-by. Not forever, Daddy; just for a while"—aye, to do that is glorious, even though our faith be as small as a grain of seed. O Mary of Magdala, we are like thee; thou art our sister in unbelief. This same Jesus, who cast from thine own soul seven devils, can He not cast off the grave-clothes? He who raised Lazarus from his damp tomb, can He not gather strength to lift Himself up from the shelf in Joseph's sepulchre? He who was fed by angels, has He not the power to command the angel of the Lord to roll away that paltry stone?

O bereaved soul, let us make progress in our faith. We have reasoned it out often enough, have we not? We have always reached the same conclusion, that this mortal **MUST** put on Immortality. Why, then, go back and reopen the question so often? Why return to the primer after we have entered the advanced reader? Faith is a muscle; let us exercise it. Faith is a habit; let us acquire it. Let our confidence in the Resurrection beam out in our conversation. "He is risen!"

II. Again, she supposed Him to be the gardener because she did not expect the Lord to come to her. To her, a woman? Would He not first come to Peter or John or James? What a tower of strength it would have been to the "Primacy of Peter" business had He honored the fisher-

man! No; not Peter; nor yet the swift-footed John; nor James, His own brother. But "when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." First to a woman! He had shown a novel chivalry towards women, shocking the Pharisees who would not even ask their way of a woman. Who started the Woman's Suffrage movement? Lucy Stone or Mary Livermore? Frances Willard or Carrie Chapman Catt? None of these; Jesus began it when He spoke to the woman at the well, when He made friends of Mary and Martha, when He signally honored Mary Magdalene.

But of all women, would He appear unto her, out of whom He had cast seven devils? That phrase loses much of its hideousness, by the way, when we recall that it was the vernacular of the age. These were seven violent sins that possessed Mary, whatever their nature. We use milder terms now, except in divorce on complaints, and in drawing up these, unscrupulous lawyers graphically describe the demons that destroy homes. Our Roman Catholic friends take it for granted that Mary Magdalene had led an immoral life, being the woman who washed the Lord's feet in Simon's house. Farrar thinks this not improbable, and points to the fact that the context says that Jesus had been in the vicinity of Magdala at the very time when the incident of the Seventh of Luke occurred, and that immediately afterwards Mary is mentioned among the women who followed the Master's company and ministered to their wants. At any rate her sins were those of a strong character. Peter Cartwright said that some souls would be too small to house seven devils; there would scarcely be room for one little imp.

So I consider it significant that Jesus showed Himself to this redeemed woman. He was not above honoring her. It was in keeping with His whole ministry, for He constantly declared that He came to call the sinful, not the righteous. And this is the present need of the church; to show concern

for the sinner, and make room at her altars for the seven-devil man and woman.

III. She supposed Him to be the gardener because she did not expect Him to appear in such natural, unconventional fashion. Had He come in shining apparel she might have looked more intently. But here He stood, in raiment not unlike a gardener's, in speech like that which any sympathetic man would utter in presence of woman's tears. He wore no crown and held no sceptre, nor were there at His side the usual dignitaries which adorn the presence of kings.

A Canadian in London expressed the hope that he might by chance see King George. While walking on Piccadilly, his English friend suddenly pointed ahead, saying, "There's the King." The Canadian looked among the throng of pedestrians in vain. "Now he is gone," said his friend. "He wore a grey suit and a derby hat." That was why the man from Toronto had missed him. He expected to see the monarch as he is shown in the pictures on calendars, with crown and sceptre and regal robes.

Do we not so often make the same error? We look for our Lord in a sacrament or a creed; we expect Him at worship in the cathedral. And when He does come He appears in such commonplace settings that we suppose Him to be the gardener. After the Resurrection, He never walked in the temple courts. But He came to homes, walked on the shore of the lake He loved so well, visited the mountains and approached men as they journeyed along a country road. And it was always in the unexpected places where Jesus came upon His followers. Oh, that we may look for Him in all our experiences! I saw Him in a play, when "The Servant in the House" preached his beautiful Gospel. Some present supposed Him to be the gardener, but it was the Lord! He comes to the haunts of trade, telling men where to cast their nets so as to have a good catch, an honorable catch of dollars. He leans over the shoulder of the busi-

ness man at his desk to suggest the principles of square dealing. He may be found in the drawing room, the golf course and the club house.

IV. But when He said, "Mary!" she no longer supposed Him to be the gardener. She cried, "My Master! My Master!" and thrust herself at His feet. Some people would have run away, badly frightened. They could not have greeted Him as their master or their friend, for they have never grown enthusiastic over Jesus. The supreme question is, Can we call Him Master? Are we conscious that He has saved us from aught? Only so are we able to enthuse over the Saviour of the world.

Mr. Moody used to tell of a lady who, on a trans-Atlantic voyage, asked for a place at the captain's table, thinking it would be interesting to converse with the master of a great ship. For some days his chair was empty however, for the fog kept him on the bridge. When he did come, the lady was greatly disappointed. All her romantic dreams were shattered. Captain John Clark, known to the seafaring world as a skilful navigator, was a silent man, with little use for the small-talk of dinner tables. Moreover, his hands were red and rough, and his face was none too handsome. Indeed, after a meal or two with him, the passenger asked the steward to seat her at another table, making some remarks about not wanting to eat with such an old man. As the vessel neared the coast of Ireland she collided with a freighter and sank. The lady was drawn out of the water into a lifeboat. When she recovered consciousness she found that her rescuer was Captain John Clark! Then how she praised him, thanked him, offered him rewards! How handsome he appeared to her, how noble his face, how beautiful those hands! Has He saved you? Has He prevented one devil or seven from entering your soul? Do we meditate sufficiently upon these things? Only by so doing shall we love Him as Mary did.



XI

IN SPITE OF HEAVY HANDICAP



## XI

### II. SPITE OF HEAVY HANDICAP

"Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, and he was the son of an harlot."—Judges XI: 1.

"AND"—not "*but*." The additional clause is not meant to subtract aught from Jephthah's glory, but to add to it. In spite of the fact that he carried so heavy a handicap, he won life's race. That is the clever wording of our text.

At once, then, Jephthah's career becomes of exceeding interest. Can a man with a wicked or a weak mother or a dissolute father rise to eminence? Can he run well dragging so heavy a ball and chain after him? Can he find a file and cut the ring from his ankle? Let the life of Jephthah answer. I would have all who for any reason cannot be proud of their parents read this story. Let them lift up their heads unashamed, using the name they have and making it shine with the lustre of noble and kindly deeds. A father's sins, a mother's waywardness, cannot damn you.

Henry M. Stanley was never quite sure about his real name. An uncle, to get rid of his charge, boarded him out at a half-crown per week. When this was no longer forthcoming, the poor laddie found himself thrust into the town workhouse where he chafed under the tyranny of a vicious schoolmaster. One day, when patience ceased to be a virtue, he gave the master a sound thrashing, scaled the wall and ran away. He made his way to New Orleans where he was succoured by a rich merchant, Henry Morton Stanley. "What is your name, lad?" asked his benefactor. "Don't know for sure," he answered. "Then take my

name, and be my son." Just as the youth was preparing to take his foster-father's place in the business world, the latter died without making provision for his protégé. But no discouragement could quench young Stanley's ambition. Neither early handicap nor later criticism by the press, nor the incredulity of scientists dampened his ardor. The world's real giants are not to be stopped by such gossamers as whisperings regarding birth or omissions in wills.

But this youth Jephthah was made to feel the full sting of shame. He had been reared with his step-brothers, his father's legitimate sons. Suddenly they turned on him and drove him off the estate and out of the community. "Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman." Some busybody had doubtless whispered the scandal in their ears. How cruel the assassins of reputation, the wreckers of people's peace, can be! I knew a sweet girl to come home broken-hearted because some one had told her that she was but an adopted child of unknown parentage. Notwithstanding a foster-mother's tender comfortings she developed a sad countenance and a plaintive tone. Well, a big-boned and big-hearted young fellow, whose father had disgraced his family came to her to say: "Kate, you and I are both in the same boat. Say the word, and I will go out to British Columbia, make a home for us both and come back for you." Kate said she was game to go at once; so they went for a marriage license. They prospered, gained a place of respect in their new home and were happy. Then the war came. He enlisted, went to France as a lieutenant and was killed while gallantly leading his men at the Somme. His blood washed his pedigree and hers!

So poor Jephthah's brothers began to do some calculating. With this half-brother out of the way, they would each get \$7,466 more from their father's executor. The seed of selfishness germinated; they thrust him out. He fled to the wilderness of Tob. It is significant to note that Bible

students are at sea as to the location of this hiding place. Many have fled to Tob, and thank God, it holds their secret well. "Ah, hospitable wilderness!" exclaims Joseph Parker, "where all the Hagars and the Jephthahs, the Moses' and the Davids, can find shelter." To some, it is New York; to New Yorkers, San Francisco; to Ontario folks, Alberta; to Englishmen, the whole of America. Thank God for the land of the Second Chance! There is ever a Tob to which the unappreciated and the spurned may flee.

But in Tob is where this Gileadite becomes a mighty man of valor. There he finds room for his talents. He cannot be kept down. I like to picture him as a big burly fellow, with big far-apart eyes; a square jaw; rather short, Boston-terrier ears; an ox's neck. He was a born leader, a dynamo. I saw such an one in Omaha, recognizing him at once, though I had not set eyes on him since our early school days. Then he was nick-named "The Boss," because he was the self-appointed director-general of all our sports. With czarlike authority he decided all questions. I recalled that one day he tried to see how many boys he could carry,—one above another,—on his broad shoulders. I was the third and highest, and when that Tower of Babel fell, I got the full shock. Then, frightened by my collapse, he carried me a mile to my home. Now he was directing the construction of a ten-story building, and, as I approached him, he was saying to a workman: "Look-a-here, you; move that pile o' bricks across that walk. Want it done in thirty minutes. Get me?" And the man answered, "Righto!" That word of the British Tommy, by the way, was not long in crossing to Nebraska. Ah, what would we do without the Jephthahs? When railroads or tunnels or city blocks or ships are to be built, they are the one requisite; without them, under any form of government, there can be no progress.

I will not deny that this Bob Roy, this Villa, had some failings. His troops of adventurers did not always observe

the laws of civilized society. As a rule these free-lance warriors wreaked vengeance on the foes of Israel. When times were dull in this line, however, it is likely that the neighboring shepherds frequently missed a sheep and charged it up to Jephthah's men. But I love to think that in this bleak border country the reserve power of the young exile came to the surface. He didn't sulk; he wasn't bitter towards his relations nor sour on the world. Even in this somewhat lawless fashion he secured the habit of success. He started to break his way through. "Try every door," said Garfield; "keep on trying; and by and by you will find one that will open." Degrees of will power generally account for varying degrees of success. As an automobile's strength for hill-climbing depends on the engine, so a man's power to overcome discouragement hinges on the amount of horse power his will possesses.

But let us watch our Jephthah as he emerges from the border chief phase of his career to take a more legitimate position. There is such an evolution in many a life. It is God's way with a free-lance man. See how it comes about. One evening a delegation waits on him at his headquarters. There stand his half-brothers, unabashed, among a committee that includes the leading men of all Gilead. They have come to offer him a major-general's commission; at any rate, that is the way they put it. They should have said: "We are here to ask you to help us out of a very deep hole." The fact was that their ancient enemies, the Ammonites, had come upon them suddenly, finding them badly handicapped with military unpreparedness. Also, they had heard all about their exiled kinsman's valor. News travels, even from Tob.

So they come to fetch him back. What consummate nerve! They say nothing of the old score; they give him the glad hand, as though they had always known he would make good. Oh, this is Jephthah's proud moment. The fateful hour calls for the strong man. Did you ever have some-

thing akin to this happen to yourself? When empty honors or exalted positions were being distributed, were you overlooked? Then, when real work was to be done, they called you in! Take it as a compliment; a grave crisis furnishes the real man his chance. When the foe is at the gate there is no place for the pink-tea officer. Kitchener chafed in his subordinate place in 1913. But in August, 1914, he was recalled by wire.

We can forgive his first words in reply to the call of his countrymen: "Did ye not hate me, and expel me from my father's house? Why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?" That is certainly "rubbing it in;" but after all it is well that there should be a fair understanding. They should realize that he knows full well that they come to him because they know that he "has the goods." Let us observe also that he insists on a definite arrangement regarding the future. He says coolly: "If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?" That is reasonable. The foreman may rightfully propose such a stipulation. If he makes good, shall he be given his just share of the profits? Certainly; why be timid about it? That is the commendable and wholesome independence which genuine merit always possesses.

So he forgave those selfish and now brazen relations. His first victory of the campaign was over himself. He might have put those fellows in irons. Ah, there is something noble in human nature after all. The German Nietzsche denied this, declaring that all so-called affection was essentially selfish. But when he became old and feeble-minded, his sister, whom he had never even noticed during his days of success, came and nursed him until his death. She negatived his cynical theory by her faithful, forgiving love!

The first thing the new general does when he gets back home is to go to church! Note that well, "And Jephthah

uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh." During those stressful days of the summer of 1918 General Foch attended divine worship daily. So Jephthah seeks strength at the Throne of Grace. Responsibility drives him to God, even as their distress has driven his brothers to him. He is drawn to the Mercy Seat by the demands of elevation. Therein we catch a glimpse into his true character. Oh for a statesman who seeks his closet of prayer when he is called to form a government!

Another pleasing thing: He labored for peace, even as did Sir Edward Grey during that fateful July week. He sends a conciliating message to the Ammonite king. He asked him why he was invading Israel. The answer was that when the Israelites came out of Egypt they took away some of the territory of his ancestors, which he now demanded. At best it was a rather musty claim, but Jephthah endeavors to show that it is a misapprehension. Israel had taken this land, not from the Ammonites, but from the Amorites, and with justice. But when the Gileadite leader finds argument of no avail, he closes the discussion by saying, "The Lord be judge this day between us."

