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# BROTHER GRAVES



## WALKING WITH GOD

BY  
W. M. G.



WINNIPEG, CANADA

FREE PRESS JOB DEPT.

1910



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**G**OD'S greatest gift to the Church of Jesus Christ is a holy life, and when we see one and hear his testimony we know it is not the work of man in educating and training, but the handiwork of the Infinite. The great Architect surely works in a mysterious way. He plans not as men do, but after the counsel of His own will, the lives of His children; then seeks to have them follow this plan. Who knows how God thinks and seeks to guide the timid and tired ones? Who can understand to-day what is in the great loving heart of our God for each one of us, and the difficulty He has in getting us to really know His will?

The subject of this sketch learned to know God as very few do; and to him was given the great joy, the unspeak-

able delight of going along the lonely way with Jesus the One he loved above all else in the world, the Bridegroom of his heart. Men talk very freely about a practical Christianity, inferring that such consists of good deeds as charitable and benevolent works, but surely the most practical Christianity is to know Christ, to really know Him, to live so close to Him as to catch His spirit and thought for the world, then by the unerring law of cause and effect the outflow of the life will be from the inflow of the Divine Life, and not the ordinary humanitarian works that to a casual observer may seem the same.

Brother Graves, as he was generally called among the brethren, was born in Norfolk County, Ontario, in the year 1874. He received his education in the public school, afterwards attending high school in Simcoe, securing a second class teacher's certificate when under fifteen years of age. As a child he was rightly inclined, "chosen in Him

before the foundation of the world," that he should be "holy and without blame before Him in love."

At six years of age he was sent, by an uncle from Brantford home, in charge of the conductor of the train. On arriving at his home town, he walked into one of the stores and, being noticed by the proprietor, was asked, "Well, whose boy are you?" The answer came, "I'm a child of the King, heaven is my home." How this reminds us of many of his replies in after years. "Well, brother, how are you to-day?" Quickly the reply would come, "I'm rejoicing in Him."

It was the wish of his parents that he should study law, and shortly after leaving high school he entered the law office of John Carruthers, Tilsonburg, Ontario. He stayed there for a year, and in that time became fully persuaded that no man could succeed as a lawyer and be a true Christian. Some may say here that he was mistaken; but Jesus said, "If any man will sue thee at the

law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Let a twentieth century lawyer follow that teaching and advise his clients accordingly, and in less than a year he will either have to seek a new vocation or look to the Associated Charities for an odd job. Of course, it is argued that Jesus didn't mean what he said, but that won't satisfy the seeker after truth; for if that be true, Jesus can be made to say just what anybody wishes to make Him say. It is much simpler and more logical to take Him just at His word and believe that He meant exactly what He said. Jesus' teaching was very radical, and opposed to all the customs and teachings of His day; and so it is in modern times, and the only way teachers of these days get over the difficulty is to preach around and around the text in a vain effort to prove that He meant something different from what He really said.



After giving up law he at once took a position as shorthand typewriter and accountant, and for about two years filled that position in a highly satisfactory manner; he then removed to Manitoba with his parents, and entered business with his father at Boissevain, taking full charge of the store at that place for about six years. Few young men were so highly esteemed for integrity and honor in business dealings as he was, being also exceptionally competent. It could easily be noticed that as the years passed by he grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The following incident may illustrate:

The store of which he was in charge was stocked with tobaccos, pipes and cigars, as all general stores in country towns are. One day he was reproving a young man for smoking, when he was reminded that he, himself, was encouraging the habit by selling tobacco. Immediately he was convicted of the

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inconsistency, and without conferring with flesh and blood, removed all tobaccos, pipes and cigars from the shelves of the shop. When his father returned, he did not object to what he had done, but he suggested that rather than lose so much money they had better sell the goods to some other merchant. But this, also, was inconsistent, and the goods were never afterwards seen. It is presumed he put them in the furnace.

