

Sunday Reading.

HE WAS A GENTLEMAN.

How Dick Ackley Got An Idea and Took In a Principle in Life.

It was a cold stormy night when two ladies stood in the throng upon the platform of the Lake street elevated road in Chicago, waiting for the train to come along. One of them happened to drop her muff; the wind caught it, and would have blown it away, but a boy who was standing near ran after it, caught it and restored it to her. The young lady thanked him, and smiled at him so sweetly that Dick—his name was Dick Ackley—thought she was just the prettiest lady he had ever seen in all his life. She had bright, dark eyes, and her cheeks were just the color of the soft pink feather on her hat; and when she smiled it seemed to Dick just like a flash of sunshine.

The train came rushing along; the people crowded and pushed and jostled each other in their hurry to get into the car first and get the best seats; and they crowded and pushed and jostled the ladies too, so they were obliged to stand back and wait until the men had all gone in.

Ordinarily, Dick would have rushed and pushed with the best of them; but after that smile and that "Thank you," he couldn't think of pushing the young lady or her mother out of his way; and some new instinct of politeness made him stand back and wait until the ladies had passed in. They noticed it, and the younger one flashed at him another smile which almost took his breath away; for Dick was not used to being smiled at by pretty ladies in such fashion.

At Ashland avenue the ladies got out. It was Dick's stopping place also, and as they went down the stairs the older lady said:

"How disagreeable all this pushing and crowding is!"

"Yes," replied the younger; "that boy who picked up my muff and then stood one side till we passed in, seemed to be the only gentleman among them all. He was a real little gentleman."

Now it happened that Dick was walking right behind them although they did not know it, and heard every word they said. It was a minute or two before he realized that "that boy" they were speaking of was himself; but when he did take it in he was so bewildered that he stopped short, and his cheeks burned in the darkness, and he whispered over and over to himself: "She said I was a gentleman! She said—I was—a gentleman!"

Now, Dick's idea of a gentleman was somewhat vague. If anybody had asked him what a gentleman was he would probably have replied that he was a man who wore nice clothes, and smoked cigars, and rode in a carriage, and had plenty of money to spend—things which he had never dreamed of aspiring to. He stopped under a street lamp and looked at his shabby clothes and grimy hands. Surely they were not like a gentleman's belongings. Then he began to wonder what he had done to merit the title. He had picked up the lady's muff and stood one side and not pushed her and her mother when they got on and off the car. He wondered if being a gentleman didn't mean being good to women. Then he remembered vaguely how he had seen men lift their hats when they met their lady acquaintances. He remembered seeing them help ladies carefully in and out of carriages, and assist them in going over rough places, and—yes, he was sure that being a gentleman meant "being good to women."

By the time he had settled this matter to his satisfaction he had arrived at home, and a poor home it was. He was the oldest of five children, and his pale, overworked mother was always tired and sometimes irritable. His brothers and sisters were noisy and quarrelsome, and generally Dick was only too ready to do his full share of the noise and quarrelling.

He was very sober all through supper, but he was very happy too. After supper his mother tried to clear the table, carrying the fretting baby upon one arm, and working with her other hand as well as she could. All at once this thought came to Dick: "A gentleman is good to women."

"Mother is a woman, and if I am a gentleman I must be good to her," he knew very well that the best way to be good to her would be to take care of the fretting baby. He was tired; he had been running errands all day; but his mother looked tired too. And almost for the first time in his life he unselfishly put aside his own pleasure for the sake of someone else, and coaxed the crying baby to come to him, and played with her and sang to her until she finally fell asleep in his arms. He felt very happy when his mother, as she took the baby after her work was done, said: "You have helped me so much, Dick."

The next day was very cold, and Dick's clothes were old and thin, and he had a good many errands to do. "She said I was a gentleman," and the thought of it seemed to keep him warm.