The campaign is short and decisive. The men of Israel, under this sturdy son of Gilead, go forward to tremendous slaughter and overwhelming victory.

Now the conqueror sheathes his sword and becomes the efficient president of the commonwealth. What is the most sensational biography of the New World? Grant's. In April, 1861, he was a poor tannery clerk, with some question as to his habits; in 1868, he was president-elect of the United States. His career traveled in three sections: Weakness, Struggle, Strength.

Is it not a splendid biography, this of Jephthah? Are you not surprised that we do not make more use of it? Perhaps that is because we feel under a false obligation to explain away that rash vow of his. But surely we see here a most unique example of human triumph over untoward circum-



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stances. This life of three stages preaches a wonderful sermon. It says in the words of the poet:

"There is no thing we cannot overcome!  
Say not thy evil instinct is inherited,  
Or that some trait inborn  
Makes thy whole life forlorn,  
And calls down punishment that is not merited.

Back of thy parents and thy grandparents lies  
The great eternal will,  
That, too, is thine inheritance,  
Strong, beautiful, divine,  
Sure lever of success for him who tries.

Pry up thy faults with this great lever, will,  
However deeply bedded in propensity,  
However firmly set,  
I tell thee, firmer yet  
Is that strange power which comes from truth's immensity."



XII

WILL YOU BE MISSED?



## XII

### WILL YOU BE MISSED?

"Then Jonathan said to David, To-morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."—I Samuel XX: 18.

It was a compliment to David to say so. Davy, my lad, to-morrow is a feast day, and if you are not at the banqueting table you'll be missed, sorely missed. King Saul will look down the festive board and ask: "Where is my son-in-law, David? I hate him in a way, the beggar; yet it is a pleasure to have him about, after all. He is such a vivacious fellow, chatty and witty, the life of the dinner hour. And how his harp cheers me and drives away the blues! When he sings that original poem of his, 'The Lord is My Shepherd,' I brace up!"

Yes, to have a David at the table makes even Hooverizing tolerable. Some people you would never miss; they are such nonentities. If they are absent you save that much food; that's all. You will also have a bit more elbow-room. And some are so selfish, never saying an appreciative word about the menu, that it is positively a relief to be told that they will be absent.

You do miss some folks when they are away from church a Sunday or two. They look so good down there in the pew; they listen so intently, even when the preacher is aware that his talk is quite commonplace; they are so mindful of others in the matter of hymn books,—yes, and the end-seat prerogatives. When you detect their absence you want to shout out, as I did once: "Where are the couple who used

to sit up there by yon post? The woman wore a fox fur." Somebody told them, and the next Sabbath they were there, and at the close, they came and said: "We are so glad you missed us that, in spite of the fact that we have moved to the suburbs, we are going to continue to make this our church home." Others drop out of a church or a community as easily as a drop of rain water falls from a roof. They haven't gladdened a heart. Nobody will miss them unless it be the grocer or the butcher or the debt-collection agency. What a difference! What a gulflike difference!

Not that David was to be dead, but absent. This need not be a morbid query about death, though we may carry that thought along with us as we proceed. But if we should pull up stakes and move to Saskatoon or Sicamous or Walla Walla, would we be missed? It comforts us to imagine that we would. The compound extract of homesickness is to think that the old town is going right on without us. My father used to dance me on his knees to the jingle of a song whose words ran:

"Do they miss me at home, do they miss me?  
'Twould be an assurance most dear  
To know that this moment some loved one  
Were saying, 'I wish he were here!'  
To feel that the group at the fireside  
Were thinking of me as I roam;  
Oh, yes; 'twould be joy beyond measure  
To know that they miss me at home."

By instinct we hate oblivion. Industrial insurance agents find that their best argument among the poor is the prospect of a decent burial and a headstone! The horror of oblivion is a universal salient of the soul, and can be turned into one of the best assets of life. In the old-fashioned autograph album the exhortation, "Remember Me," became especially pathetic when the writer had passed to the Great Beyond. Nor is it a selfish request. The Master, as He passed the cup, said: "Do this in remembrance of me." Garfield whis-

pered as he was dying: "Will my countrymen remember me?" The wish to be remembered is a powerful spur to noble achievement.

Where will you be missed? "Well, down at the office," says the young man who knows he is giving satisfaction. "I threatened to leave if I didn't get a raise, and my employer said: 'My boy, take another dollar a week, and stay, for I couldn't keep house without you, nohow.'" Did the boss say that? Good! But do not take it too seriously. In the business world, when a man drops out of his place, it makes about the same commotion as when a sailor sinks from a torpedoed vessel into the sea. A few bubbles are seen to rise, and all is over. A sign on the front door of the counting house says: "Closed from 2 to 4 this afternoon on account of the funeral of our Mr. John Smith." And a few days afterwards, the daily paper contains a notice beginning: "In the matter of the estate of John Smith, deceased." That is all. When E. H. Harriman died every train on the transcontinental system he controlled stopped for one minute,—and then proceeded as if nothing had happened. No, it will not be in your business haunts that you will be missed very long. Your business will swing along without you. The chief thing is that you give it the right swing!

But you have your little corner where, thank God, you will be missed. I walked down Broadway, at five in the afternoon, just as the offices were pouring out their hundreds of thousands of employees. Cars were clanging, motors honking, newsboys yelling, wa ons rumbling, pedestrians hurrying. I thought how little one poor life meant there. How unmissed a man would be from that whirl of human rushing. Hold on! Each man in that throng has a nook in which he is an important factor. Each has an influence, good or bad. Each has a reputation for some quality. Each has a group of friends, a little circle in which he is the centre, a home in which he will nestle to-

night. And if just one, out of these myriads, would not appear at his wonted trysting place at the usual hour, an alarm would go out. He would be missed! Ah, comforting thought. Not by too many; by just a few faithful friends who appreciate him. Do not be envious of the famous; they cannot have more real friends than you possess. I called on an eminent man and greeted him with: "I am glad to see you, Doctor." He replied: "And it is as good as an eyewash to see you again!" Therein he erred, for he had never seen me before. (That was why he needed eyewash.) But he was to be pardoned his mistake, for he had so many acquaintances; not friends, but acquaintances. Our minds cannot hold too many real friends, but oh, how good to know that a few love us!

For what will you be missed? David was not king then, nor first minister of the crown. He was but a harpist. Saul was king, and when he died he was missed, too, but with a sense of relief. He was remembered as a human tragedy. How dreadful if, long after we have closed our earthly career, men shake their heads when our name is mentioned, as if they recalled us with a shudder! I drove along a country road in my native county, and recalled the names of the farmers who lived in that section thirty years and more ago. One after another their sons were mentioned, and my cousin made comment upon their whereabouts. One had gone to the Far West, another had made good in Algoma, still another represented the riding in Parliament. "And what became of Henry Blank?" "Oh, he went wrong." What an awful epitaph! He had all kinds of chances. The sweetest girl in the township returned his love. He stole, and forged his father's name to raise money. The sheriff sold out the homestead, lock, stock and barrel. Nobody ever speaks of him now. Where is he? Don't know. Somebody said he was seen in State Street, Chicago, not long ago. What is he doing? Thinking! Wishing! Regretting! And he can never sing, "Do they miss me at



home?" O Homesick One, you are in a heaven, compared to him. O Bereaved Father of the son who sleeps in Flanders' fields, rejoice with holy joy!

Missed for what? Even Saul's children were frightened of him. I heard two boys on the way to school hilariously exclaim: "Dad is gone to New York for a whole week!" What would have given them more joy would be the news that he was to stay away a second week. I heard another boy in the same neighborhood tell his chum: "Ernie, your father has come back from his fishing trip; he's just gone around the corner." Ernie threw down the baseball bat in a trice, rushed to the garage and called: "What luck, Pop?" Are the children glad to see you go or see you come?

Listen! We shall never be missed because of our dollars nor for our mental endowments, but for our qualities of heart. A Winnipeg man grew enthusiastic as he said: "We are blessed by a visit from my good old mother. She had four children of her own, and when the last was married she adopted three other bairns in turn. Now that she is old the only thing we quarrel about is who shall have her next. I have preempted the next six months." Is not that worth while? Hetty Green was never so prized, with all her millions.

They wheel a dear old woman past my house in an invalid's chair every fine day. I have cultivated an acquaintanceship with her so that I may see her smile, and hear her say: "What a grand morning this is, and what a privilege to be abroad!" One of these days I shall wax bold enough to read her Alice A. Ferguson's poem, "The Master and His Laborers."

The Master sat on the great white throne;

The toil of the day was done.

Around Him were the laborers,

And thus He said to each one:

"I have done great things for thee,

What to-day hast thou done for Me?"

"I've labored hard with heart and hand,  
To build a structure worthy Thee,  
I've borne the burden of the day,  
And done it, Master, willingly."  
And the Master said, "Well done."

"My voice, dear Lord, I used for Thee,  
And sang the story old and sweet,  
Till burdened souls looked up again  
And humbly sought the Saviour's feet."  
And the Master said, "Well done."

"Thy word I've preached in foreign clime,  
Encountered dangers without end,  
Upheld the flag of truth divine,  
Till heathen souls claimed Thee as friend."  
And the Master said, "Well done."

"My feet on errands swift have fled,"  
One smaller than the rest replied,  
"My day was filled with little things,  
My best in each to do I tried."  
The Master smiled and said, "Well done."

"Has My poor lamb done aught to-day?"  
The Master asked in kindly tone,  
His face with sweet compassion filled,  
To one disease had claimed his own.

"Oh, Master!" humbly she replied,  
"My day was spent in idleness,  
I come with empty hands to Thee,  
Oh, pity me in my distress,  
I could not work, but 'mid the pain,  
I smiled for Thee and bore the same."

The Master's face was full of love;  
"Thy deed the angels will record,  
'Tis not the abundance of work done  
That meriteth the great reward,  
But she the great reward may claim  
Who smiled for Me amid her pain."

How much will you be missed? Not over how broad an  
area, but how intensely? Looking from this earthward

side, no one is going to be missed very long. Nor is there anything we can designedly do to stave off the oblivion which will surely overwhelm our names. A Philadelphia German, in order that his name might be preserved, created a fund with which to perpetually provide a great annual feast on his birthday. The last banquet broke up in a free fight over the question of the name of the deceased host.

Only a few names cross the centuries, but every wholesome deed leaps across ten thousand years. The biographies in the encyclopedia are constantly cut down in new editions to make room for new names. Our list of so-called immortals is continually being revised. When our century becomes a mere speck on the horizon, there will be credited to it merely a score or so of great men, just as Hannibal is one of five or ten surviving his age. When General Sherman was assured by an admirer that his march to the sea had secured him an earthly immortality, he replied: "Then name the commanders of Alexander the Great. No; only one name will go down to remote posterity from this war, and that is the name of Grant." Fame is not so much a matter of extent as of intensity. The question is not how many will miss you, or how many centuries will you be remembered, but how powerful and salutary is the influence you have sent out, even though it be unlabeled.

Will you be missed? Even now you may be missed in Heaven. Tolstoy did not go to St. Petersburg until he had attained fame. Then he found the city en fête in his honor. All his old companions who had gone to the metropolis before him were waiting to meet him, making the city seem like home. While we are lingering here, oh that our fame for fidelity may be growing there! Do you begin to feel lonely here? Then rest assured that your old companions up yonder are speaking tenderly and wistfully of you. When you land at Heaven's aerodrome some one will spring forward to exclaim: "How I have missed you!" A dying

saint was comforted by this clipping from the Don Marquis column in the New York Sun:

"One night I dreamed that I was lately dead,  
But feared to venture out of Time and Space,  
—The double cage that is our dwelling place—  
Into a boundless liberty instead.  
And while I lingered, hoping to be led,  
I felt an air of wings upon my face,  
Great power moving with majestic grace,  
And saw a mighty angel overhead!  
'Oh, not for me,' I faltered, 'such a guide!  
But some more humble spirit whom I know.  
There was a little brother, long ago;  
And he would understand me, having died.'  
Then said the angel very tenderly,  
'Do you not know me, sister? I am he.'"

XIII

A TAPELINE FOR MEASURING PREACHERS



## XIII

### A TAPELINE FOR MEASURING PREACHERS

"And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias."—  
Luke I: 17.

IN foretelling the coming of the Lord's forerunner, Gabriel declares that he shall be like Elijah. Nine hundred years after this man's ministry he is still the tapeline for measuring the work of preachers!

The testing of a prophet's power may come long after his ascension. Do men still speak of him? Do any survive him to tell of his influence over their lives? Did he enunciate old truth in new fashion? Did he set the pace for young preachers round about? Robertson of Brighton did that. In his short ministry he shaped the preaching of a generation. How far-reaching the influence of Horace Bushnell among American preachers! Under Joseph Parker's portrait in the City Temple is the quotation, "He, being dead, yet speaketh." So he does! His "Studies in Texts" will for another century teach young orators how to be brief in their introductions, clear in their propositions and vivid in their illustrations. Spurgeon's great Tabernacle is still thronged. But more wonderful is the fact that his printed sermons are even now of large circulation.

The real preacher is ever a unique man. He has a personality. He possesses individuality, which is usually misnamed sensationalism. Some always object to the unusual; they would take umbrage at Paul as at Beecher. They favor the conventional in the pulpit; every vest should

be notched and every sermon introduced by a formal exegetical notch. But Elijah is a picturesque figure. He leaps before us unannounced, and stands in our presence an agile man, in physique and mentality. Even in his maturity he tightens his belt and races down the mountain side, ahead of the royal carriage. He is at home anywhere; he knows the language of the palace and the dialect of the hut.

