

Sometime We'll Understand

"Not now, but in the coming years, It may be in the better land, We'll read the meaning of our tears, And there, sometime we'll understand.

"We'll catch the broken thread again, And finish what we here began; Heaven will the mysteries explain, And then, ah then, we'll understand.

"We'll know why clouds instead of sun Were over many a cherished plan; Why song has ceased when scarce begun; As there sometime we'll understand.

"Why what we long for most of all, Eludes so oft our eager hand; Why hopes are crushed and castles fall Up there, sometime, we'll understand.

"God knows the way, He holds the key, He guides us with unerring hand; Sometime with tearless eyes we'll see; Yes, there, up there, we'll understand.

Chorus:

"Then trust in God through all thy days; Fear not, for He doth hold thy hand; Though dark thy way, stilling and praise Sometime, sometime, we'll understand."

The Call of the Soul.

F. B. MEYER, M. A.

There is a time in every truly religious life when the traditional passes into the personal, and the soul awakes to appreciate the need of direct fellowship with God. That moment may come suddenly or gradually, as the result of a growth or of a direct divine interposition; but whenever it comes it is like a rebirth; old things pass away, and all things become new.

God is eager to awaken each soul that he has made to this personal and direct fellowship with himself, in which he may speak his profoundest thoughts, and have unhindered and direct access to the soul's most secret shrine. He is unwilling that we should be so dependent on the rites of a church, the institutions of a religious society, or the example and teaching of others. He is intensely desirous of accustoming us to deal with himself, as though there were none else in the universe but him and the son whom he desires to bring to glory.

An illustration of this occurred in the story of Samuel. We are all familiar with the fascinating description of his mother's sorrow and travail of heart, her prayers and tears, her solemn vow, her ecstasy of rapture as she pressed the child to her heart, and her solicitude to train him with her own motherly hand for the great life to which he was destined. Her song shows how familiar she was with the grand old Hebrew literature, with the noblest traditions of her people, and with the many chords that sound in all human lives. And as the child stood at her knee and drank in her words, what wonder that his young nature became inspired with something of her spirit. The little Levite coat which she made for him year by year, was a visible embodiment of those habits and clothing of the inner life which she made for her rapt pupil, to whom she represented God and truth and duty.

But it is clear that both at the time and afterwards, when, as a growing lad, he was put under the care of Eli, his religious life was rather a reflection of the light that shone on their faces, than a fire which was kindled on his own inner altar. What his mother said about God was his highest conception of God. What Eli taught was his supreme code. He did not know God for himself; and when the accents of the divine voice fell on his ear, instead of an instant recognition, they only excited a vague wonder.

All this required to be altered before Samuel could fulfill the high purpose of his being. He must be weaned from the breast of the human mother that he might feed on the bread of God. He must see the light of childhood pale before the radiance of the coming day. Stars are well enough, when the gray dawn lingers on the hills, but they must make way for the sunrise, into whose opal and yellow they fade.

So it befell that God stood and called, "Samuel, Samuel!" Probably there is no soul of man to which, in some form or other, at some time or other, that call does not come. We must always believe that the work of Jesus is for the whole world; that the true Light lighteth every man who comes into the world; and that the swathing bands of God gird all men, even though they do not know him. Every holy inspiration which visits the sons of men is a call from those lips that, in the stillness of the shrine, as the light from the great lampstand was burning low on the margin of twilight, uttered in tones of flute-like sweetness the name of Samuel.

Has that all come to you?—the direct speech of God, the personal communication of the divine will, the breathing in of the unexpected and unconventional on the ordinary and

commonplace! It comes not once nor twice. It lingers as though loath to take a negative. He stands at the door and knocks. The Lord stood and called. Oh, can you not recall moments when something within you suggests that you should be sweeter and tenderer to those near you, that you should abandon evil habits which cling to you, and arise to the new life which beckoned you, that you should enter into the life of prayer and fellowship? Have you hitherto refused, as though Samuel had hidden his head under his counterpane and sought to go back to sleep?