Now that his eyes were opened it was wonderful how many things Dick saw that day that he would ordinarily have passed

by without a thought. A shabbily dressed woman, with a big bundle in her arms, was going along the icy sidewalk. She slipped and would have fallen; but a finely dressed man in fur-trimmed overcoat and dog-skin gloves, who was passing along caught her and held her up. He asked her where she was going, hailed a street car, put her on it, and paid her fare to the conductor, while Dick looked on with admiring eyes, saying to himself "He's a gentleman."

In the afternoon as Dick was going up an elevator, two men in it were talking about another man. One of them said: "Oh, Smith is no gentleman! He cheated Brown in that bargain."

Here was another thought. Gentlemen did not cheat! Now Dick had the name among the other boys of being very sharp at a bargain. He had, in fact, cheated whenever he could, and had felt a little proud of it, too. He thought it was smart; but—a gentleman, did not cheat, would the pretty lady have called him a gentleman, he wondered, if she had known he ever cheated? His face got very red as he thought about it. He pondered over it after he went to bed that night. If he really was a gentleman—and she said he was—he must never cheat again, no, not so much as a penny's worth; and he solemnly resolved he never would.

The very next morning as he was going to his work on the crowded street car the conductor missed him when he was taking the fares. Generally Dick would have chuckled with glee at the thought of that extra five cents; but it happened that a man sitting next him was also passed by. He was a workman, dressed in rough clothes, and with a dinner pail in his hand. When he got off the car he handed his ticket to the conductor and said: "You missed me when you took up the fares."

"That's a gentleman!" said Dick to himself. "He wouldn't even cheat a conductor. I'll be one too."

So, though it was something of a wrench to do it, when he got off the car he handed his ticket to the conductor, and said the very same words: "You missed me when you took up the fares."

That conductor opened his eyes pretty wide at the sight of two such honest people in one morning. For a minute, it must be confessed, Dick thought regretfully of the peanuts he could have bought with that extra five cents; but he sturdily declared, "I'd rather be a gentleman than have a peck of peanuts."

The days went on. It seemed to Dick that he had never heard so much about gentlemen, or seen so many gentlemanly—and ungentlemanly—things done in all his life before as he had in those few days. But that was because he had never thought so much about the matter before, and because his eyes and ears and mind were all open and intent upon it.

Dick went to mission Sunday-school; that is, he went when he felt like it. His teacher was a nice young lady, and he liked her, but he liked what he called fun it was—better; and many a time Miss May had gone home with a heavy and discouraged heart, feeling as if all her efforts to do any good were in vain.

The next Sunday Dick took his place in the class, and during the first prayer he was just reaching his arm around to pinch Jim Mayhem when he thought, "I'm a gentleman. I don't believe a gentleman would plague Miss May like that." He knew well enough how it grieved his teacher when the boys "acted up" in the class, and he immediately straightened himself, withdrew his hand and reverently bowed his head and covered his eyes. All through the lesson time he was attentive and respectful, and the other boys were so astonished at him—for he was usually the leader in mischief—that they forgot to try any of their mean little tricks, and the consequence was that they all became interested in the lesson, which was the feeding of the multitude with the boy's five barley loaves and two fishes. Dick wondered if that boy wasn't a gentleman, to give up his lunch when he was hungry himself, and didn't know that he should have anything to eat all day; and he decided that he was. Indeed, it began to dawn upon Dick's mind that being a gentleman meant more than being good to women and not cheating—that it meant being thoughtful for others, kind, unselfish in every way.

Now, Dick didn't like to be unselfish; he didn't like to take thought and trouble for others; he didn't like to give up his own will and way, and do the things that he didn't want to; and he saw it was going to be pretty hard for him. But he was a boy who did whatever he did with all his heart, and he had set his heart upon being a gentleman, and a gentleman he would be.

Time went on. He made a good many failures in trying to live up to the young lady's idea of him, but still he made progress. For one thing, he kept his face and hands clean, and his clothes as respectable as he could, so that he began to look like a different boy. Some of the boys called him a dude, but little he cared for that.