His message also is unique. It was his very own; he did not get it out of a book. God stirred his spirit and he spoke that which he must. A deadly danger lurking in the young preacher's path is plagiarism. What are the limits of literary honesty? How much of the other man's production may be used without theft? Well, Collier's British History, used in school by some of you older people, tells of the munificence of Warwick, the King Maker. Any man could come to the Earl's castle and carry away as much beef as he could hold on the double-edged dirk of that day. If the visitor tried to lug off too large a chunk, its weight would cause the sharp blade to cut through and release the burden. Would it not be fair to say that a man may carry as much of Earl W. L. Watkinson's product as he is able to lug off on the poniard of memory, unaided by pencil and paper? To go back to the book for details is like taking a cart to Warwick's Castle for beef!

The preacher's message for next Sunday has some resemblance to a physician's prescription. What do these people need? Not want, but need. Ahab, walking in murdered Naboth's garden, needs a thundering warning of the certainty of retribution. A typical court chaplain would have spoken of a sovereign's right of eminent domain, but Elijah cries: "Thou hast sold thyself to work evil!" The wavering people on Carmel need the word of decision; "How long wilt ye halt between two opinions?" The poor starving widow of Zarephath needs altogether another word; "The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail." Rebuke, Exhortation, Comfort, these three:



but the greatest of these is Comfort. What do my own people need? What must they have for next week's struggle? In a snug country church, I found a young preacher, fresh from the seminary, pounding away at the inauthenticity of the story of the Flood. Among the church announcements of the daily papers was one telling that the morning address at a certain church would be given by a university professor on the theme: "The Ethics of the Single Tax." Now, whatever latitude may be given the pulpit on Sunday evenings, I submit that the morning discourse should spiritually feed the people. They come to be helped, to be fed with the Bread of Life. Woe unto the man who gives the children a stone!

Another measure of a prophet's power is his humanity. The Tishbite was a many-sided man. To-day he is stern toward base sovereign and false prophet. To-morrow you will find him with a babe in his arms. This week he is very brave; next week he lies under a sagebrush crying, "Let me die!" We love Elijah for that fit of the blues; he is so human, so much like you and I have found ourselves to be. And he is poor; oh, so poor! There are rich Abrahams, rich Jacobs, rich Jobs, but only poor Jeremiahs, Isaiahs and Elijahs. The preacher renounces all thought of gain. Penuriousness is to his power a non-conductor stopping the subtle current of influence. Asking for ten per cent ministerial discount is not apt to bring the village merchant to church. When they rebuked Newman Hall for throwing half-crowns to beggars who, in nine cases out of ten, were unworthy, that prince of pastors replied: "But what would the worthy tenth beggar think of me?" Dr. Joseph Wild took the \$50 wedding fee which he received in a suburb, to the struggling pastor near by, saying: "This belongs to you, who should have performed the ceremony."

To the world the prophet seems to endure an anti-climax. Every John the Baptist knows that "He must increase,

but I must decrease." That is part of the contract which the man of God makes with his Lord. He hides behind his Christ; he does not speak of himself. In the pulpit of the City Temple, where only the preacher can see it, are the words, "Sir, we would see Jesus." And to watch the growth of the Kingdom is the pastor's exceeding great reward. I know not how much time there was between Elijah's last sermon and his heavenly journey, but what matters that when at last the glorious equipage appears? The world cannot appreciate the prophet's joy. Ah, John, Herod's axe is sharpening for thy neck! It is poor business, this preaching against matrimonial alliances of princes. But the memories of those days when he baptized three thousand between sunrise and sunset, are they not reward enough? In the strength of that meat he can go even to the scaffold. Savonarola dies in the flames, but is it not worth it to have demonstrated that a preacher can regenerate a city and rule it as a theocracy? Columbus goes to prison and dies in poverty, but the thrill of the dawn of October 12, 1492, with its shout of "Land Ahead" can never be taken from him. Jonathan Edwards is driven from his church pulpit, but he can look back on Northampton to say: "In yon church, when I portrayed the wrath of God, men clung to the columns lest they should slip into hell! Was not that bread enough while he was in the wilderness?"

In a revival meeting we sang, "I Hear Thy Welcome Voice," and eight men and women came to the altar. A patriarchal-looking old man whom I had invited into the pulpit just because of his ministerial garb, burst into tears and shook with tremendous emotion, "I had not intended to tell you that I am the author of those words," he explained, "but to see eight more come to the Saviour through my hymn overpowered me." He was Louis Hartsough, in the extreme feebleness of age. Who can estimate how many have come to the Cross through the singing of, "I

am coming, Lord; coming now to Thee! Wash me, cleanse me, in the blood that flowed on Calvary."

I can imagine how some of the gossips in Israel could have told how they had seen Elijah out yonder by the brook. "His clothes were shiny, trousers frayed and out at the heels, toes emerging from his shoes." Ah, but they do not add how the ravens fed him. They did not hear the old giant smack his lips and declare that Ahab's feasts were nothing compared to those bird-brought banquets. "That parson who predicted the drought, I understand, is starving now. They say he is over in Zidon, sheltered by the poorest widow in town." But they did not see the plenty that came to the wee cottage from the prophet's visit. "Say, did you read the news from the capital this morning? The Reverend Doctor Elijah has received a jolt since his big day at Carmel. Last evening Her Majesty vowed dire vengeance against him. They say he ran like a frightened stag, never stopping till he got into the wilderness beyond the river. He is lying out there now in a nervous collapse." True; but the news vendors did not see the angelic caterer prepare the tired prophet his dinner. They did not hear the music of the command, "Arise and eat." They did not hear the outlining of his new work, even more important than any he had hitherto performed,—the anointing of a king in wicked Ahab's stead, the selecting of captains and preachers for to-morrow's reforms. They did not hear the old hero exclaim, as he leaped to his feet: "In the strength of this meat I can go forty days and forty nights."

Let us pause a moment before this scene in the wilderness. It may be that some fellow-preacher who feels that his work is about done may get from it a helpful thought for to-morrow. Heretofore Elijah has been doing his work unaided. Indeed, from his lament under the juniper tree, it would seem that he expected to carry on his campaign all alone. Now comes the summons to the second

section of his career. He is to enlist the help of other men in executing the greater tasks before him. He is to link up with the representatives of those seven thousand which God said He still had in Israel. Perhaps in the decade remaining of your ministry, O Brother Mine, there is somewhat of this constructive work for you to do, some younger preacher's talents to develop, some struggling cause to establish, some organization, pregnant with possibilities, to foster.

I love to read the story of "Elijah Taken to Heaven," as the King James version calls it. How close the companionship between the prophet and his pupil! "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on." I love to read the answer that Elisha gave to those two groups of the sons of the prophets when they asked him if he didn't realize his coming loss: "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." I love to think how, with the translation imminent, the prophet and his successor proceeded in the even tenor of their way. "And while they still went on and talked," there came the chariot of fire into which the old seer leaped to seize the reins and drive the prancing fiery steeds up to the Gates of Pearl!

And lo, while the young Elisha was watching the disappearing vehicle swaying into the clouds, he saw something fluttering in the breeze, falling to earth. It was the translated itinerant's mantle. The junior preacher kissed it, hugged it, and put it on.

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#### XIV

#### THE NOVELTY OF A BABY'S NAME



## XIV

### THE NOVELTY OF A BABY'S NAME

"And they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name."—Luke 1:59, 60, 61.

"HE" means a new baby boy; "She" refers to his mother; "They" stands for the neighbors who had come in to congratulate Zacharias and Elizabeth on the happy event. What a human touch is in this: "And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her."

And as they chatted the conversation swung to the question of a name for the wee lad. The cousins must have a hand in that business. They put their heads together and deliberated for two hours and a half. Then they said: "You cannot do better than to call him after his own good father. Zacharias has been an honorable name for a thousand years." In the matter of burdening a child with a cognomen, should not the neighbors and the cousins keep out?

But Elizabeth said: "Not so; he shall be called John." You will recall how the angel had announced the coming of the child; how Zacharias had doubted the possibility of this; how the angel sentenced the doubter to dumbness until the day of the prophecy's fulfilment. Zacharias undoubtedly conveyed to Elizabeth the details concerning the angelic visit, including the order, "And thou shalt call his name John." Therefore her prompt veto of the suggestion of her kinfolk, and her instant pronouncement regarding

this novel name, causing the cousins to gape with surprise. "Not that, not that!" they exclaim. "There is none of thy kindred that is called by this strange name." They appeal to the aged father now, and he writes, "His name is John." Not "shall be called," as his wife had put it; but "is." And in acknowledging that the angel had given the babe the name, the father regained the power of speech, "and he spake, and praised God."

It is about these neighbors and cousins that I would speak. They represent those who oppose angelic novelties in babies' names the wide world over. They have a horror for the new; it befuddles their little brains. The fear of change shackles many men. They cling to the past; they hug tradition; they insist that every bairn shall carry its father's name. That spirit is the strongest barrier to progress. Think not that the reactionary who profits by the system of the past is the only opponent of reform. He represents a very small minority after all. But he is supported by a host of conservatively-minded people who are sure that whatever is, is right or it would not be.

These are idolatrous in their worship of the past. History is the big thing. What did the judge decide in 1847? Very well; let that be sufficient. What was right then is right to-day. They search feverishly for precedent, and, having found one, treasure it as the pearl of great price.

"For thus such reverence is lent  
To well-established precedent."

Very often history's chief value is not as a guide, but as a warning. There is the red light; let posterity beware of the reefs of the past! History repeats itself principally when there is no progress. The really great epochs have come from men's persistent efforts to throw off the iron shackles of a tyrannical past.

The greatest page in ecclesiastical history tells of ninety-



five theses denying precedents handed down by the popes of a thousand ye. rs.

The greatest page in British history tells of 1688, when the people got away from the spell of the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. They did then what Germany must do now, and did it at far less cost. What a fearful mental struggle did our very conservative English forbears endure before they could bring themselves to fling from them that ugly little idol.

The greatest page in French history opens with 1789, when men began to think for themselves. True, the ignorant thought rashly, but it was worth a Reign of Terror to get away from the feudalism of yesterday. The blood that flowed in the gutters of Paris then, prevented a prostrate France, yea a fallen world, in 1914.

The greatest page of American history speaks of 1776, when the colonists escaped from the history of their European forefathers. Up to then colonies existed for exploitation. The mother countries forbade their dependencies to manufacture their own wares. The day that Englishmen in America decided to cast off the enslavement of precedent was a glad day for Britain too. But for the Declaration of Independence would the lion have had any cubs to answer her roar in 1914?

The greatest page in Canadian history records the rebellion of 1837. There is no other bend in the stream of Canada's annals as pronounced as that. Before that epochal year our forefathers were referred to by the haughty governor as "the inhabitants." However rash the measures of Mackenzie and Papineau may have been, they did insist on calling the child John.

Precedent urges us to do it as it was done yesterday; progress calls for a better way, crying, "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" There is an old land called Egypt, and a new land called Saskatchewan. The latter is supplanting the former as a world granary. Never again can

the Land of the Nile save the world in time of famine, but Saskatchewan can soon do it alone. If the Egyptian could only adopt a New World steam plough! If he could but shake off the idolatrous worship of the stick-plough of his ancestors! When Britain settles down to conditions of peace again, would it not be in order to abandon the Zacharias names of Pounds, Shillings and Pence, and call the children Dollars and Cents? And might it not be a good plan for the entire Anglo-Saxon world to adopt the Metric System?

These neighbors and cousins have been stubborn fellows. Marvel not therefore that reforms come hard. It took Britain one hundred and seventy years to realize that Pope Gregory had done the world a service when in 1582 he established the new calendar which even now, in honor of its papal author, is called the Gregorian Calendar. Finally, in 1752, to remedy matters and prevent Christmas from gradually arriving in the dog days, a bill was introduced in the British Parliament to drop out eleven days in September. The measure passed, but its author had to bear the brunt of the popular prejudice against the change. "Give us back our eleven days!" shrieked the mob that followed him on the hustings. His ignorant constituents elected the other man, who promised what he never could do,—to give them back their eleven days.

Every important invention has had to face the opposition of the Zacharias people. Sewing machines, when introduced in New York City, were smashed by the journeymen tailors who feared their trade ruined. An old man showed me a pamphlet he had found among his father's papers railing against George Stephenson's steam engine. "It scarcely seems necessary in this enlightened year, 1830," it proceeds, "to show what a dangerous folly is proposed by this silly innovation. The locomotive boilers will frequently explode and kill engineers and passengers. Sparks will set fire to the cars and the grass. Passengers cannot

ride upon these swaying vehicles without liability of seasickness. Often they will be hurled from the carriages by the breaking of the wheels. The vibrations caused by passing trains will wreck buildings. Horsebreeding will be ruined, and the market for hay and oats will dwindle. Dairy-men will find that their frightened cows will yield no milk."

Think how far we have gone since that pamphlet was written. When you are tempted to grow pessimistic, it will be healthy to read John Richard Greene's portrayal of the England of 1800, how lunatics and insane folk were treated like wild beasts; how prisons were but reeking dungeons; how debtors were prevented from earning wherewith to pay their debts by being thrust into jail; how the agricultural laborers were herded like cattle and paid like serfs; how the cities suffered from heaps of garbage and unlighted robber-infested streets; how little children of eight worked sixteen hours a day; how drink destroyed the nation's manhood; how debasing were the very sports of the people; how terrible the effect of the public executions and brutal pillories. And it is but necessary to recall how stubbornly officialdom refused to grant reforms in these matters, yet how easily the reforms were accomplished when once men were aroused by necessary agitation, and how permanent the improvement has always been, to become optimistic regarding the ground still to be won.