The first tendency of us all at such times is to seek our Eli. Samuel ran to the bedside of the old man, and was astonished to discover that the oracle was dumb. At first, Eli had nothing to say, no advice to give, no response of any kind, save to say that he at least had not called.

Too often we have impaired our best impressions by talking them over with others, who either have never passed through the deepest experience of the soul life, or were inexperienced in the direction of others. Too often we have insisted on the clergymen, the ministers, the director giving us the message, which he thought was appropriate, and been content with that! Too often we have preferred like Israel, that Moses should speak to us, and, like them, have entreated that God might not speak, lest we should die. Of course, the wise helper of souls has his place, but it is a very different one from that which we, in our first anxiety, would fain assign him.

Eli was a weak man in many respects, and his weakness became sinful for himself, fatal for his family, and altogether ruinous for his country; but on this occasion he acted with conspicuous wisdom. He forbore to intrude himself in the crisis of this young soul's experience. There was no trace of assumption, or arrogating a special fitness to represent God to Samuel, or Samuel to God, or of priestcraft. He was wise enough to keep out of the way, and leave the boy face to face with the great Friend who had come to woo his young soul. Too many of us would have overloaded Samuel with suggestions and exhortations, making him introspective, nervous, and self-centered; whereas Eli was satisfied to bid the boy open all his soul and listen and obey. He felt that the voice would call again, and that all he need do was to tell the boy that it was the voice of God. Happily, the young Levite had been so trained that God was no strange, unfamiliar, or dreadful object, but sweet, lovely near at hand, and not more to be dreaded than his mother or Eli himself. It was no terror to the child to have to meet the great God all by himself. He never thought of asking Eli to remain with him during the audience, and he went back to bed without a tremor in his pulse or a misgiving in his heart. He combed the words that Eli had suggested, and had them ready, and lay quietly waiting till the room again was filled with his name, as even Hannah had never spoken it. Then he answered in the low, reverent tone of a little boy learning with reverence the first great lesson of personal religion, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

This is the greatest work that any of us can do for another, whether old or young, to teach the soul to draw its water from the wells of God, not waiting for a Rebekah to draw it, but letting down the pitcher into the deep darkness to bring it back flashing with the brimming water. There was no jealousy in Eli, that Samuel should get independent of him. He took the lad into God's audience-room and went out.

When the soul begins to listen, the voice of God is heard, in its supreme revelation, not in words, but in the Alpha and Omega, whose being is the one final voice of God. The richest gift of Christ is not in the golden sentences by which he has enriched human thought and speech, not in the story of his matchless career, not in the Evangel—but in himself. He is the Word of God, the Divine Speech, the utterance of the innermost heart and mind of the Infinite.

There are three things to be remembered:

First. When God speaks to us in Jesus there is not at first the intellectual, but the spiritual. In other words we receive him, or we receive the special gift that he has for us, through communion and fellowship and faith, and it is only afterwards that we form an intellectual cognition of that which has already entered us, to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. That which is first is not natural, but spiritual, afterward that which is natural. For this reason men are one in their life, but so diverse in their creed.

Second. The word of God is to be sought, not in dreams, impressions, and mysterious voices, but in and

through the word of Scripture. At the close of this very chapter (I Sam. 3) we learn that God made himself known to Samuel by his word. It is as the soul approaches the telephone wires of the Bible that it hears the voice of Jesus. "My sheep hear my voice, and they know me, and follow me." If a voice speak in their heart, they expected to find its corroboration in the Scripture and in the providences of life before they act on it as the authoritative voice of Christ.

Third. The voice of Christ only comes to those who are prepared to obey, and have already obeyed up to their light. "He that will do his will shall know."

After this first wonderful audience with God, Samuel opened the doors of the house and essayed to perform the simple duties which had been entrusted to his case. The visions of God do not indispose us for ordinary duties, but lead us to perform them with deeper reverence and insight, and those who experience the second truth are not born out of but into simplicity and humility.

The Man Who is Ready.