Miss May was delighted to notice the improvement in his looks and his manners and his attention. He was at Sunday-school every Sunday; he even learned the golden texts out of the little book she gave him, and he often seemed to take an interest in the truths of the lesson.

One day the lesson was the story of Christ blessing little children, when the disciples wanted to send the mothers away and he would not let them. Dick listened intently, and by-and-by he suddenly asked: "Miss May, wasn't Jesus Christ a gentleman?"

Miss May was startled at the question, but without showing her surprise, she simply answered:

"Yes Dick He was the most perfect gentleman that ever lived."

Then she went on to tell the boys more about that word "gentleman," how it was made up of two words, "gentle" and "man,"

and that the word meant just that, a "gentle man"—not a rude, rough, coarse, swearing man, but a man who, while he was strong and brave, was also kind and tender, and was thoughtful of other people and always trying to help them and to do them good, especially those that were smaller and weaker than themselves. That was a gentleman—a gentle man—a Christian man.

This gave Dick something to ponder over for many a day. Little by little he took in the truth that Miss May tried to teach him. He began to think less about being a gentleman and more about being a Christian. And when a revival began not long after in the little mission chapel, one of the first to give his heart to the Savior was Dick; and Miss May was overjoyed when, one communion day, four out of her six boys, stood up and confessed Christ together and united with His Church.

As for the pretty lady who dropped her muff that stormy night, Dick has never seen her since, though he has looked for her anxiously; but she has never known how her sweet smile and appreciative words set in motion the forces which finally transformed the poor, forlorn errand boy into that highest type of boyhood and young manhood—a Christian gentleman.—The Independent.

WHAT IS RELIGION.

Sermon on This Topic by Rev. F. O. McCortney of Rockland Mass.

Texts: "Lo, I am come, to do thy will, O God."—Heb. x., 7.

"But I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth."—Luke xxii., 27.

"Becoming obedient until death, yea the death of the cross."—Phil. ii., 8.

To attempt to tell what religion is, in a few words, is a large contract. Theologians and philosophers, ministers, and religious writers have spoken and written for ages on the subject, so that it is very hard for one to realize the fact that, while religion is an important thing, it is after all a very simple thing—so simple that, if we once caught the meaning of its simplicity, we would be disappointed, for there is more or less of a desire in all of us to put certain things in the place of genuine religion.

Now, let us start right. I want you to understand, once for all, that religion does not consist in making long prayers or short ones, nor in believing in a definite creed, nor in taking part in or witnessing long and mysterious ceremonies; it is not belonging to a church nor does it consist in attending church or religious meetings, nor does it mean the observance of certain rites, or the reading of religious books or the Bible. I have spoken of what religion is not, in order to clear away a lot of untrue ideas which we may have on this subject. Understand me: I am not saying that the things I have mentioned are not all right and important in their place, and they may be a help to religion, yet they in themselves, taken in a lump, do not constitute religion. For a man may do all of these things and yet be very far from being a good man or a religious man.

Let us boil the thing down and get at the essence. Religion is made up of three principles: 1, obedience; 2, service, and 3, sacrifice.

1. Obedience. You at once ask, Obedience to what? I answer: Obedience in thought, word, and deed to the highest right you have in you. There is in most every man a conception of highest duty. Now, if you should today make the deep resolve that, as far as you knew it, you would do your full duty in everything, in every part of life, I say that you would be on the right track. A man should be anxious to find out the highest right, and then have the courage to do it, no matter what the consequences may be. To keep the soul open to every good influence, to hold the mind ready for any truth, this is the correct attitude of mind and heart.

For, if we only knew it, these visions of duty and this knowledge of right are the very voice of God whispering to us, and the spirit of God attempting to lead us to a realization of all that is good and true and beautiful. Jesus, when he lived, had this great desire to do the thing which he knew to be right. In the epistle of the Hebrews he is represented as saying, "Lo, I am come, to do thy will. O God." God wills that we should want to find out the truth, and then go and put it into practice. That takes in the whole matter.