But Elizabeth broke the yoke! She and Zacharias were true to the angel's command. Soon those same neighbors heard Elizabeth call, "John, Johnny! Come here, son!" And as the little toddler came running, some cousin said, "It is a nicer name, a far nicer name, than Zacharias after all." Then one of the men added how much better it was to have a totally different name for the son, so as to avoid confusion and the necessity of calling one Zacharias, Senior, and the other Zacharias, Junior. Soon a family down the street called their baby John. Indeed for nineteen hundred years it has been the stylish name, sometimes with Smith

trailing after it. So the neighbors and cousins have become too greatly attached to the now oldish cognomen, and we need another Elizabeth to set their minds against its too frequent continuance.

It takes courage to play Elizabeth's part, as it takes intelligence to know when to do it. Perhaps we might better say that it takes an ear trained to hear the angel's voice. Not every one with a new suggestion in names had a command from Gabriel. But in the long run, the world recognizes its prophets and follows them. When a real prophet arises to declare that now is the time to give the babe a new name, there are always those who discern the voice as of God. Our reason comes to our help, if once we are liberated from the fear of change. Let no one be afraid that society will adopt reforms too hysterically. The blunders of the past have not consisted in too frequent changes, but in resisting salutary innovations overlong. The best proof of that lies in the fact that very seldom have men returned to the old after testing the new. Study British or American legislation of the past eighty years and see if you can find one single retrograde movement of consequence.

This babe with a new name was himself an innovation. Oh, how fresh his sermons were, compared to the mechanical drivel of the pulpiteers of his day! How straightforward his advice to the soldiers and the publicans! There was none of the chicanery of the sectarian about it. When they asked, "What shall we do?" he didn't prescribe ablutions nor recitals of rosaries. But he declared: "Be generous; be charitable; be fair; stop profiteering; stop blackmailing; stop grafting." And John introduced the greatest of all innovations,—Jesus.

I love to dwell on the way Zacharias' tongue was loosed and how he praised God. It was all because he had acknowledged the supernatural in his life. He and Elizabeth believed that an angel had whispered unto them, giving them

a part in God's program, pushing them out into a new sphere, with individual duties to perform, with a child to rear for a prophet's work. Is not that ever the secret of a noble career? Does it not always mark the difference between colorless, purposeless existence of three score years and ten, and an earnest life, ever conscious of being put here on purpose? The noblest thought we can hold is: "We are laborers together with God." Your name, too, O Hearer, is, not Zacharias after your father, but John, for in the great campaign you have a novel part to perform.



XV

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR WORK





## XV

### OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR WORK

"Man goeth forth unto his work and to labor until the evening."  
—Psalms CIV: 23.

OUR attitude toward our work is pregnant with power to bring us peace or misery. In his beautiful morning prayer frail Robert Louis Stevenson reveals his indomitable resolve to persevere: "The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces; let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day. Bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonored, and grant us in the end the gift of peace."

In going to work in the morning the Psalmist declares us to be in step with the universe. Look at this song of work. It begins with praise to a God who toils. "Thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment. Thou stretchest out the heavens like a curtain. Thou layest the beams of the chambers in the waters. Thou makest the clouds thy chariot; thou walkest upon the wings of the wind. Thou makest thine angels spirits; thy ministers a flaming fire. Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be moved forever. Thou sendest the springs into the valleys; thou waterest the earth. Thou causest the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring food out of the earth." Nature is active. "The trees of the Lord are full of sap." The moon and the sun are assigned their tasks. The birds make their

necks; the wild asses range the green hills; the young lions seek their food; the fish are busy in the sea. And finally "MAN GOETH FORTH UNTO HIS WORK." So when we walk down town to the day's duties we are keeping step with a universal army. It is big business, this of joining the host of breadwinners. It is great to be a strap-hanger. We are on the march to conquer indolence, to besiege the task of the day, to fire at obstacles, to capture a few dollars, then parade homeward to the tune of "See, the Conquering Hero Comes!"

I respectfully suggest to all preachers, writers, artists, musicians and other professional men, that they divorce business from their home. The ministerial study should be in the church. The preacher should leave his house in the morning and go into his work until the evening. He will enjoy wife and children the more. They will appreciate his presence at suppertime with better relish. A short daily absence will make the heart grow fonder.

The higher the man, the more intense the work. Some look upon toil as an evil, to be reduced to the minimum. It is a deadly mistake. The South Sea Islanders are the laziest, dullest and most brutish of human beings. They get their food too easily, and need too little protection from the elements. It is not an accident that the world's intellect and dynamic force are found northward from the Fortieth parallel of latitude. Toil is royal. Never let us regard our daily work as a giant task-master with bare arm and knotted whip, driving us out to servitude. Work is a chum that beckons us in the morning, pointing to the rising sun as the daily exemplar who calls us to do our part.

Do not let your work rush you. Arise early enough to assert your mastery of time. Some slumber so long that their final rising is like a fireman's answer to an alarm. They must throw themselves into their clothes, swallow a slice of toast, gulp down a cup of coffee, dash for the car and appear on duty a few minutes late. A fair start is

the greater part of the daily conquest. Benjamin Franklin said: "He who loses an hour in the morning must keep on a dog trot all day, but will not overtake that hour, even by evening." As our belated train crept along, first twenty, then forty, at last seventy minutes behind time, the old conductor said: "Switches are turned for the train on time, but semaphores are raised against the train that is late." To plan for an hour at breakfast is a healthy thing. Then you can walk as tranquilly to the shop as if you were on a pleasure jaunt.

Every man has his work. In the rough, each gets the place for which his gifts and energy fit him. All cannot receive like work or like pay. Some philosopher has truly said: "Nothing is more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals." After all the government can do in the matter of protecting labor against the avarice of capital, or of protecting capital against the tyranny of labor, it will still be true that wages can never be arbitrarily fixed by statute. Each toiler has it largely in his own power to increase his daily stipend. There is much waste of time in fulminations against the "terrible wage system." I can lift myself out of the wage system in five seconds. How? By buying a nag and a wagon and driving down the street yelling, "Rags!" I may thus become a bloated Jewish plutocrat. But you and I do not care for that line of work. Perhaps, if we tried it, we would "go broke" in a week. So we continue to take wages.

But our calling in life need not fix our social status. Our work need not drag us down. "A man's a man for a' that." Neither is our reputation fixed by the time we go to work in the morning. Early one summer morning my friend and I rode down town on a car crowded with factory workers. Nearly all carried dinner pails; many were roughly clad; some looked physically unfit. My companion said: "These are the unskilled, the overworked, the underpaid. An hour later you will see a better class of workers on the

cars,—the skilled, the unionized, the eight-houred, the better-paid. Then will follow the stenographers and the bank clerks, the foremen and the superintendents. Last of all the bank presidents and the managing directors will be whirled down to their palatial offices in their touring cars." I was tabulating the various classes referred to in these misleading observations and moralizing upon the stern decrees of fate with something akin to indignation when I saw, wedged into a corner of the car, the rotund figure of the city's commissioner of public works. Why was he abroad at six-thirty in the morning? Then I recalled that the city was threatened with a water famine. He was on his way to the intake pier out on the lake. He was seeing to it that tea kettles could be filled and lawns and streets sprinkled. He was an \$8,000 man, and he earned every cent of it. Which of these on the car could do his work? And if he could do it in four hours to-day and twelve hours to-morrow, still would he be entitled to his wage.

We will always need the foreman, be he employee or employer. I stood watching a hundred factory workers trooping past a time register at evening closing time. Each pushed a button which recorded to the minute his hours of work that day. This convict-like numbering of men, this lock-step march past the clock, was just beginning to arouse whatever socialistic tendencies were within me, when my friend the foreman, after waiting till the last man was beyond hearing, remarked: "I expect a strike to-morrow for shorter hours." I felt like telling him that I sympathized with the men, that I wouldn't work where I had to push a button, and that I hoped they would strike and win. But, instead, I listened to his reasons why he thought the hours were short enough and the wages high enough. When we reached the corner where our paths homeward separated I was still a silent listener, and a sceptic as well. "Will you be at the church concert to-night?" I asked in parting. "No, I shall not be able to come," answered the foreman

quietly. "I must go back to the factory after supper *and lay out to-morrow's work.*" The italics of the last five words are not used to indicate any particular emphasis on the speaker's part, but to give you some faint idea of the force with which the announcement collided with my previous line of thought.

I suddenly lost my horror for the time recorder. Even the numbering system didn't appear quite so bad. This man, who, I had noticed, did not need to push a button on leaving, had to go back to work, while his men could spend the evening with their families. The executive duties could not be measured by the clock. On the foreman's sacrifice of pleasure that night depended the work of a hundred men next day.

I am making no comparisons. I am not speaking for the employer against the employee, I am not making a point against labor's demands. I merely hold before your view that foreman going back to lay out to-morrow's work. The clock did not record that extra time; very likely the men never gave it a thought.

Indeed the world over we are too apt to forget the man who is laying out to-morrow's work. He may be a foreman, he may be a promoter, he may be a farmer, he may be a captain of industry. Perhaps it is next year's work he is laying out. In cutting out a garment, in writing a book, in designing a building, in planning a railroad line, in organizing a business, in creating a new commodity, in inventing a device, these foremen are laying out the work of the future for thousands who could not do it for themselves. The many are well equipped to follow; the few are qualified to lead. We will always need the architect, whether he plans buildings, campaigns, books or industries. So while we sympathize with all who toil with their hands, while we want to secure for them all they earn and all the leisure hours they should have, let us not forget that, under any social system the Utopian dreamers may devise,

the world will always need the foreman who lays out tomorrow's work.

But can every man enjoy the prospect of his employment? We are often told to love our work. Let us be perfectly frank about it. Not every task is in itself to be loved, yet I think the workman may enjoy some phase of it. I do not know as I can blame a young man for not rubbing his hands in glee to remark, "I just dote on adding up columns." I have never heard a servant exclaiming, "I love washing dishes." What, then, shall we do about disagreeable work? Well, first, let us see whether we can overcome our dislike by enthusing over its necessity. I saw a famous surgeon performing a most repulsive operation. While his assistants closed the wounds his knife had made, he was shouting almost hysterically, "We have saved a life."

The thrilling moment in a famous play is when a returned prodigal, resolved to make good by doing some useful work, comes into his clergyman brother's parlor to announce that he has discovered the cause of a foul odor that has haunted the church and the manse. He has crawled through the great sewer and discovered old burial vaults which accounted for the pestilential nuisance. When they try to dissuade him from his task he cries in his recovered majesty: "I am the drain man; everybody has his special work. Cleaning out drains is mine. Some one must clear away the muck of the world." If we can seize somewhat of such enthusiasm, our task will be easier.

We can love the companionship of our work. Even though we toil alongside disagreeable mates we can make the whole day a ministry to them. Such a struggle will add zest to life. By looking at things philosophically, we may often reap a laugh where others only glean a sigh.

The driving-wheel of work is love. Our text tells us that "man goeth forth unto his work until the evening." Can you not picture the rest? Can you not see the tired

reapers coming home? Can you not see in the twilight the ploughman and the tired steeds? Can you not hear the clanking of the chain traces? Evening is coming, with food, rest and love. The motive of work is love. A wife and a child are the hostages we have given to fidelity. Throughout the day we may rejoice over the prospect of the little home, the evening conversation, the coming Sunday, the prospective holiday, the yearly vacation. I asked an old man of ninety, who was still enthusiastic at the recollection of his courting days, though the death of his betrothed had robbed him of his wedding-day, what was the sweetest word his sweetheart had ever given him. The old man's eyes twinkled as he answered, "Her word that she would always be glad to meet me at the gate on my return from work in the evening." O wife, O daughter, it is worth while to be sentimental. It is worth while to meet father at the gate. Even my Scotch collie was aware when five o'clock came. He watched for his master with eager eye, and came running with a mighty bound to tell him he was glad.

A religious attitude toward life will help us to enjoy every hour of every day. An old rhyme is apropos:

"Who drives the horses of the sun  
Shall lord it but a day;  
Better the lowly deed were done  
And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,  
The dust will hide the crown;  
Ay, none shall nail so high his name,  
Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat  
Was in some quiet breast  
That found the common daylight sweet,  
And left to heaven the rest."





XVI

HIGHEST COMPLIMENT EVER PAID HIM



## XVI

### HIGHEST COMPLIMENT EVER PAID HIM

"He saved others; . . ."—Matthew XXVII: 42.

STOP there! Do not add another word, but see the clause in all its beauty. Wouldn't it make a fine epitaph? "He Saved Others." Not "He saved dollars," though a goodly supply of saved dollars is not to be lightly esteemed. Not "He saved his own skin," though, as we have but one life to live here, we should sell it as dearly as possible, prudently conserving it till we can sacrifice it for the greatest good. But "He saved others."

Oh, for an epitaph that means something! Somewhere in old Ontario they called my attention to an inscription on an old-fashioned gravestone, reading something like this: "Margaret Soule, Mother of nine children." Then across the stone, carved in large letters, was the legend: "BUT SHE LOVED LITTLE JOHNNY BEST OF ALL!" Amusement turned suddenly to reverence when it was explained that little Johnny was an idiot, the only weak-minded child in that large family of sturdy Canadian men and women.

They said it while He was hanging upon the cross. "Likewise the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save." They meant it as a gibe, but it was a glorious truth. Error is often built upon a distorted fact, and when the house of error falls, the fact remains. They lied. They knew He could save Himself; they had seen Him walk through the midst of mobs in majestic calm. But the time had come

when to save others He must die, that to the end of time  
children might sing:

"There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified,  
Who died to save us all."

A snicer may contain a real encomium. During the earlier period of the Civil War a correspondent in Blackwood's Magazine, predicting the speedy fall of the Washington government, added: "How can it be otherwise with a nation which has for its chief magistrate a third-class country lawyer who buys a ten-cent steak and carries it home himself?" The writer lacked the wit to see that he touched one of the qualities of Abraham Lincoln's greatness. So this scoffing yell of the priestly haters of our Lord contained the highest compliment He ever received on Earth.