Every great victory is the result of years of preparation. It is not given to any man to achieve success in life without this preparation. Every success in life is the expression of a man's ability to recognize and lay hold of opportunity. And no man can do this without preparation. The man who expects to achieve victories "off hand" never achieves them. No great book was ever written, no great sermon was ever preached, no great picture was ever painted "off hand." They are all the result of the cumulative power of work and growth and development. The man who writes the great sermon began to master all the details of it during his first years at college. The man who wrote the great book began to adapt himself to the work of writing it years before a line of it was ever penned. And only the artist who paints a great picture knows of the years of patient, wearisome preparation back of the finished work.

Charles Kingsley says of Turner, the great painter, that he spent hours and hours in the mere contemplation of nature without using brush or pencil. An authentic story is told of how Turner was once known to have spent a whole day sitting upon a rock throwing pebbles into a lake. When evening came his brother painters showed him their sketches and rallied him upon having done nothing. He said, "I have done this, at least; I have learned how a lake looks when pebbles are thrown into it."

None of his fellow-students could ever paint the ripples as Turner painted them. Many men and women find to their sorrow and dismay that when the opportunity of a life-time is presented to them they are utterly unable to grasp it because of lack of preparation. They are not ready for the hour of opportunity when it comes. They have not that keen discernment, that mastery of details, that ripened judgment, which only preparation can give.

When a great man achieves a great triumph in art or literature, or even in business or war it is often said of him that he is a genius. So he is. He has the sort of genius Carlyle had in mind when he wrote that "genius is an immense capacity for making trouble." Genius and the work go hand in hand.

The man who is ready when the hour of opportunity and uses it, has to compel them to obey his will. His self reliance is based on good judgment and not on vaunting egotism. The man who is ready is the man who has a profound sense of the responsibilities and possibilities of life. He sets no limit to his own development, and yet his ambition does not exceed his powers of achievement.

The man who is ready is the man whose life takes on its appointed honor and glory.—Selected.

The Loss of the Family Altar.

We have just been reading of a traveller who asked for entertainment in a cabin on the mountain top. He was welcomed by its occupant, and after supper was asked whether he was a minister. "No; why?" "Because I have lost my family altar, I lost it while I was crossing the Alleghenies, and I want some one to help me build it again." The traveller, though not minister, was a pious man, and that night they erected a family altar in that home.

The expression of that mountaineer rings in our ears. "I have lost my family altar." What a grave, sad loss it is. God has made an opportunity. Nay, more; if we ourselves neglect that altar, may we not offend him, and lead him to withdraw some of his gracious influences from us and from our children?

If a parent were to be struck with deafness or with dumbness, what a calamity it would be! How painful would be the lack of his voice! I the family altar be lost, how painful the absence of the voice of God!

Is the family altar lost in any dwelling where this sheet is read? We can erect a new one in one day. We can call the family together and settle upon an hour when everyone will make it his business to be punctual. In every family there is some one who can read the Bible aloud. Some parents are timid about the sound of their own voices in prayer. But they can at least repeat the Lord's prayer in unison. That shortly, they can find a printed prayer which meets their necessities, and either memorize or read it. And when we do the best we can God will give us help day by day to do more; and then the family altar will become a precious comfort to us all.

What is Wanted.

Not a school of methods; not a council of war; not a discussion of doctrines nor a defense of dogma. But a convocation of prayer; an upper room tarrying at Jerusalem; a seeking for the old paths; a crying for the return of former times; a discovery of lost treasures; an abandonment to the Holy Ghost; a praying that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into his harvest. The pentecostal movement of the twentieth century must move, first of all to its knees. It is possible to plow away the spirit of prayer. We might preach away the presence of the Spirit. Performances often preclude power. Programs may prevent the precipitation of results. The greatest of ministerial qualifications is in this. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The soul of all worship and the success of all Christian work is this: "Whosoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst."