How few men there are who will actually live up to their convictions; they say they are wrong, they will confess their position is a false one, but reason that there are plenty of others. There are few Daniels these days. There was only one in Babylon. How often must God be grieved with half-hearted, inconsistent, vascillating Christians. Thank God for some who are willing to lose money; aye, more, are willing to lose all things, and count them

but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, and be found in Him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith in order that they may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

It was at this time he felt called to preach the gospel. Glorious calling! Let us pause a moment here. The King has sent for one whom he delights to honor. He wants an ambassador who will worthily represent Him in a foreign land, and at a foreign court. Is it to preach the gospel? To make a sensation? To draw the crowds? To become loved, honored and highly esteemed by the world? To enter the political and social arena and play the part of a man of affairs? To be eloquent, forceful and powerful as a platform orator? Let me

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answer these queries by the testimony of one whose word will be accepted as final by any court: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man but in the power of God." "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." "Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-

scouring of all things unto this day.”

How the preachers of this twentieth century have swung away from first principles, God knows; and may He open the eyes of many to stop and take stock and see if they are only hirelings and time servers, and not really ambassadors of the King of Kings, and courtiers of the high court of heaven.

John Graves, we believe, proved true to his holy calling. For two years he attended the Moody School, Chicago, and ever afterwards this most excellent training was manifest in his life. It is a grand thing to know that in these days, when so many theological schools have drifted into Higher Criticism, and are instilling the minds of young men and women with doubts about the Bible, there are some institutions like the Moody Bible schools which still hold to the old path, and teach the simple truth of the Scriptures as the Revelation of God to man; and surely these are the men whom God is really

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honoring in true evangelical work. He never uses higher critics to lead souls to Himself. "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." Men cannot talk and write as they like about the Word of God and be guiltless.

Study and training have much to do with the maturing of human lives, but not everything. What shall we have our young men study, and what about the training? We have no hesitation in saying Jesus' method was the true ideal. He didn't house his followers in elegant college halls, and hire clever men of science to teach them in order that they might excel the students of rival institutions. We all know His simple method. He first of all drew them to Himself, and unless men come first of all to Jesus and sit at His feet, they better keep out of this business. He sat and taught his disciples by parables, using the incidents which occurred in the day. A

sower went forth to sow. Then they came to a fig tree. Then a blade of corn. Then a vine, and so on. He taught so simply that these common fishermen understood Him. Here and there throughout the land to-day we can find a Bible School, just a simple Bible School, where the students are taught, not to criticize, but to practice and live out in their everyday lives the principles of the Living Word of God. Thank God for such schools as those founded by Mr. D. L. Moody.

Our brother, after graduating, labored in different fields as the "cloud" leads. Sometimes in a church, or a Y. M. C. A., and for about a year he labored as secretary of the Men's Own in Winnipeg. This was a difficult work, and never shall we forget the faithfulness of this man of God as he toiled on day after day and night after night with a class of men, who, generally speaking, know not the meaning of appreciation. His Christlike love for the lost, his self-

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denying interest and untiring efforts for their salvation, have been a real inspiration to others to go and do likewise. Many that were in the lowest depths of sin were led to Christ under his ministry at this time, and some are now preaching the gospel. How wonderful! What hath God wrought! It is God, and only God can take a lost sinner, cleanse him from his sin and make him in turn a fisher of men. Hallelujah! Glory to His precious name!

It was at this time he contracted the illness which proved to be his last. It may at first thought seem hard to understand why God should allow a young man of such promise for service to be cut down just at the threshold of a life of such usefulness; but after a moment's reflection we are led to the conclusion that sometimes brief lives live more into them than so many long lives. God, we think, does not measure lives as we do. He asks not how long, but how well have we lived. Not how long you have lived,



but how holy have you been. Oh, Jesus, help us to live each day as though Thou should'st appear even before its close! Let our hearts be hushed and our heads bowed as we listen to the voice of our God: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." "Be perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Holiness! Perfection!

Our brother lived a very serious life, He seemed to live not in this but in the age that is to come, therefore was misunderstood. How can people of this age understand a man of God? How can a natural man understand Spiritual things? We are fully convinced that the closer a man lives to God the less he will be understood by the people. Jesus was misunderstood. So was Moses, Elijah, Daniel, and all the prophets of old. It is well said that "Every true prophet is misunderstood by the age in which he lives." Furthermore, every true prophet cares little whether he is understood or not. He is satisfied if only his life is

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well pleasing unto Him, who has called him out of darkness into light. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," is as true to-day as when first written.