Saving others was the very centre of His ministry. It was the most striking phase of His whole work. It was so practical, so wholesomely infectious. It transcended all the philosophy of Aristotle and the wisdom of Socrates. Deeds were the wings of His philosophy. The finest thing ever said of Dr. Johnson was not by Boswell. The three volumes of that great biographer contained nothing so touching and inspiring as what Sir Joshua Reynolds's sister wrote: "When Johnson went home at two o'clock in the morning he would put pennies into the hands of children sleeping in the streets that they might buy breakfast when they awoke."

The first step towards noble living is falling in love with Jesus. Some do this unconsciously by becoming captivated by the beauty of some Christ-touched life, without realizing that they thereby are following the Master. What thrills you most in reading about Him? With much diversity of phrase, and yet with a certain wonderful unity in thought, have the geniuses of all time spoken of Jesus. Pilate called

Him "The Man Without a Fault." Diderot said He was "The Unsurpassed." Bonaparte referred to Him as "The Emperor of Love." John Stuart Mill admitted that He was "The Guide of Humanity." "He is The Highest Pattern of Virtue," said Lecky, while Martineau proclaims Him as "The Divine Flower of Humanity." Renan declared Him to be "The Greatest among the Sons of Men," and Theodore Parker sees in Him "The Youth with God in His Heart." More simple and really powerful is the word of Peter, who speaks of Him as "The Man Who Went About Doing Good." That covers it all. Does any one ask what was His greatest work? I can make no comparisons, for His sermons, His miracles, His deeds and His death all are for the same object,—saving humanity from sin and shame. His whole life on Earth spelled OTHERS. His preaching had this definite aim. No wonder Isaiah hears the Great Servant saying: "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." His miracles all saved something or somebody. All but one, somebody says, recalling the blighting of the fig tree. But was not the purpose of that miracle preeminently to save men? Was it not to teach that we, like a fruitful tree, must live for others if we would avoid the curse of barrenness?

Thousands of volumes have been written to show exactly what Jesus did for us upon the Cross, and most of them tend to some particular theory of redemption. But the best proof that He did something real on Calvary is that the world, without pronouncing definitely on any one school's doctrine of the Atonement, has caught the spirit of the Cross. Saving others has become the responsive chord in all biography. Bishop Fowler used to tell of the heroic deed of a locomotive engineer who was pushing his way up the mountain just west of Altoona, Pennsylvania, with his train loaded with excursionists, when he saw just before him four cars laden with stone, broken loose from a freight

train ahead, coming down his track at a hundred miles an hour. Quick as thought he whistled for "on brakes." He ordered his fireman to climb over the coal tender to the baggage car and, remaining on the car platform, to uncouple the engine. Then he went up alone to meet the monster, knowing that he would receive the full impact and that the wreckage of his engine would derail the cars and save his train below. As they drew him out from under the twisted mass of scrap-iron, he moaned: "Nobody killed, you say? Thank God, I turned the trick!" Many great scholars have spent a lifetime endeavoring to phrase satisfactorily what Christ did on Calvary, but the deed of that burly engineer illustrates it sufficiently for most people.

Men refuse to listen long to the story of any life that has not somewhat of Golgotha in it. The movie that thrills must have a rescue scene in it. The world's greatest novel is still "Les Miserables," simply because Jean Valjean is the Christ of fiction. John Hay knew his universal audience when he argued for Jim Bludso's final salvation by declaring that "Christ ain't going to be too hard on a man that died for men." No biography is valued very highly by the Encyclopedia Britannica unless it tells of altruism. A book agent seeing me one day when I was wearing a clerical vest approached me confidently to say: "Father, I want to interest you in the best 'Lives of the Popes' ever written." I replied that I had as much literature on the Papacy as I wanted, but I should be glad to get a good life of Father Damien. Alas, he had never heard of that real vicar of Christ, for he said that the Roman Catholic Church had far too many priests to give a separate biography of each one. On the site of Newgate Prison stands a bronze statue of Elizabeth Fry, with the inscription: "She lived for erring sisters." On the bleak plains of North Dakota is a gravestone with the inscription, "Elizabeth Hooker. She died for our children, 1887." They still tell the story of the brave young schoolmistress who, lost with three chil-

dren in the terrible blizzard, took off her outer clothing and covered the little ones. They found her frozen body at the mouth of the shelter she had improvised; within were the children, alive. Ah, the price of posterity's love is our love for others. As soon as we detect just a little of Jesus' spirit in a soul our eyes moisten and our heart chords respond to the vibration of love.

Saving is the principal item on the world's social program of to-day. Serving is the blessed fad of the hour. Society is turning from empty pleasures to deeds of mercy. Red Cross costumes have pushed thousand dollar gowns off the stage. Do not let us miss the new evangel because we cannot everywhere identify it with our narrower ecclesiastical life. It is to be feared that the church is in some respects like a hen who sees the ducklings she has hatched swimming across the pond. We have not always preached a saving as well as a shriving Christ. And we have been too greatly concerned about being saved ourselves to be moved with the desire to save others. Schleiermacher said that religion arises when a holy soul is stirred by the universe. A good man is one who accepts partnership with God in His campaign for a better world. The nurse is queen to-day. We have ten thousand Florence Nightingales, God bless them! It is so appropriate that they should wear the cross, red or white, as an emblem.

Now the most important thing for us to remember is that we may all win for ourselves this compliment given the Master. We too can save others. In that we may all be Christlike. We are so apt to overlook the wonderful fact that the greater the greatness of a man the more easily he may be imitated. I cannot imitate Napoleon, but Lincoln I can, and Lincoln is greater than Napoleon. I cannot gain the wisdom of Plato, but that of Jesus I can, and Jesus is greater than Plato. We are all able to become somebody's saviours. Saving a man to society, turning him from being a social liability to a social asset is a Christ-

like work. "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Saving is best done by prevention. Therefore every father and mother, and all who kindle nobility in children, may win this epitaph.

"He who gives the child a treat  
Makes joy bells ring in Heaven's street.  
And he who gives the child a home  
Builds palaces in Kingdom come."

A murderer's mother sat in the court-room near her culprit son. He had sunk to the very lowest slime-pits of social degradation. He had stabbed a courtesan in a fit of jealousy. His widowed mother was a saint. She came from her village home to attend the trial. She sat alone, bewildered by the proceedings. Every day the papers were filled with the reports of the trial, with the pictures of the judge and the jury, of the lawyers, the criminal and the criminal's mother. The days passed, and still she sat alone. Not a deaconess, nor a Ladies' Aid woman, nor a charity worker, nor W. C. T. U. member, nor a woman's rights zealot, came near her to do those kindnesses which are the very heart of the Gospel. They were all cumbered with too much serving. But the last morning of the trial the court officials noticed a lady in black step inside the railing and sit down beside the mother. With a whisper she took the poor old hand and sat silent all forenoon. During the fiery speech of the prosecuting attorney the poor mother swayed backward and forward in her mute anguish. The lady at her side put an arm about her and the swaying ceased. After recess the stranger was present again to hold the withered hand. When the foreman of the jury said, "We find him guilty," the agonized mother gave a groan of despair and reeled, as if about to fall from her chair, but her comforter drew the white head to her



shoulder, patted the pallid cheek, and wiped away the tears. It was all done so modestly that the curiosity of the judge prompted him to send for the unknown visitor and ask her name. "Oh, I am but an ordinary wife and mother," she answered, "but I have a son myself, and he is blind. He has been such a comfort to me, and when I read of this woman's sorrow I felt it my duty to give back to the world some of the comfort I have received. Besides, I myself had need of a comforter the day the physicians brought in their verdict that my poor boy must be in darkness all his days."

O, beloved, that is the Christ spirit. That is the very centre of the holy of holies. You never need expect to get much closer to the heart of Jesus than that. To have such a holy desire take hold of you is the quintessence of Christianity.

Good deeds are "catching," like the influenza. Love awakens love. From the Cross went a company of men and women whose numbers speedily multiplied. Paul speaks of Christ as giving himself for men, "that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works*." That is the sign of genuine conversion the world over. When Dwight L. Moody fell sick in Kansas City, he wanted to get back to his beloved Northfield. The general manager of the Wabash Railroad put his private car at the disposal of the party, and the great evangelist started on his last earthly journey. At Detroit the engineer who had just completed his run came walking along the platform, lantern in hand, and seeing the private car inquired about the errand. Mr. Moody's secretary told him of their anxiety to get the dying leader home, and lamented the fact that the train was two hours late and was therefore likely to miss connections at Buffalo with the West Shore. The engineer said: "You will need to make up an hour between here and Buffalo to do it. The trouble is that the track is bad on account of the sleet to-night, and a new

man will take the engine." After a moment's silence he added: "I am not tired, and I know every bit of the road. I'll go to the chief and offer to take the run myself." In five minutes he returned and quietly said: "If Mr. Moody is awake, tell him that I was converted in Farwell Hall twenty years ago, and have tried to serve the Lord ever since. Tell him to rest easy for with God's help, his old convert will get the train through all right."

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## XVII

"TOO MUCH RELIGION WHEN I WAS A BOY"



## XVII

### "TOO MUCH RELIGION WHEN I WAS A BOY"

I WANT to speak about the man who had too much religion when he was a boy. He told me so himself, when I invited him to come to church. "Guess I'm case-hardened, parson; too much church-going and Bible drummed into me in my youth; haven't gotten over it yet." He had said it so often that even his wife believed him. She, not knowing that he had thus absolved himself, gave me the same camouflage from the rear seat of their big car as they were ready for their all-Sunday trip. "I cannot get my husband to go to church at all," she said. "He says he got too much religion when he was a boy. And I consider it my duty to go with him Sundays, for he works so hard during the week." It was the pleasantest duty she ever performed, whirling away with her veil fluttering in the breeze, leaving dull care and all responsibilities far behind.

I will say that such a man labors under a false impression. If his father really did never smile on Sundays, if the children were actually compelled to sit quiet as mice and listen to extracts from Fox's "Book of Martyrs," and Baxter's "Saints' Rest," if they were made to commit to memory innumerable psalms, and were whipped if they whistled, the fault was the sourness and not the religiosity of the parent. Had he not been a stern church member, his sternness would have manifested itself otherwise, perhaps in more objectionable ways. *But there never were very many such people.* Even forty years ago they were not much more plentiful than Egyptian mummies; at present they are as scarce as German dyes.

And in many cases the tales of sombre Sabbaths and doleful exercises grow with the telling until, like the report of Mark Twain's death, they are greatly exaggerated. Robert G. Ingersoll started the impious fashion of slandering pious parents, and every young reprobate who seeks an excuse for his lechery and drunkenness finds an easy exit from rebuke by saying, "My folks kept me too tight." So he still gets tight, you see. Stop that vile habit of casting aspersions on your very best capital, the asset of a godly ancestry. Had you kept to the way of your father, your record would be the cleaner.

But the fairly moral man may also harbor this delusion. "Fifty verses a week was my task," said a grey-headed friend. "Now memory is a wonderful thing," I replied. "The things we learned by heart in our youth we rarely forget. I myself can say 'Casabianca,' and the 'Downfall of Poland,' and the 'Battle of Waterloo,' backwards as well as forwards, right-side up or upside down, walking or sitting, awake or asleep. I wish I could hear you reel off a few verses, provided they are longer than 'Jesus wept.'" But he sidestepped my proposition. Believe me, that man is greatly mistaken as to the extent and duration of his early Bible training. He is twin-brother to the fellow who thinks he walks five miles every morning, and to that other chap who boasts of an ice-cold bath every day in the year, but who, if the facts were really told, simply immerses his great toe in tepid water. No, no; the number of people in the whole Dominion who are suffering the effects of too much early religion would not make a battalion for overseas. Even so, I decline to believe that you could get the slackers to enlist.

I also protest that these people hold a wrong theory. They imagine that in matters of religion children should be allowed to follow their own bent. That notion has been popular of late. "Train up a child in the way he should

go" has become "would go." Moreover, many foolish people allow their offspring their own sweet will in all things. "If he wants it, let him have it; if he doesn't want to, don't make him." Let him to go school when he will; let him get up his home-work when he has a mind to; let her lie abed till ten if she is sleepy.

The way to get a child to incline towards the right thing is to bend his inclination, and do it early. I trained a perverse sapling towards an upright life by tying it to a straight stick. You may need to apply a sapling to your sapling a time or two to secure the correct inclination. Some mental labor is necessary to bring up a child midway between undue severity and a spoiling mildness, and the trouble is that some parents are too indolent to perform their duty. A perplexed mother writes a church paper: "My fourteen-year-old boy doesn't want to attend divine service because he says there are so many hypocrites in the church. What shall I do?" Shades of Franklin and Wesley, what a precocious child! We shall soon hear of a thirty-day infant objecting to being baptized! In a former parish of mine there came to church every Sunday morning an earnest-looking woman with her four fatherless boys, the youngest about seven and the oldest a youth of seventeen. It was a pretty sight to see that lad lead the way to the family pew, step aside to allow the mother and his little brothers enter and then sit down beside the widow with an air of proprietorship. I asked her long afterwards, when I preached in my former pulpit and saw them all there, just as before, with about a foot added to every child's stature, how she had managed it. She answered: "Oh, I suppose it was all a matter of beginning right; the question of staying away was never raised. Perhaps I appealed to their pride, for whenever I bought one a new necktie or a pair of shoes it was always 'because you'll want to wear it to church Sunday morning.'"