2. Service. Religion does not consist alone in the experiences of God in the thought of feelings.

More than God and the soul are concerned in religion. Loving God is a part of religion, and an important part, but the way to show one's love for God is to give one's self completely to the service of our fellow men.

Our personal life and destiny are bound up with the race. Life consists in being related to others. A man should not emphasize too much his relations to his family or business associates. He is related to the community, to the commonwealth, to the nation, and to the world. The highest gift which can be offered is one's life to the service of humanity. If you were to ask me along what line service were most needed today, I would say, along the line of solving the great problems which confront this nation. We are on the eve of great changes of some kind. Political action must settle, rightly or wrongly, great industrial and social problems. If justice triumphs, if the principle of brotherhood is introduced into our economic system, if the liberties which were won by our forefathers shall be preserved, it will be only because you, with others, shall immediately give your lives and devote much of your time and

energy to the solution of these great questions.

This, then, is today the line along which you can give your highest service to your nation and to your race. The destiny of millions of your fellow men who are now in poverty and ignorance and darkness depends on the way in which these problems are solved. Thus service is more than being a good husband or wife or son or daughter. These are high duties without question. To be honest in the conduct of business, to be true as an employee to your work, is a part of duty and of service, but I wish to emphasize the necessity of taking a larger view of what service consists of. I want you as an individual to begin in a new sense to bear the burdens of the nations and the world. And on this altar of service may you give all that you are or possess.

3. Sacrifice. I have spoken of obedience and sacrifice as being two of the underlying principles of religion. There is this third principle of sacrifice. A man should be willing to follow the truth into action at whatever cost. A man's family, reputation, fortune, and life should be put upon the altar as a sacrifice, if following truth and right demands it.

So with service. I do not ask that a man should sacrifice himself unnecessarily but if necessary, any sacrifice should be made in the service of humanity. There is very little service which does not involve sacrifice; there should be no sacrifice which does not result in service. There should be a willingness on the part of every man to sacrifice all in obedience and service.

Some one may say right here that I have not mentioned love as being the chief thing in religion. And yet I have been preaching love all the time in everything that I have said. My love fellow men is dependent upon the extent to which I am willing to serve them. A willingness to sacrifice in service is the highest possible expression of love.

We are sometimes deeply moved at the recital of the need of our fellows. We feel tears coming to our eyes, and our throats choke up a little. That is the right kind of a feeling, but the test of its genuineness is this: Does this emotion express itself in service to our kind, even that service which counts life as naught in comparison to the true well-being of our fellow men. Religion is action, having service as its chief purpose and sacrifice as its method. And this is love.

And so with love to God. I believe that a man may feel the presence of the Infinite in his heart and life, in the universe, and in his fellows. But my love to God can express itself how? By obedience to all the truth that he reveals to me, by service to his children, my brothers; by obedience and service if needs be, by the sacrifice of all.

If you should today give body and mind and heart and will to this obedience, to this service, to this sacrifice, you would know then in actual experience what religion is in its essence. And no one can realize what religion is unless he puts into practice these three principles.

Devote your life to obedience, service, sacrifice, and through it there will breathe the spirit of a great helpfulness, and from your life there will flow love and light and life for your fellow men.

VALUE OF THE APOCRYPHA.

The Books are Inspired and Should Have Attentive Study.

By most protestants, perhaps by all except a numerically weak minority of students, in which but few preachers, other than those of the Anglican and American protestant episcopal churches, are to be found, the Apocrypha is regarded as a collection of fables. There are protestants who go so far as to regard the doctrines of the Roman and Greek churches as sinful in that they recognize the Apocryphal books as equally inspired with those recognized by the protestants as canonical. Indeed, the word "Apocryphal" has drifted through ordinary conversation into a synonym of "spurious." Its true meaning, however, is "secret" or "hidden" and in this sense it was applied to the books under notice, because they were not read opening in the Jewish temple, but in the privacy of the home. They were accepted as religious but not sanctioned as inspired by the rabbis.