He was pre-eminently a man of prayer; he spent hours, days, weeks and months on his knees and made it his business to plead with God like the prophets of old that He would forgive the sins and spare the lives of His people; and God never fails to answer such appeals, and in recent years has, in a most wonderful way, poured out His Spirit upon the people throughout this country.

A little tract written by our brother at this time will give the reader some idea of the burden of prayer that was on his heart.

### **Humble Yourselves and Pray.**

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear

from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”—II. Chron. VII:14.

Writing of the Welsh revival, Mr. W. T. Stead, editor of the Review of Reviews, says: “For a long time (previous to the breaking out of the revival) the Welsh Christians had been moved to pray specially for the quickening of religious life in their midst. In remote country hamlets, in mining villages, buried in distant valleys, one man or one woman would have it laid upon his or her soul to pray that the Holy Spirit might be poured out.” It appears that later prayer circles were formed and a more general and organized effort was put forth along prayer lines. Thus the people began to humble themselves, and to pray. It is said the cry went up, “Bend us, Oh, Lord.” They had a desire to humble themselves, and to pray.

God says: “If my people, that are called by my name shall humble them-

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selves and pray"—“my people, that are called by my name.” It is God’s people who must “humble themselves, and pray and seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways.” It was the Christians of Wales who humbled themselves and prayed. It is the Christians of Winnipeg who must humble themselves, and pray, and seek God’s face, and turn from sin. This is the one condition to be met.

It is evident that the Christian people of Winnipeg desire a revival. Three years ago an organized effort was made to have one. Last year it was decided to secure Dr. Torrey. This year we are expecting Dr. Wilbur Chapman. The Christian people of our city desire a revival. Are we willing to pay the price? It is not a matter of dollars and cents. We must humble ourselves, and pray and seek God’s face, and turn from all evil. Revivals are prayed down. The organized effort of three years ago failed to result in a general revival because it

was not preceded by prayer and a humbling on the part of the Christian people. Dr. Chapman's simultaneous campaign will also fail unless we get on our faces before God. Revivals are prayed down; not worked up. "If my people that are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven." God calls upon the church of this city to humble herself, and pray and seek His face, and repent of all sin. He revives the humble, and the contrite ones.

You who have humbled yourselves, and prayed, continue to humble yourselves before God, and pray, and seek His face, turning from all sin. The prayers of the righteous avail much. "I will avenge mine own elect which cry unto me day and night, though I bear long with them. I will avenge them speedily." "God is faithful." "The word of the Lord is tried." "If my people which are called by my name

shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and forsake their evil ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive, and heal.”

It's not theology, new or old, that we need. The science of God is not the need of the hour, but rather grace to humble ourselves, and pray, and seek God's face, and turn from all evil—a rending of our hearts. Nineveh fasted, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. The decree of the King and his nobles was: “Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea let them turn everyone from his wicked way and from the violence that is in their hands.” And God spared Nineveh. Beloved, that's God's way. No other way will avail. Nothing can to any appreciable extent check the awful drink traffic in this city of Winnipeg, or reduce its immorality;

nothing can remove the formality and worldliness of the church; nothing will reach our loved ones, and the lost whom we profess to love, but a humbling of ourselves before God. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear in heaven, and forgive—and heal."

A few months before this beautiful life closed, he wrote to a dear friend from Los Angeles, California, as follows:—

My dear Brother and Friend in Jesus Christ: I received just now your letter of Nov. 26, and may say that for some days I have felt like writing you, though it is not long since I wrote you. Yes, I have felt that way—like writing you and telling you about things, perhaps, as I could not tell others; for I think I feel a little different towards you. Do not mind my telling you that I believe that you are just a little dearer to me than any other

friend I have. When I say that there are a great many things about you that I admire, do not think that it is fawning flattery. Your consecration to God and to the service of our Master, your faith, your love, your humility and self-denial: I have rightly, I think, put these first, but where those things begin and where they end in a life it is hard to say, as they sort of permeate and overflow the whole. Your family and home life are attractive. Have I not had a chance to prove it? Large business interests have been committed to you by God, and lastly I would mention all that you combine and possess by natural endowment and inheritance. I am not throwing bouquets: I would plant a little forget-me-not in your path and not wait to send a wreath for your coffin. Bless the Lord! Aye, bless the Lord, O my soul!