You owe your child wholesome discipline in all things pertaining to habit, positive and negative. It is his right. It is your duty and privilege to reinforce him by gentle teaching against the assaults of evil by prejudicing him against the wiles of the wicked before they succeed in prejudicing him against old-fashioned goodness. Do it first! Do it thoroughly!

I will say with deliberation that it is a flimsy excuse, this too-much-religion plea. It is a deadly heroin, used to put conscience to sleep. When the Sunday automobile party speed past a church where devout worshippers are gathering, the man falters: "Well, I suppose it is all right for most people, but I got fed up on hymns and sermons." I know a dyspeptic who, when wholesome food of most kinds is placed before him, says, "No, thank you; I once ate too much of that when I was a lad." So he eats freak foods, of kinds and proportions unknown in his childhood, and keeps his stomach in a perpetual ferment. And this man in the auto with his "over-fed" excuse quite likely feeds on wild plays and midnight carousals with associates whom his honorable father would have scorned. Give the plain food of the church another chance!

I have lately labored in a city which, according to the assertions of many of its people, has outgrown the church. "The thinking classes, the doctors, the lawyers, the business kings, rarely go to church," says a writer; "they feel they have passed from that kindergarten stage of development." Yet this city has three thousand divorces a year. Six thousand weddings and three thousand divorces! Meanwhile Canada bemoans the report that thirty-four divorce cases await the next session of the Dominion Senate. The fact is that these leading citizens, the professional and business people, have no feeling of responsibility towards their fellows. They spend their Sundays in idle follies, unconscious of the awful fact that their community is rotting in



social sins against which the church has during the ages made consistent protest.

A well-filled village church on a Sunday morning is a joy unparalleled in the city. To see the squire and the doctor, the reeve and the constable, the merchant and the postmaster walk into the house of God is a wholesome sight which, let us hope, shall never be obliterated. A Canadian-American describes his visit to an Ontario town church. "The leading merchant ushered me into a pew. The county judge sat next to a teamster's family. I noticed that a working man was well clad, and that his daughter sang the alto in 'Lead, Kindly Light,' with beautiful voice. Another daughter was soprano soloist in the choir. A young lawyer—a schoolmate of mine—handed a stranger a hymnal. It puzzled the usher to seat all the people. The whole hour had a charm, and I left wishing that all our great centres were like this Canadian county town. After service the streets were thronged with people going home from similar gatherings."

"Oh, sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
'Tis sweeter far to me,  
To walk together to the kirk  
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,  
And all together pray,  
While each to his great Father bends,  
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,  
And youths and maidens gay!"

"Too Much Religion When I Was a Boy" is a covering for supreme selfishness. Such people forget Kant's Silver Rule: "Act so that the maxim of thy will can at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation." They forget that they themselves are the product of the church, and that they are living by the light and heat of yesterday. Few men of thoughtfulness really believe that America

would be better off without churches. Still fewer have any suggestion to make regarding a substitute for the church. Let the man who has abandoned the habit of church attendance face the issue candidly. If you, non-churchgoer, are willing to have no more Sunday convocations, no organs peeling, no bells ringing out their welcome, no Sunday Schools where the Ten Commandments are taught, no Jesus lifted up; if you desire now to stop the circulation of the Bible and allow the story of its heroes to perish; if you would see the hymnal of your father torn up, with "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and "Lead, Kindly Light," lost to us forever; then, I say, you are entitled to pursue your course of action, and allow every church in this broad land to be nailed shut. But if you say, "No; by no means that; I do want somebody to keep things going at church; I want somebody there to sing and help usher on the Sunday when I may take it into my head to attend service," then I say, **YOU OUGHT TO BE DOING YOUR BIT!**

So I make a plea for the church. Not the great cathedral, but the old-fashioned little church of your childhood, the tiny country chapel where the farmers gathered and talked about the crops till the bell rang; the village church, where the young fellows lined up on the sidewalk after service until each saw the maiden of his heart's desire emerge. Occasionally, by the way, he walked up to quickly walk away again, in which case the heart's-desire business did not turn out to be reciprocal. But even the courting of a community is the better for being conducted in the atmosphere of church-going. Ah, that village church! Say you send back a few dollars to invest in some new hymnals or a new carpet.

Do you want the windows of that little church nailed up? You can help close it forever by withholding your attendance from the church in your present neighborhood, even though you may live a thousand miles from your boyhood home. Go to church and sing! What music is better

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than that of the old church hymns of your childhood days?  
Do you recall how the fathers sang?

"The blessing thrilled through all the happy throng,  
And heaven was won by violence of song!"

I plead for the Sabbath. It is one of the sacred vessels of religion. A visitor said a Sunday in Toronto was like spending the day at the bottom of a well. Better that than spending it at the bottom of a sewer, don't you think? What did that fellow want to do that he couldn't do in Toronto? Talk, I presume. And hear himself talk. Wanted merely to have something to say. What would he have us do on Sunday? Race around like mad and be more tired on Monday morning than we were on Sunday morning? When you break those much-denounced blue laws of Sabbath-keeping, you almost invariably force other people to lose their Sunday rest. If a hundred thousand people have a wide-open Sunday it means that ten thousand people must slave on Sunday and about ten men get rich from it all. There is generally a negro behind the woodpile in all these specious pleas for Sunday "liberty." Let us make the Sabbath a delight for all. Let it mean rest for body, improvement for mind, culture for the soul.

I plead for the Bible. What, do you say it is a worn-out thing? Did I hear you say it contains pages that you would not show your children? You are a hypocrite, you with your Bobby Burns and your Shakespeare on the library shelves in your home. Bring it out, select a hundred beautiful paragraphs, not too long, and resurrect your love for the dear old volume. Select the most convenient time of the day, preferably at the end of a meal, read a few scriptural gems; then, while all bow the head, invoke God's blessing on your home and your loved ones. Add a prayer for the world's peace. A man said to his wife: "Mother,

Charlie and Will are gone to the front. How would it be if we read a word and have a bit of prayer every morning till the boys come home?" He held her tenderly while she sobbed her gratitude; then they knelt together.

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XVIII

THE "YET" OF ETERNAL HOPE



## XVIII

### THE "YET" OF ETERNAL HOPE

"For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet . . ."—II Samuel XIV: 14.

EVEN before we finish reading our text, let us dwell a moment upon his magic conjunction of hope. How it turns disconsolation into serenity! The "Yets" of the Bible are fountains amid deserts. In his prayer Moses recounts the sins of Israel, and asserts, "YET are they thy people." God agrees with Elijah that his is a terrible age, but adds, "YET have I left me seven thousand in Israel which have not bowed unto Baal." Ezra, admitting that he and his compatriots are bondmen, shouts, "YET our God hath not forsaken us." Ezekiel hears God say, "Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, YET will I be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." Job declares, "Though he slay me, YET will I trust him." Jonah sees a ray of hope even in the depths, "I am cast out of thy sight; YET I will look again towards thy holy temple." YET! There is hope, whispering, cheering, broadening hope!

Now look at the text; see what a gloomy stock-taking this is; what a dismal inventory of mortality. All must die; we are as water spilt upon the ground; surely that can never be gathered up again. Nobody is exempted from this draft, YET—

The story of the text explains the "Yet." Here is a plea to a father for mercy towards a recreant son. David has

been mourning for his living but fugitive Absalom, who invoking the same unwritten law we hear altogether too much about nowadays, had caused the death of a scoundrel half-brother, and had fled to foreign soil. It was a felony which David as King cannot overlook. But David the father cannot forget his son. Joab, the keen-eyed general, grieves to see his royal master ageing with sorrow, and adopts a clever device to demonstrate to his sovereign that justice and mercy are not incompatible in the heart of a father-king. He secures the help of a tactful woman with some dramatic power. She plays the part of a widow, falls on her face before the king, telling him her story with well-feigned agony. "I am a widow," she declares, "and my two sons strove together in the field. There was none to part them; the one slew his brother. Now the whole relationship is risen against me, demanding that I give up my surviving son to the vengeance of the law. So they will quench my remaining coal, and there will be no fire of love upon my hearth."

David's great heart is touched. Like Lincoln, he cannot abide a woman's tears. "Go to thine house," he tells her, "and I will give orders. Not a hair of thy son's head shall fall." Now she reveals the parabolic nature of her plea, and frankly shows the king his inconsistency. Why does he not treat himself as indulgently as he treats her, she asks. Why not show mercy to his own culprit son? Why not fetch him home? In her case, he overrode the law to show mercy. Why not do as God does? And in her argument she uses the words of our text: "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person, YET DOTH HE DEVISE MEANS, THAT HIS BANISHED BE NOT EXPELLED FROM HIM." David was convinced, and did call back his banished son, first to a half-way pardon, without seeing his face; then to a full reconciliation.



First, then, God loves with a father's love. You may call Him King, Engineer, Creator, Shepherd, Judge, but His constant, unchangeable office is Father. Perhaps, were the Bible to be written to-day,—in any other country but Germany,—it would say more frequently that God loves with a mother's love. Or, still better, with a combination of father and mother love. Do you not plainly see to-day that you needed both the love of father and mother?

In a Canadian town I found myself the guest of a most interesting couple, so opposite yet so well fitted to each other. He was a giant; she a midget. He had been a member of the famous mounted police of the Canadian Northwest; she an Anglican nurse among the Indians of the same region. His hands were brawny, big, brown; hers, small, white, soft. He was strong; she was gentle. He looked so proud; she so meek. Yet a neighbor said, "They make a fine team, and have such good children." God is both father and mother. "Like as a father pitieth." "As one whom his mother comforteth." My father administered justice; mother showed mercy, both had love. After discipline had been administered, we nestled in mother's comfort. In those days, we thought we needed mother most; later we knew we had need of both. They both loved us.

God can punish only in love. I know not the details of the retribution that must follow wilful sin; all I do know is that it can never violate the basic truth that God is a father. Build whatever hell you can on the text, "God is Love." Farrar said, "A noble God must be the keystone of our theology." All theories of life,—this life and the future life,—must be reconciled to, and be brought into harmony with, Eternal Love.

Next let me assert that God loves with a parent's limitations. He must devise means to bring back his banished. He must sit down and plan the steps that love must take. The babe is placed in its crib without its wishes being consulted. For the present it is treated with a certain

necessary despotism. Meanwhile a mind is developing within. The day comes when the parents can no longer beget the son in their arms, nor even order him arbitrarily. They must advise, persuade, woo,—devise means. God does exactly that. The power of choice makes a man. The possibility of vice makes virtue. God limits His sovereignty in dealing with our race. The tree cannot sin, neither can the moon. But we can. When He made man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, He said, "Choose! Eat of this and live; eat of that and die. Choose! It is the prerogative of your royal manhood. Otherwise man would be a mere automaton, and God could never be pleased with him. The first Eden was good, but being in it was no credit to our first parents. The final Eden is won by overcoming through Christ, and we shall have merit if we gain it.

Why has not God stopped this war? It is usually the taunting query of the modern cynic, the brother of him who jeered at the psalmist with, "Where is now thy God?" Our race must work out its own destiny with the helps we have. God gave us ideals, and the Great Ideal, saying, "Build! If you fail, begin again, and yet again, until there is an ennobled, a perfected human race, the joy of my father's heart. Sir Oliver Lodge said: "This planet has been a million years preparing for the human race. Between the first and the fifth creative days were aeons. The earth shall be the theatre of such a magnificent race, with such energy, power, joy, peace, that it will entirely compensate for all the pain, tears, war, sufferings, of ten thousand years." God can afford to wait. "A thousand ages in His sight are like an evening gone."

Yet, despite our free will, the Father throws about us influences for good, as devices to win us towards Him. Some of these are moral laws, whereby evil is punished and virtue rewarded. Nature is in league with the Ten Commandments. Man is never punished for chastity, but

always for licentiousness. Heaven inclines our hearts to keep her laws. The grooves all run, not towards evil, as so many assert, but towards good.

Then I think it is fair to deduce from the text the crowning truth that God loves with a parent's persistence. "That his banished be not expelled from him." But you protest that the mere assertion of a clever woman is a rather slender peg on which to hang such an important doctrine. True; and yet may it not be that David's visitor voiced a prevalent eschatological view of her day? So many of the king's own psalms are full of the same thought, that His mercy endureth forever. Note the difference between "banished" and "expelled." At school it was not deemed so serious an affair to be suspended, but to be expelled was a disgrace. To prevent that calamity the Father is busy devising means. That is His supreme concern. Parents know what that implies. Not how the parlor chairs or the pictures on the wall behave, but the children! I was in a home from which a married daughter and her merry children had just gone. I remarked upon the well-furnished and orderly house, but Grandma remarked, "Oh, sir, we wouldn't mind if our grandchildren were only here to upset the furniture." The child is our concern. And it does not matter how far away that boy has gone, the parent can never, never cease his love. O child of the Great Father's Heart! You are the object of concern. He is not worrying about Jupiter, to watch whether its orbit measures exactly as it did ten thousand years ago, nor about Neptune, whether its journey is accomplished on schedule time. Those are matters of the divine fiat. But the children of earth, they who are made in His image, must be wooed back to the great Hearth above. That is why He sent His Son; His coming was the most natural thing in the realm of history. It was the capstone of the devices of God.

Every fragment of the parental affection, be it human or of the lower species, is an echo of the Love of God.

The owner of a Buffalo, N. Y., residence stood helplessly viewing the conflagration which enwrapped all his property. His fox terrier came rushing toward him repeatedly, whining piteously, then darting towards the flames as if to urge him to follow. Her three puppies were in the kitchen, and the mother-doggie was trying to secure his help in rescuing them from death. Finally she dashed through the fire, returning to place a puppy at the master's feet. At length all three were rescued, and though the brave mother was severely burned, her barks of joy were wonderful to hear. If such a wee creature has a parental love so intense, how shall we picture the heart of the Great Parent of all?