The presence of God—that is what is wanted, and that, too, in a sense different from that which makes up the divine omnipresence; different, too, from that in which the Spirit may be said to attend much of our church service and assembling ourselves together; different from that in which he accompanies many of our lives and most of our ministries; different from even what attended disciples before the day of Pentecost; different from what he was ever in the world with men before his dispensation; but not different from what the fathers of every church in the land have experienced, nor different from samples some of us have seen and felt upon this very mountain top. The living Christ in every believer as a proof of his own crucifixion and a seal of his resurrection, and the living Christ walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks—this is the soul of the movement we would see inaugurated. As God hath said, "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people."

WHY CROUP IS FATAL.

When croup attacks your child you must be ready for it. It comes as an accompaniment to an ordinary cough, or it may attack without warning. All ills of children develop quickly, and when any kind of cough appears there should be something at hand to stop it with promptness. Many a child has choked to death with croup because the right remedy is not convenient. Every one should know that the right safeguard for a child's cough or any cough is Adamson's Botanic Cough Balsam. With this soothing compound in the house, croup is always easily checked and relieved.

To give a child a "cough mixture" containing a narcotic is a very serious matter, yet most preparations contain something of this kind. Adamson's Botanic Balsam is prepared from the purest extracts of barks and roots and gums of trees, and is health giving in every component part of it. Wherever it touches an inflamed surface, it heals and soothes it. Nothing ever compounded for cough is so harmless, and nothing so efficacious as Adamson's Balsam is an old remedy and it has never lost a friend through failure to help. Keep it in the house. Try it on your own cough and do your child a good turn by being ready for any emergency. Price 25c. at any drug-gist's.

Your Own Cross The Best.

There is a poem called "The Changed Cross." It represents a weary one who thought that her cross was surely heavier than those of others about her and wished that she might choose another instead of her own. She slept, and in her dream she was led to a place where were many crosses of divers shapes and sizes. There was a little one, most beautiful to behold, set in jewels and gold. "Ah, this I can wear with comfort," she said. So she took it up, but her weak form shook beneath it. The jewels and the gold were beautiful, but they were far too heavy for her.

Next, she saw a lovely cross, with fair flowers entwined around it sculptured form. Surely that was the one for her. She lifted it, but beneath the flowers were piercing thorns which tore the flesh.

At last, as she went on, she came to a plain cross, without jewels, without carving, with only a few words of love inscribed upon it. This she took up, and it proved the best of all, the easiest to be borne. And as she looked upon it, bathed in the radiance that fell from heaven, she recognized her own old cross. She had found it again, and it was the best of all, and the lightest for her.

God knows what cross we need to bear. We do not know how heavy other people's crosses are. We envy some one who is rich; his is a golden cross set with jewels. But we do not know how heavy it is. Here is another whose life seems lovely. She bears a cross twined with flowers. If we could try all the other crosses that we think lighter than ours, we should at last find that not one of them suited us so well as our own.—J. R. Miller.

The Spiritual Life

The spiritual life is a Spiritual led life. It has new impulses, new sensations, new deeds. It is a life which no longer goes its own way; it has surrendered its own way to the spirit's better way. By submission to the Spirit's direction, it escapes the dominion of the flesh. The spiritual life is a life yielded fully to the control of the mighty Spirit of God.—Episcopal Recorder.

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills cure Anaemia, Nervousness, Sleeplessness, Weakness, Palpitation, Throbbing, Faint Spells, Dizziness, or any condition arising from Impoverished Blood, Disordered Nerves or Weak Heart.

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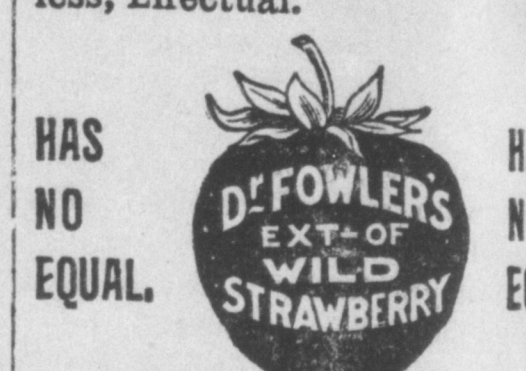
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