It is an interesting question, though we have not space to discuss it, as to the relative values of the authorities that pronounce for and against the inspiration of Apocryphal books. The Jewish canon, accepted by protestantism, was not made up until A. D. 92, at which time more than 500 years had passed since Malachi, the last of the canonical writers, had laid down his pen; and there is not even a pretense of a divine inspiration directing the councils of those who then decided what was and what was not to be regarded as canonical out of the mass of Hebrew religious literature. Except in point of time, we fail to see an advantage that the council of rabbis had in A. D. 92 over the council of Trent in 1546. Yet the one denies, the other affirms, the inspiration of the books commonly called Apocryphal.

Yet the value of the books is so unquestionable that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge have united in the issue of a new and copiously annotated edition of them. Whether they be inspired in the larger or the lesser sense of the word, they are inspired. Their inspiration may be inferior, as that of the De Imitatione Christi, or it may be superior, as that of the Gospel of St. John, or, perhaps, as that of the Pauline epistles, but inspired in some degree they surely are. Their value lies in their manifestation of the growth and trend of religious thought during the long years that passed between the day in which Malachi prophesied, "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," and the glad morning in which the herald angels proclaimed to the Jewish shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

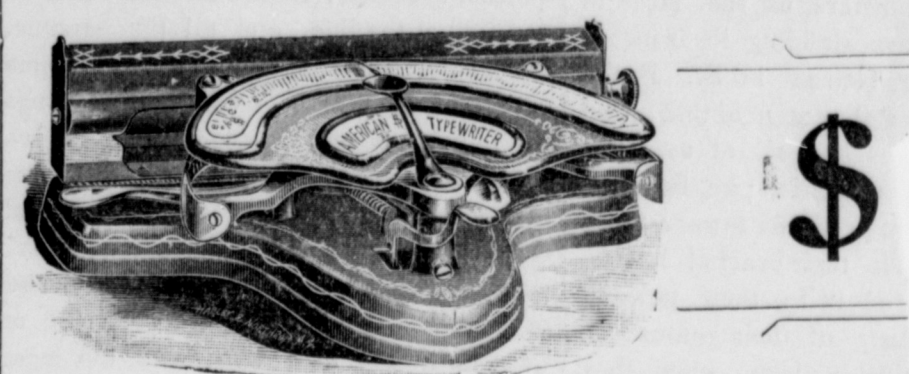
Whether they be inspired in the major or in the minor degree, the Apocryphal books are a part of the history, nay of the nurture, of the divine evolution of creed

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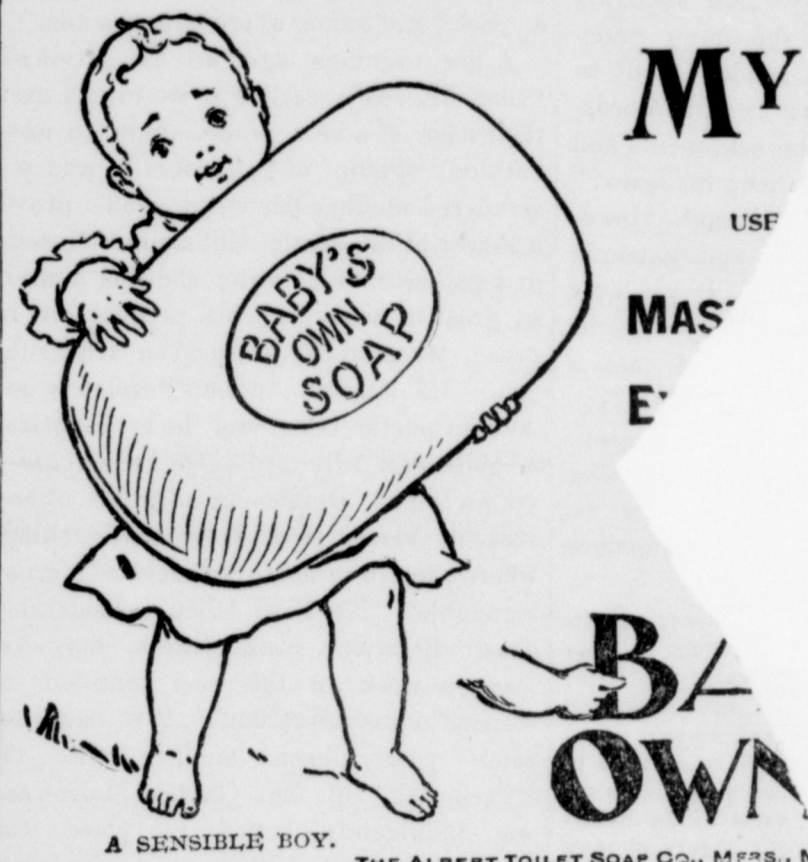