We need not be surprised that the wise woman of Tekoa had this thought, and that this was the view of David's daughter when we recall the picture of the Eternal Love which the Israelite had constantly before him in his worship. The law said, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." That flame was to the devout worshipper an emblem of the undying love of Jehovah. The light is ever in the window of our Father's House. His table must be filled. The heavenly home must be occupied.

An older brother of mine, after teaching his first term of school in the next township, came home to spend the summer vacation. Father asked him to go on a two-day business errand, but as that would interfere with some social engagement on hand, he stoutly refused. At last when all persuasives failed, father quietly suggested that perhaps since he didn't want to be agreeable, he had better go back to his farm-house boarding-place. Brother Foster took up the challenge and, despite mother's pleadings, packed his grip and went. Nobody doubted that he would come around all right, yet when October came without word or visit from him, I knew by many signs that even father was viewing the matter more seriously. One Indian summer afternoon, he and I in our journey came to where a slight detour would bring us to Foster's school. Without a word

father turned the old horse's head in that direction. After consulting his watch he drove very slowly, and I knew that he was delaying so as to arrive at the school house just at four. Finally we saw groups of children coming down the road, followed at last by the youthful teacher. He saluted us somewhat carelessly and would have passed on, had not father said, "Whoa," and asked some questions about the school. "Well, come home when you can," was as far as he could go towards a reconciliation. To which Foster replied, "All right, I'll see."

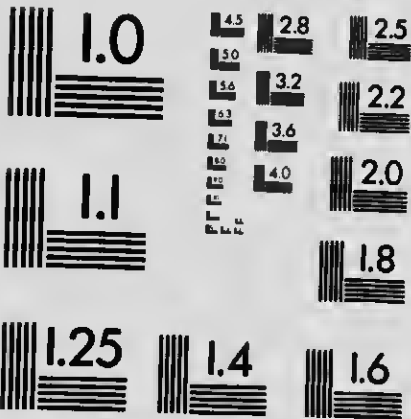
Well Christmas came closer and closer, and I noticed that arrangements for the usual feastings were uppermost in mother's thoughts. She got ready the plum pudding and the mince meat and planned for a turkey dinner. One evening she said to father: "You sit down now and write Foster that we surely expect him home the day school is out. Christmas day is just two weeks off, Father; give in a little for the sake of peace." Father took down the writings materials and wrote the letter. What was written we never quite knew, but anyway it brought home the boy. When he entered our house, mother rushed towards him with tears and kisses. Father greeted him somewhat more quietly, then went out on the porch to see what kind of weather we would have to-morrow. When he came back, his eye was moist. Next thing we knew he and Foster were having their usual game of checkers.

The Christmas Above is coming! Father wants you home.



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XIX

THE CHRIST OF THE RIVER



## XIX

### THE CHRIST OF THE RIVER

"Thus saith thy Redeemer: I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river."—Isaiah XLVIII: 17, 18.

LET us glory in the rhetoric of the Christian life. There is a geography of the soul, with a Valley of Sorrow, a Hill of Endeavor, a Mountain-top of Glory, a Rock of Security, a Sea of Eternity, a City of Heaven, a Beautiful Isle of Somewhere, a Harbor of Rest, a River of Peace. The Redeemer said it; The Peace you have in Me is like a River.

But what has a river to do with peace? Is not strife more like a river? Would not peace be more like a pond? No; there may be a false peace, a mere lack of effort, a supine willingness to yield, which is like a quagmire. But if peace includes life, courage, self-reliance and nobility, then it is like a glorious river.

Of all the majestic vantages of the San Francisco Bay region, with its Twin Peaks, its Tamalpais, its panoramic view from Lincoln Park, I love the Seal Rocks best of all. Not on account of the seals, for they are dull, dazed, hybrid things that would seem to need another ten thousand years to become fully awake; not on account of the rocks themselves, for you can find such in any range of Californian hills; but because they stand there like some old warrior, facing with calm serenity the oncoming foe. They are noble on account of what is constantly assailing them. The waves which have gathered force all the way from China contin-

ually assault it like a hostile troop against a fort. They come as German legions rush against the human walls of old Britain, only to fall back in impotent rage. Ah, how firm stands the rock, a picture of an upright man, serene amid difficulties. In this is the essence of the Christian's peace,—that tranquillity may reign over a tempest.

It is healthy to recall just now that times of fierce conflicts have developed the serenest spirits of the ages. Amid the clash of arms men have walked with their hands in God's, singing paeans which are our comfort and inspiration now. Isaac Watts wrote his hymns while Louis XIV was crushing the world. John Newton composed verses of serene faith amid the clash of hostile hosts. Richard Baxter gave posterity his "Saints' Rest" while he himself was passing through the fires of persecution of Bloody Jeffries' day. Thomas Ken sang the Doxology wherewith we open our religious assemblies while the revolution shook England. Jeremy Taylor, the Shakespeare of the English pulpit, preached his grandest sermons while a royalist exile in Wales in Cromwell's time. During the black days following Austerlitz and Jena Rowland Hill comforted the people in discourses which are cherished to-day. So let us understand that this may be a time of holy triumph, of spiritual regeneration among our people, of an enriched religious literature, of a glorious revival in the Church of God. This burst of regret in our text may be changed to a promise: "Hearken to God's commandments, and thy peace shall be as a river."

Have you ever visited the cradle of a river? We were carried up a Swiss mountain from whose sides fell torrents that looked like bride's veils as they streamed from the endless fields of snow on the summits. Here are cradled the great rivers of Europe, the Rhone, the Rhine, the Danube, the Marne, the Loire. Standing near a peak of the Jungfrau, I saw the process. There was a roar like that of a big gun; an avalanche swept down well-worn

grooves, falling again with another crash, disappearing for a moment, coming into view again to take a final leap into a huge cup in the mountain side, where it would melt and feed the streams that form to rush so swiftly towards the sea. So is born that peace which passeth all understanding. In the bosom of God it has its source. "Great peace have they which love the law." "Acquaint thyself also with Him, and be at peace."

Have you a genuine or a counterfeit peace? Is it based on the prosperity of to-day? Does it depend on the fleeting joy of an hour? Is it a spring freshet which may dry up to-morrow, leaving its river-bed parched as a desert? Does it trust in health? Will it vanish in the evil day? The peace of the inevitable day of testing that must surely come to all is God's approval of our life. Oh, the serene confidence of the soul that has learned to trust God amid all conditions!

This peace is like a river because it grows deeper and broader with the years. Rivers never contract; they ever widen as they go onward. You can jump across the Mississippi up at Lake Itaska; you travel for miles among the estuaries of its mouth. This is because the great stream draws to itself a multitude of smaller rivers in its course. It deepens also. It was a shallow creek up in Minnesota; below Memphis ocean vessels can navigate it. So with the Christian's peace. It was a shallow thing at first, narrow and thin, often lost amid worldliness and temptations. But as the experiences of the years are added, how it grows in volume and power! It is a remarkable thing that the Mississippi has a fall of only four inches to the mile. Yet this is sufficient to ensure its progress and deepen its flow. Just a trend towards righteousness will shape that young person's career towards his parent's God. You must not expect too much from him now. Do you look upon that child of pious parents, that young fellow without serious thought, that girl so unlike her mother, with apprehension? Do you say that these will never have the earnest devotion of their

fathers and mothers? Ah, give them time. If they have the least tendency towards righteousness, in the end they will turn towards a true life.

A pessimist, one of those sad-faced mortals who believe that everything is going to the dogs as fast as possible, was with me at the wedding of the daughter of a fine family of the church I served,—one of these ideal families of sons and daughters devoted to parents whose whole lives have been spent in fidelity to sanctuary and home. She was a glorious girl. Even at her own wedding she couldn't quite shake off the habit of looking after the comfort of every guest. During the whole hour I couldn't help saying, under my breath of course, "Lucky dog, this bridegroom is, in getting a girl like that!" But when we left the house, the melancholy man ranged alongside of me to remark: "Did you notice the difference between the bride and her mother? She will never be the woman her mother is. The race of pious, earnest women is dying out. We will never again see the type represented by that prayerful, God-fearing couple we have just left." You are wrong, my friend; you do not read the signs of the times. Give the girl a chance. True, her dress is not like her mother's. Her heels may be higher, and her sleeves shorter. But neither were her mother's togs like *her* mother's. Give her time. Let the years have play. Let the rains of forty more summers baptize her face, and the winds of winters roughen her cheeks. Let the frosts of Novembers whiten and make beautiful her hair, and the heat of Augusts bronze her neck. Let the problems of food lend a gentle concern to her brow, and the needle of stitchings roughen her fingers. Let the croonings over a cradle soften her voice, and the weepings over a babe's casket add a sweet plaintiveness to her songs. Let a wayward laddie's thoughtlessness drive her to her knees, and the beams from the Throne of Grace shed peace upon her countenance. Let the comforting deeds of stalwart sons cheer her heart, and the gentle hands of

daughters soften her pillow. Then she will be like her mother is now. Just an inclining towards Mother's God is what is needed.

Do you dread the coming years? Are you concerned regarding the burdens of old age? Cheer up! The river will be wide and deep enough to carry all your cargoes. Every test of His promises, every trial of your faith, every confirmation of your trust, will mean added power for the burdens of to-morrow. The wide river is below you. The scenery will rest you, the prospect will thrill you. Joys now unknown will come to you.

"And the night shall be filled with music,  
And the cars that infest the day  
Shall fold their tents like Arabs,  
And as silently steal away."

Again, the Christian's peace is like a river because it is so resistless in its course. Rivers flow but one way. There is only one known exception, the River Casiquiare which joins the Orinoco and the Negro. It flows whichever way the wind blows. But it is just a series of pestilential bogs, and of no use whatever. Life flows only one way. We never go back; ever on, on, on. You would be most unhappy were you to return to the old scenes and the old experiences which seem so glorious now. The river says, Onward! You cannot stop it. You may divert its course a few rods, but it will find its bed again and deepen it the more because your damming it has given it fresh power. I saw an ice-dam on the Niagara. For a day or two, it looked as if the water would reach the top of the gorge, and overflow the whole community. Then suddenly the whole mass gave way, and the rush of water was a sight to behold. The river said: "I shake you off! I am not to be stopped; I am bound for a port; I go on a mighty errand to the sea, the great sea!"

Does something seem to stop you, O Brother Mine? Is

the river of your peace dammed up? Have your enemies thwarted you? Have you lost money, position, strength? None of these things can permanently keep you from a happy life. The dam will soon break! Up yonder the waters are piling up. All the years of honest endeavor and of faithfulness, all the precepts you have made your own, the promises you have confirmed, the grace you have gathered, will mass themselves together and hurl aside the obstacles in your path. Then stand and see the glorious demonstration of the power of a good life; it will be a sight worth seeing.

Even the rapids of a deep river are a delight. Only the shallow follies of sin are dangerous. We camped on the famous Chaudiere Rapids, on the French River, named by the immortal Champlain, who was the first white man to find that Canadian beauty-spot. One huge curl, as wide as this church and as long as three city blocks, was the special joy of my Indian guide. He had me out in his birch-bark every morning and evening to ride that giant wave. Our canoe was carried down like a chip. A few swerves of Dave's paddle sufficed to steer us away from the rocks along the shore. We were carried down to still waters where no hint of the rush of the previous moments was manifest. How pure that water that had been tossed in rapids, hurled over cataracts, whirled in whirlpools, filtered in sands, sifted in the eddies. So life is purified by conflicts and sorrows.

Do you fear the rapids of business crashes? Cheer up! The placid waters are below you. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Henry Spofford, a Chicago lawyer, friend of Dwight L. Moody, went over to England to meet his broken-hearted wife after the loss of their four beautiful children at sea. After two months of terrible anguish they obtained that victory which the Lord's bereaved ever achieve. Then they jointly composed the hymn which has comforted so many:



"When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
And sorrow like sea billows roll,  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
'It is well, it is well with my soul.'"

A river is a benign thing. It is an asset to the country through which it passes, affecting soil and climate, giving scenery, nourishing crops, breathing health and prosperity all along its course. When canny old Sir John A. Macdonald went through the Canadian Northwest, he came to a frontier town out on a dreary, featureless plain. An enterprising land agent, wanting a terse sentence from the famous premier of Canada for his prospectus, asked: "Well, Sir John, what do you think of the location of our fine town?" The veteran politician cautiously answered: "Well, I think that if you had a little more hill and a little more tree, and a little more water, it would be tolerably good." Rivers give landscape. And the Niagara lights houses, heats parlors, toasts bread, irons clothes, sweeps floors, churns butter, turns factory wheels, draws street cars.

So with the gracious qualities of godliness. The righteous man is an asset to his community. He is the one steadying influence whose life is like a mighty river. He is always there; you know where to find him. Others may be changeable, panicky, nervous, but he is steady, trustworthy, calm. He beautifies a neighborhood, he influences his neighbors for good, his very name lends security to a business. When a famous old man of probity beckoned for the despoiling mob of Paris to stop and listen to his argument, the leader of the mad throng had sense enough to shout: "Citizens, stop and give attention. Sixty years of goodness would speak to you!"

Thy peace, O my soul, is like a river in its final goal. There is something grand about a river's mouth. Where it delivers its cargo to the sea is a majestic place. Where art thou going, O mighty St. Lawrence? I am hurrying to the sea. I have prepared for my journey in deep, ice-cold Su-

perior ; I practised speed in the rapids of Sault Ste. Marie ; I proceeded in slow but sure progress down old Lake Huron ; I shoved through St. Clair and Detroit ; I gave of my benignity to the quiet shores of Lake Erie ; I taught the world how a carcer can pull itself together even after a catastrophe like Niagara ; I compacted my forces in deeper Ontario ; I beautified the resting places of the Thousand Islands and Murray Bay ; I spoke to men in the grandeur of the exit of the Saguenay ; now I am ready to pour my vastness into the mighty ocean ! O soul of mine, whither art thou bound ? Unto the sea, unto the Infinite Sea ! A few more years shall roll and I shall join the ocean of Infinite Love.