But you say, "What I am, I am by the grace of God," and quote 1st Cor. IV:7. "For who maketh thee to differ



from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" So that what I have ventured to say has brought us to the acknowledgment that what we are, and what we have, is of God, and by and from Him. I therefore praise Him for you and all that you are and have. And I might add that I believe this friendship is in no small degree mutual. I have felt this to be so, as I have grasped your hand; and, in fact, I have heard you say God had given you a love for me. You remember how David lamented Jonathan's death, and will recall these words: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been to me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." That is so lovely, and shows that sometimes man's affection for man exceeds the love of women.

I wonder if ever God will permit us to be associated together in His work in the foreign field. Nothing would suit me better, I believe. I trust I am

ready to go anywhere. Recently He said surrender was a broken will, and He further said it was His work to break it. He said sometimes we do a lot of foolish things to get surrendered, or to keep surrendered, or to feel surrendered, instead of being quiet and letting Him melt down and pulverize our will. I believe I can say with Paul: "What wilt thou have me do?" and that I am willing to go to the uttermost parts or stay at home. I find it very hard to get interested in the work at home, however, the humanitarian runs through it to such an extent. Worldly methods are adopted to such a degree, too, and faith is not exercised. I enclose a card of the Fisherman's club which I have been interested in a little. Every member is pledged to do personal work. Here, however, they appear to have a zeal in collecting money to finance things that does not commend itself to me. I do find it hard to work at home, I say, there is so much

effort that is in the flesh and not mixed with faith. But God is helping me, I believe, to know something of surrender, and is giving me a great desire to do real work for Him under His definite and perfect guidance. Just as He leads, here and there. When He says China, or Japan, I am ready; but as we agreed when I was camping at your home, our business is to do our best here and now, till the time comes to move somewhere else.

Father has given me many definite opportunities of service since leaving Winnipeg. I cannot go into details, but suffice to say I have recognized His hand in blessing: I have perceived that He is with me.

Now, I am very sorry to learn of your poor health, but glad to know that there is an improvement. Especially thankful am I that you have been able to rest in God and desire to prove Him as your healer. He said, "I love you and will manifest myself unto you." That's our

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great need, and His deep desire, that He should manifest Himself unto us as Healer, Sanctifier, Comforter, Guide, Teacher. He has to manifest Himself often too. Each time we see Him in some new character or attribute? Always the same Jesus, but a new photograph. Praise Him! Brother, I find more and more one of the secrets of health is getting quiet and keeping quiet—going into the inner chamber of our heart and communing with the Lord. The devil wants to keep us fussing and fuming, and I do believe there is such a thing as unholy activity. Let us get quiet and let us learn to let Him take us and use us. I feel we want to let Him take us, and not us try to take Him. **Let Him take us.** I hope when you write you will report that He has raised you up.

When you write the Archdeacon, will you kindly ask him to call at 717 Discovery street. It might be better if just dear Mrs. Phair called. I found some

ground in good shape, and think the Lord gave me to do some seeding there, and I wish now that Mrs. Phair would call. She may find it harvest time and be able to garner a little golden grain for the Master in that home. They are lovely people.

A note about the weather. I wish you were all here. I have this typewriter on a box in a yard, and part of the time I have been working with my coat off. Lots of sunshine and flowers. Better come!

How am I, brother? Why, the Lord tells me continually that by His stripes I was healed, and it is getting easier to believe than it used to be. O Praise Him! Bless His Holy Name! As I expressed myself above, we must get quiet, and I am just doing that; resting in Him; just being satisfied with Him and in Him; and with what He does and what He gives, or what he does not do or what He takes; and, too, being happy in being just how He wants me to be, or

permits me to be in health; above all, **looking unto Him!** Keeping my eyes on Him. Glory! Hallelujah! Praise Him! Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Love in Christ to dear Mrs. G——, to dear Newton, to dear little Mary, from Graves, and to our own boy, Jack—the Lord bless him! My love to you and to all friends. I shall remember you specially in prayer.

Awaiting your next letter, I am,

Yours in the Coming One,

J. T. GRAVES.

This was the last letter received from our dear brother; he returned from California the last week in January, 1910, and fell asleep in Jesus on the third of February, awaiting the day when the last trumpet shall sound and the dead in Christ shall rise to meet the Lord in the air. Beloved, sorrow not then as those that have no hope.