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and practice that has culminated in Christianity. Their publication in this period of critical examination of the foundation of religious belief will be welcomed by all students, and should be availed of even by the general reader.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Aim Needed in Prayer.

"Much of our prayer is vague and pointless," says the Rev. Andrew Murray. "Some pray for God's blessing on those around them; for the outpouring of God's Spirit on their land, or the world, and yet have no special field where they wait and expect to see answer. To all the Lord says, what is it you really want and expect Me to do? Every Christian has but limited powers, and as he must have his own special field of labor in which he works, so with his prayers also. Each believer has his own circle, his family, his friends, his neighbors. If he were to take one or more of these by name, he would find that this really brings him into the training school of faith, and leads to personal and pointed dealing with God. We all know with what surprise the whole civilized world heard of the way in which trained troops were repulsed by the Transvaal Boers at Majuba. And to what did these owe their success? In the armies of Europe the soldier fires upon the enemy standing in large masses, and never thinks of seeking an aim for every bullet. In hunting game the Boer had learned a different lesson; his practised eye knew how to send each bullet on its special message to seek and find its man—Such aiming is wanted to-day in our battle against sin.—Thomas Hogben.

In Charity with All Men.

Let us suppose that you have wronged someone, and so you are estranged from someone, or that someone thinks you have wronged him. Perhaps you think he is mistaken when he thinks you have wronged him. It may be that you were provoked beyond endurance; it may be that the wrong done was on his own part, that he was the aggressor, that all the pride that is in you rises up and says, "When he comes and confesses his fault, then I will go and confess mine, but I cannot take the first step." What are you to do when someone else thinks you have wronged him? If, therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath sinned against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first, be reconciled to thy brother, and

then come and offer it. As you came morning you remember with someone last week back from the post into the instruction put into No matter what the anywhere cherishes the done him some wrong, to endeavor to correct Abbott.

Present use for

It would probably do are continually piling up keeping it nearly all for what John Wesley as long, useful life. He for you who are rich you give all you can do what I will with m Here lies your mistake. It cannot be, unless of heaven and earth. Who addition to your fortune? Don that God entrusted you with for His work? "But I must pr my children." Certainly. But he making them rich? Then you w bably ruin them. "What shall I do, Lord, speak to their hearts, else I spea vain. Leave them enough to live on, idleness, but honest industry. And you have no children, upon what principle can you leave a great behind more than enough to bury you? What does it signify whether you leave £10,000 or 10,000 boots and shoes? Haste! haste! Spend all you have before you go to the better world—Pathway of Holiness.

Instant in Prayer.

Being "instant in prayer" was beautifully explained by Stonewall Jackson one day, when his sense of its meaning was required. "I can give you," he said, "my idea of it by illustration, if you will allow it, and will not think I am setting myself up as a model for others." On assurance being given that there would be no misjudgment, he went on to say: "I have seen the habit in my mind that I never raise a glass of water to my lips without a momentary asking of God's blessing. I never take a letter from the post without a brief sending of my thought heavenward. I never change my classes in the section-room without a brief petition for the cadets who come in." "And don't you sometimes forget to do this?" I think I scarcely can say that I do; the habit has become as fixed almost as breathing."