Some Indian tribes in Florida thought of the sea as Heaven. So they placed their dead on funeral boats, which they decked with evergreen and flowers, and released to float down the still river until it rested on the bosom of the Atlantic. The peace of the soul flows on into eternity.

And how dost thou know, O mighty St. Lawrence, that thou dost approach the sea ? Why, dip into my depths here in the bay, and taste the ocean's saltness. The sea comes up to bid me welcome. Heaven comes to the dying saint. He feels in advance the serenity of Glory approaching to meet him. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is Peace."

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## XX

### "IF I WERE TWENTY-ONE AGAIN"

(Delivered before the Student Body of Leland Stanford  
University)



## XX

### "IF I WERE TWENTY-ONE AGAIN"

"Thou shalt not turn again to go by the way that thou camest."  
—I Kings XIII: 17.

It is the law of life; onward, never backward. So, since I can never turn again to go by that way I have come, since I can never be Twenty-one again, I will turn my very mistakes into assets for the help of youth. I therefore say, first of all, that if I were Twenty-one again, I would listen to the advice of a man of Forty-Eight. I rarely feel older than that excepting when a woman in a street-car says to her boy, "Get up, dear, and give that old gentleman your seat."

The young man or woman who will listen to me will save time. Harkening to older people is the only substitute for experience which youth can call upon. It so frequently marks the difference between the man who makes a pronounced success early in life and one who gets around to the secret of advancement just too late to take advantage of it. The first observed the paths of others, and profited by both their victories and their defeats. In the far north we crossed a lake region through which ours was the first launch to pass. We had to feel our way, yard by yard, through the creeks and rivers, watching for snags and hidden rocks. Farther south, a party preceding us in some sort of motor boat had facilitated our voyage by using tin cans and red rags as signals of warning. Then at Port Arthur, we boarded a palatial steamship which glided along with little regard for "hiding rock and treacherous shoal," for the

government had placed lights and foghorns wherever needed and every ship on Lake Superior had the benefit of the voyages of a hundred years.

So I say, the careers of to-day should be, and they are more successful, more righteous, more helpful than ever before because they increasingly have the benefit of observing both good and bad lives. It is a stupendous mistake for the young to imagine that they live in a different age or on the brink of a new epoch (an overworked word, by the way) in which the old principles of conduct may be safely discarded. It is the Devil's lie. Listen, young sailor, to the weather-beaten mariners who have traveled the seas you will cross: skirted the shores you must touch, avoided the reefs and shoals which threaten you, or, alas, shattered their bark upon them. There are four books which will always be charts for life's voyage: The Book of Proverbs, Pepys's Diary, Wesley's Journal and Franklin's Autobiography.

I would build my career aright now,—NOW while it is being erected. Hence the importance of receiving advice from the builders of yesterday. A man was planning to build himself a home. He said, "Wife, eventually we will have this house perfect. When we can afford it, we will have it heated by a hot-water system, lighted by electricity, equipped with a vacuum cleaner, laundry chute, clothes-closets and all conveniences. But we will simply erect the house now and skimp along without those things. We will use stoves and fireplaces, and light up with kerosene lamps till we have more money." So they built the house. In three years, he said, "now, wife, our bank account is pretty large, and we can make those improvements." So they called in a steam-fitter to figure on a furnace outfit. "Too bad you didn't have the piping done at small cost when you built the house," he said. "Now you must tear up the floors and disfigure the rooms." Likewise the electrician showed how easy and inexpensive it would have been to wire the building while it was in process of erection. And as for a

laundry chute, the carpenter remarked that now it would be as conspicuous as a diamond stud on a woolen shirt bosom. Then the man saw that he should have had a good architect to advise him while he was planning his home. You cannot so easily rebuild a career. It is possible, but not very probable, that you will undo habits and get new brain-cells to work in middle life. Now is the accepted time!

Let us get some little but not unimportant items out of the way. If I were a young man meeting the public, I would shave every morning. I would buy a safety razor, some shoe-polish and a brush, and keep my clothes, my shoes, my face and my hands immaculate. I should have a crease in my trousers even if I had to put them between the mattress and the bed-springs at night. I would be on time at the office, at my young lady's home, at church, at committees. I would develop an agile body, so that in whatever work I found myself I could develop speed, bodily and mental. I would guard my health, and obey John Wesley's rules: "Breathe deeply of good air. Walk three miles a day. Wash your feet twice a day. Use the flesh brush freely. Drink plenty of water. Eat lightly, and not too much meat, and that boiled and not fried. Talk cheerfully and pray sincerely."

I should save money. Not too much, but some. It is possible to have an abnormal fore-thought. Some people, horrified by the epicurean dictum, Let us eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow we die, go to the other extreme and starve to-day because they may need on the morrow. That is a deformity of prudence. But I would save money. Three good books are the Bible, the hymnbook and the bankbook. Seventy-five per cent of the people of this country, somebody said, would be embarrassed if they would miss next week's pay envelope. They are the slaves of the other twenty-five per cent, and would be under any social system that could be devised. I would buy some endowment insurance. I would keep out of hazardous speculations and

bucket shops. Most losers lose, not in their own business but in the other fellow's.

I would advise thoroughness as the key-stone attribute of success. I would not go slipshod into any calling. Not that I would advise a college education for all, though I would give it a good think before I could say it was impossible in my case. Some are not naturally studious, and might not be better equipped by a university training. But all can learn to do one thing well.

And having learned it, I wouldn't discount myself by under-estimating my possibilities. I should not let the world overawe me. I would look out for camouflage among those whom I at first blush regarded as my undoubted superiors. Charles Kingsley said that his greatest handicap was admiring, envying and following men who were really his inferiors. Nor would I place a discount on my place in life. Men are winning in strange callings. The man who looks with wistfulness at the other man's work would be very much dissatisfied if he saw it at close range. Thirty British officers were floating down the St. Lawrence one dark night on their way to a great victory. The young general, James Wolfe, had just received from England a new poem that had taken the country by storm. He read from it: "The boasts of heraldry, the pomp of power, and all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave, await alike, the inevitable hour;—the paths of glory lead but to the grave." "I would rather be the author of those lines," said Wolfe, "than to take Quebec to-morrow." He did not know that even though he died on that morrow Canada would be his monument forever. Carlyle envied the stone-mason work of his father and signed his name he declared: "A noble work, that of a mason. A good building will last longer than most books, yes, longer than one book in a million." But his essays made that million of books, and they will outlast even the rock-hewn walls of Scotland's sturdy castles.

With some personal regret, speaking out of many expe-



riences where I might have been brisk without being brusque, I earnestly declare that if I were Twenty-one again, I would cultivate a kindly spirit. I would write courteous letters and avoid snappishness over the telephone. I confess to being helped in the latter resolve by the discovery that a score or more telephone lassies attended my church. I would be magnanimous, especially towards rivals. A master in the business world lately said that jealousy was one of the most frequent bars to success. Real workers appreciate and admire successful men because they know full well how much faithful toil must have been put into their achievements.

"Hate not the world! Life is too brief  
Between the budding and the falling leaf  
For hate and spite.  
We have no time for malice and for greed.  
Therefore with love make beautiful the deed;  
Fast speeds the night!"

I would see to my reputation! Reputation is the show window of character. Unfair as it may be in some exceptional cases, people seem bound to judge the shop by the window. Our reputation is the sum total of what all men are saying about us divided by the numbers of the say-ers. Reputation is your balance at the bank of public opinion. Reputation is the verdict which the jury of society is forming in your case. As the testimony is given by friend and enemy, it will be well to make no enemies unless forced by adherence to principle. The foes of to-day will be heard from on some distant to-morrow. When you are running after a good job or an easy seat in Parliament, they will be hiding by the side of the track with the loose end of a rope in their hand, waiting to give you a tumble. To a greater extent than we imagine, we are at the mercy of our acquaintances. Three men came to make inquiries about a preacher who they thought might be the man for their big church.

They asked his ministerial neighbors, a score of nearby business folk and three newspapermen. He was a fine preacher, they all admitted, but the pastors said he could never work with others, the merchants voted him a first-class grouch, the journalists claimed that he lacked courtesy and a sense of fairness.

Yesterday and to-day are linked by chains of steel. You can never quite escape from the associates of these early days. The little college I attended had about two hundred students, but by the way those schoolmates have been bobbing up all the way from Montreal to San Francisco, I am almost ready to believe that the registrar left off a cipher and that the real registration was two thousand. In the parsonage of one of the graduates I heard a little maiden say, "I hate my name; oh, how I hate the word 'Alice'!" When we move to our next church, I am going to change it to Margaret while we are on the train." Little dearie, may she love her own sweet name better soon, since it cannot be changed so easily on that journey to the next postoffice. I would make my life an open book. He who must live over a mine, which he fears will explode any day, is in an earthly hell.

Reputation and companionship go hand-in-hand. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." I asked a hundred leading men in a Canadian city to give me one secret of their success that I might use their testimonies in a sermon to youth. A striking answer came from George Warburton, the Y. M. C. A. leader of Ontario: "My mother taught me to go with high-minded men." Choose your companions. CHOOSE! Of men who fall, it is often apologetically said that they "fell into bad company." Choose! Will to do right. Go against the stream where you must. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." I told my guide to take me where I could snare suckers as we used to do in our boyhood. "Then come to the dam," he said. "You won't find them in

the river; they are too lazy to swim much; so lazy that they get worny." But the trout, the beautiful little speckled fellows, rushed every current, and even leaped up the ladders which the lumbermen had made to facilitate their climbing the falls of a dam. Don't be a sucker; be a trout. Don't be a log; be a motor-boat.

If I were Twenty-one again, I would not only be physically and mentally pure, but would talk purity among young men. I would do it boldly. I would fearlessly deny the reactionary theory that we must endure vice, that men have always sown wild oats and always will. It is a lie! And unless we conquer vice quickly and thoroughly, humanity is doomed. Ella Wheeler Wilcox preached a real sermon when she wrote:

"If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know to-day,

I would look in the eyes of Life undaunted  
By any fate that might threaten me.

I would give to the world most wanted—  
Manhood that knows it can do and be;  
Courage that dares, and faith that can see  
Clear into the depths of the human soul,  
And find God there, and the ultimate goal—  
If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know to-day.

If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know to-day,

I would think of myself as the masterful creature  
Of all the masterful plan;

The Formless Cause, with form and feature;  
The Power that heeds not limit or ban;  
Man, wonderful man.

I would do good deeds, and forget them straightway;

I would weave my woes into ropes and climb

Up to the heights of the helper's gateway;

And Life would serve me, and Time,  
And I would sail out, and out, and find

The treasures that lie in that deep sea, Mind.

## THE BATTLE NOBODY SAW

I would dream, and think, and act;  
I would work, and love, and pray,  
Till each dream and vision grew into a fact  
If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know  
to-day.

If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know  
to-day,  
I would guard my passions as Kings guard treasures,  
And keep them high and clean.  
(For the will of a man, with his passions measures;  
It is strong as they are keen.)  
I would think of each woman as some one's mother;  
I would think of each man as my own blood brother,  
And speed him along on his way.  
And the glory of Life in this wonderful hour  
Should fill me and thrill me with conscious power,  
If I were a man, a young man, and knew what I know  
to-day."

Oh that I might divest myself of all marks of my calling  
for a moment while I say, not professionally, but as man to  
man, that if I could return to my twenty-first birthday, I  
would seek to make God's acquaintance. I would reason the  
whole matter out just once and then, inevitably concluding  
that the Supreme Mind who placed me here would not be  
monster enough to leave me without the ability to speak with  
my Father, talk to Him and invoke His guardianship.  
Harry Lauder, God bless him, says that his son's death  
would have wrecked him had he not loved God and believed  
in immortality. I would make the Shepherd Psalm my very  
own. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow  
of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; thy rod  
and thy staff they comfort me." Believe me, the day will  
come (or shall I call it the night?) when those words, if you  
can now make them yours, will mean more than all else.  
"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine  
enemies." The conquerors of ancient days brought home  
their captured kings and princes at the chariot wheels and

then sat down to the victory banquet with these captives chained to pillars of the banqueting hall. There they might clank their shackles and impotently hiss their imprecations, but the victors ate without fear. Mine enemies! Temptation, disappointment, sorrow, ingratitude, vituperation and slander are chained when God is host.

Oh that you may fall in love with Jesus of Nazareth! I would read His Gospels again, ridding myself of the conventional notions which conventional teachers had foisted on me; I would meditate on His wholesome, fair, magnanimous, serving life; I would visualize Him and fall before Him in reverence, until I knew Him to be mir:

Then I would link myself with some righteous cause. All real reforms come from the Great Central Cause of Righteousness. I would associate myself with God's eternal campaign. Vice is doomed, with rum, commercial crimes and militarism. The transient exigencies of battles may bring alternate victories and defeats, but be not deceived, evil will fall. God's Tide of Progress will sweep over the earth.

On yon far reef the breakers recoil in shattered foam,  
Yet still the sea behind them urges its forces home.  
Its song of triumph rises o'er all the thunderous din,  
The wave may break in failure, but the tide is sure to win.

The reef is strong and cruel, against its jagged wall  
One wave, a score, a hundred broken and beaten fall  
Yet in defeat they conquer, the sea comes sweeping in,  
Wave upon wave is routed, but the tide is sure to win.

Oh mighty sea, thy message in clanging spray is cast;  
Within God's plan the progress it matters not at last  
How wide the shores of evil, how strong the reefs of sin,  
The wave may be defeated, but the tide is sure to win.

THE END

