

The Fireside.

JUDGE HOWARD'S CONVERSION.

"Did I ever tell you of Judge Howard's conversion?" said Aunt Mary.

"No, I think not," replied I. "Is this one of your reminiscences?"

Aunt Mary was so fond of telling us of things which she remembered that we used to laugh a little at her about her "reminiscences," good-naturedly, of course. And she, dear soul that she was, laughed too.

"But tell me about the judge," continued I.

"The little country town in which we lived was divided into two parts by a deep, and in some places wild, valley. Curiously enough, the people who lived in the northern part were Methodists, with the exception of Mr. F—— and his family, while the people in the southern part were all Congregationalists, with the exception of Mr. K—— and his family. Every Sabbath they would drive the three miles between their respective homes and churches. Every Sabbath they would meet each other, exchange greetings, and drive on, not without a sense of the humor of it.

"Mr. F—— was what was called in those days 'a good moral man.' Mr. K—— was an earnest Christian."

"Which was the judge, Aunt Mary?"

"Neither, my dear, but both were used of God in his conversion. I remember well how he looked—straight and dignified, with thin gray hair. But for all his dignity he was a pleasant man to meet. He loved his home, and was very hospitable to all who came to it. He was a man of good habits and lived an exemplary life of uprightness and integrity. But, like the young man in the Bible, he lacked one thing—he was not a Christian.

"When he was nearly seventy years old an evangelist came to our town and held a series of meetings. These Judge Howard attended. As the days passed on several men with whom he had been associated in public affairs were converted, among them Mr. F——. This made a deep impression upon him. Christian people prayed earnestly for him, and some of his friends talked with him and urged him—in the words of a hymn much sung at that time—to 'Come to Jesus now.' Still he refused, and still he seemed 'almost persuaded.'

"One day when the meetings were nearly over he seemed unusually thoughtful, and Christian friends unusually prayerful for him. At length Mr. K—— went and sat down beside him. For a time it seemed as if his entreaties would be of no avail, when to our great joy the judge arose and, going across the aisle, took his seat with those who wished to be Christians. Prayers were changed to thanksgivings, and tears of anxiety to tears of joy. From this time the judge was a decided Christian man, and if ever anyone experienced the joy of salvation he did.

"A few weeks after he began his Christian life I was at his home one night to tea. After we were seated at the table he asked a blessing—a thing I had never heard him do before. Then he said, 'This is something, Mary, that I ought to have attended to years ago.' And he went on to tell me some of his heart experiences during the years past. He said that frequently the choir would

come to his house for a 'sing,' as it was called. These evenings he enjoyed very much. 'There was one hymn,' said he, 'that I could never hear sung without the tears coming to my eyes. It is this:

"Behold a Stranger at the door,
He gently knocks, has knocked before;
Has waited long, is waiting still,
You treat no other friend so ill."

For I thought of how quickly I open the door for my friends, and how gladly I welcome them, yet here was a Friend who had done more for me than any other had done, and I would not open my heart's door for Him, but treated Him worse than I did anyone else.

"One morning, a few months after this, Judge Howard prayed at family worship as if he were inspired. To his wife he seemed to be in the very presence of God, holding communion with Him, and totally oblivious of time and place.

"That was the last time he ever knelt in prayer. Before the sun set he was taken sick, and after a few days' illness he was indeed 'in the presence of the King.'—*Chris. Advocate.*



WHEN PEACE, LIKE A RIVER.

"It is well with my soul," was written by H. G. Spafford, and the popular tune to which it is always sung is one of P. P. Bliss' best compositions.

Mr. Spafford was a member of the Chicago bar and an elder in the Presbyterian Church.

He had been successful in his profession, but had some unfortunate investments, and then the financial panic of 1873 seriously disturbed the business of the country Mr. Spafford found that his savings of many years had been swept away.

The members of his family were prostrated by this disastrous turn in their affairs and he acceded to the wish of helpful friends that they should visit Europe and thus be removed for some time from scenes of his financial ruin.

Mrs. Spafford and her four children took passage on the French liner *du Havre*, and the story of that voyage is one of the most appalling of the many calamities of the sea.

When in mid-ocean and in the blackness of a November night in 1873 the steamship collided with the Glasgow clipper *Loch Earn*, and in twelve minutes the former went down, carrying to death 230 souls, and among them were Mr. Spafford's four daughters.

Mrs. Spafford sank with the vessel, but floated again, and was finally rescued.

The saved were taken to Havre, and from that city she sent a message to her husband in Chicago:

"Saved, but alone. What shall I do?"

This message of fearful import—"sufficient to drive reason from the throne"—was the first notice Mr. Spafford had that his dear ones were not as happy as when he parted with them a few days before in New York.

In his unutterable sorrow Mr. Spafford did not chant a dirge to impossible hope.

When he reflected that his property was lost in destruction's waste, that his wife was painfully prostrated, and that

his four children were buried in the dark waves of the sea, there came from his heart of hearts a song of trust and resignation that has many times encircled the globe.

"When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows, like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul."

When Mr. Spafford returned from Havre with his invalid wife he said to his friends:

"I never felt more like trusting God than I do now."

Spafford's hymn of resignation, with its fine musical setting by the lamented Bliss, is one of the most helpful of the many Gospel songs written during the past quarter of a century.

One Sunday evening a service of song was given in one of our large cities at which the story of "It is well with my soul" was told and the lines sung with great tenderness of expression by the audience and choir.

Attending the services was a gentle man who had suffered financial reverses in the panic of 1893.

When he heard the story of Spafford's heavy affliction and joined in singing the hymn so pathetically inspired, he said to his wife on their return home from the service:

"I will never again complain of my lot.

"If Spafford could write such a beautiful resignation hymn when he had lost all his children, and everything else save his wife and character, I ought surely to be thankful that my losses have been so light."—*Philadelphia Press.*



GETTING ON AND GETTING UP.

"How to get on," is the supreme question of the world. "How to get up" is the supreme question of religion. A young men's Bible class has arranged for a course of lectures on practical business subjects. Some of the ablest business men of the country have signified their willingness to make addresses dealing with the matters with which they are familiar. "Banking," "The Dry Goods Business," "The Packing House Industry," "The Operation of Railroads," are among the subjects advertised in the attractive syllabus. It is believed by the promoters that this innovation will be a great success. We have no doubt of it. Lectures on business are certainly to be preferred to many of the frivolous and inane church entertainments that are in vogue. But at the same time, young men of today need to be told how to get up, even more than they need to be told how to get on. They need to be taught to seek goodness, not that they may get paying jobs, but that they may get goodness.

The model held up before the youth of the present day is too often the man who from boyhood saved his cents, changed them into dollars, and by exploiting social and legal conditions before legislation had made his methods illegal, became a multi-millionaire. Such a man is said to have got on. There is another question to be answered before we urge our children to copy his life, and that is, Has he got up? If the man sank while capital accumulated, the loss has been greater than the gain. For our part, if he cannot be both, we prefer to see a boy become an honest man than a rich man.

There are those who get up, but who

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do not get on. The world says of them that they have failed. But have they? It depends upon one's definition of failure. Misfortunes have beat upon them, but they have not grown bitter; temptations to abandon principles and get rich dishonorably have come to them, but they have chosen poverty to a tarnished name. Is that failure? It is success! They may have lost the whole world, but they have gained their souls.

Young men need to be reminded that there are worse things than a small income. Those who are poor in purse may be rich in character, rich in hope. A clerk need not be less than a man. He has but to choose. The man who has no money is poor, but the man who has nothing but money is a pauper.

We must place the highest standards of life before the young men of today. If they must be taught not to despise wealth, much more must they be taught not to despise honesty and honor. The highest ends of life are often served by those whom the world regards failures; and on the other hand, those who are spoken of as successful men are often those over whose fate heaven sheds tears of pity. When Lot "pitched toward Sodom" he was looked upon as a successful man. He had selected the most fertile plain in all that region. Subsequent events showed that Abraham made the wiser choice when he turned towards the hill country.

With regard to Him whose life forms the perfect model for our imitation we see how one can be rich without money. Born in a stable, living a life of marked privation, buried in a borrowed grave, he made the world richer by being in it. In him was exemplified the meaning of Paul's words, "Poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." It was not the ambition of Jesus to wring success from God's hand. He ascended by descending. It was by his cross that he was lifted up.—*Christendom.*



What the Postmaster Did Not Know.

Recently the assistant postal officer at Hankow, China, was talking with his superior. The latter, a Scotchman, was expressing himself on the subject of Chinese Christians. He spoke as foreign officials, tourists, and others, who know little about the subject, generally do. "The minute you tell me a Chinaman is a Christian," said he, "I want nothing more to do with him. He is no good." The assistant postal officer happened to be not only a Christian, but also well acquainted with the facts. "So, he asked the postmaster a question. "What do you think of Mr. Liu?"

"He is a good man," said the postmaster, "a very capable man. We could not do without him."

"Well," said the assistant, "he is a Christian."

"H'm!" was the postmaster's only comment.

"What do you think of Yang?"