

Sunday Reading

The Christian Life.

Blindfolded and alone I wait;
Loss seems too bitter, gain too late;
Too heavy burdens in the load
And too few helpers on the road
And joy is weak, and grief is strong,
And years and days, so long;
Yet this one thing I learn to know
Each day more surely as I go,
That I am glad the good and ill
By changeless laws are ordered still,
Not as I will.

Enthusiasm Not Enough.

There came one running to Jesus, and from St. Matthew we learn that this one who sought Jesus with so much haste was a young man. It would be interesting to recall the numberless instances in which young men have hastened to ally themselves with enterprises from which others shrank. Young men rallied around the German and Swiss reformers. Young men led the way in modern missions. The students of the German universities are constantly antagonizing imperial restrictions. Young men have aroused a too lethargic Church by the Volunteer Missionary Movement.

A leader in reforms must be gratified to see the readiness of such young supporters. All regard as most helpful and most hopeful the immense impetus given the modern Church by the Y. M. C. A. and by the numberless Christian Endeavor societies. The young people may be said to come running, as the young man came to Jesus; and we read that Jesus was especially moved by the unusual spectacle of an enthusiastic young man appealing to his side.

The young man 'kneeling down' to him also. In this he acknowledged devotion to Christ. As we recall the worshipping young man, we think of the modern Endeavor pledge which so many have taken, which begins with the words, 'Trusting in the Lord Jesus.' That is to say the Endeavorers also come kneeling to Christ, calling him 'Master.'

But further the young man may be regarded as speaking the succeeding words of the pledge, which read, 'I promise that I will try to do whatever he would like to have me do.' The kneeling young man says to Jesus, evidently pledging obedience, 'What shall I do?' He believes himself ready for any allotted service.

Here, then, is an enthusiastic (he comes running) young man, kneeling at the feet of Jesus and pledging service.

The rest of the story we remember too well. When Jesus looked straight at the young man's heart, and required of him the one thing from which he shrank, alas! this enthusiastic young man drew back. 'He went away sorrowful.'

Here is the warning. Enthusiasm and pledge taking are well, may even attract kindly notice from Jesus; but the next step must also be taken, that of hearty obedience. Do not disobey. Do not shrink from known duty. Are there not some who go away from the Church, from prayer, from holiness of life, from active service, of whom cannot be said even that which was said of the young man of Gospel history, and which, because attesting the existence of conscience, to a degree seemed to extenuate his guilt, viz., 'he went away sorrowful'? Unlike this young man, there are those who have come to Christ with apparent enthusiasm, but who disobey in seeming disregard of their Master.

Enthusiasm, consecration (in words only), are not sufficient. There remains further the absolute requirement—obedience.

The Touch of Jesus.

The sense of touch is the fundamental sense. For example:

We hear, because the auditory nerve is touched; we see, because the optic nerve is touched; we taste, because the gustatory nerve is touched; we feel because some sensitive nerve is touched. Handling, hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, feeling, sensibility—these are different illustrations of the same foundation sense—the sense of touch.

How vividly all this comes out in such familiar expressions as these: 'Artist's master touch'; 'touch of genius'; 'a touching story'; 'in touch with the people'; 'out of touch with the times'; 'one touch of nature make the whole world kin.'

No wonder, then, that the Lord of nature so often used this sense of touch. For example: Does Peter's mother-in-law lie ill of a fever? Jesus touches her hand; the fever leaves her. Does a Galilean leper kneel before him, begging to be cleansed? Jesus is moved with compassion stretches forth his hand, touches him; the leper is cleansed. In a funeral procession coming from Nain? Jesus approaches the

bier, touches it; the dead youth, who had been laid out, rises up. Are flute players making lamentation over the dead body of Jairus' daughter? Jesus touches the maiden's hand; her spirit returns, she walks. Do two blind men of Capernaum beg him for mercy? Jesus touches their eyes; they see. Is Peter sinking in Gennesareth's waves? Jesus stretches forth his hand, touches him; he is saved. Do citizens of Decapolis beseech him to heal a deaf stammerer? Jesus puts his fingers into the unfortunate's ears, and touches his tongue; the deaf ears are opened, the tied tongue speaks plain. Do citizens of Bethsaida bring a blind man for cure? Jesus touches his eyes: the blind man sees. Are the favorite three terrified by their Masters transfiguration? Jesus comes and touches them; they are calmed. Is the demoniac boy convulsed in death? Jesus touches him; he is healed. Does a woman bowed with a spirit of infirmity eighteen years worship in a synagogue? Jesus calls her and touches her; immediately she is made straight. Are blind men begging by the gates of Jericho? Jesus touches their eyes; straightway they see. Does Peter strike off the right ear of Malchus? Jesus touches his ear; it is healed. Is the exile (John at Patmos) affrighted by his vision of the risen King? The risen King touches him; he is calmed.

Why did Jesus thus appeal to the sense of touch? Was it because he could not heal without touching? No; he healed the nobleman's son in Capernaum, while he himself remained in Cana. Why then did he touch? Because his touches, like his miracles, were acted parables.

Glance at some of these parable-touches. For example: There was the touch of encouragement, as when he stretched forth his hand to the sinking Peter. There was the touch of affection, as when he laid his hands on the infants of Perea. There was the touch of instruction, as when he healed the deaf stammerer of Decapolis, taking him aside from the crowd, putting his fingers into the unhearing ears, touching the inarticulate tongue, looking heavenward. There was the touch of sympathy, as when he stretched forth his hand and touched the Galilean leper.

Here in fact was one of the great meanings of the Incarnation itself. The Son of God became the Son of man in order that he might get in touch with our leprous humanity, and cleanse it with his own purifying contact.

Here is the secret of Christ's great way. He rules our hearts, not by patronizing us from heaven's throne, but by associating with us in earth's vale. His gentleness makes us great.

And here also is the secret of our own healing ministry. What our leprous world needs is the healing touch of a practical, sympathetic contact. It may be that the Church is losing many a Paul, because no Ananias or Barnabas offer to give the right hand of fellowship to Saul of Tarsus.

Go and Tell Jesus.

So did blind Bartimeus, so did the woman of Canaan, so did Jairus and so did the disciples on stormy Gennesareth. So also did the sisters of Lazarus, and so did Mary Magdalene. Indeed, there was a good deal of 'telling Jesus' when he was on the earth. The sons of want and need and sorrow and weakness, of pain and affliction and oppression and sin, soon discovered that in his bosom welled up an ocean of sympathy, that out of his great heart kept flowing a deep, broad, sweeping stream of compassion.

The disciples of John were sad. Cruel enmity had bereft them of their beloved Master. Whether shall they turn in their desolation? Jesus loved John. That they knew. Jesus understood and felt for suffering.

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Dr. Fowler's
EXT. OF WILD
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In him they knew their breaking hearts would find consolation; and they were consoled.

Jesus is not on earth now, but the shoreless ocean of sympathy rolls its sweet waters in his breast still.

Go and tell Jesus, all who are in circumstances of pain, or sorrow, or need. If there is a Bartimeus still, whose life has been darkened and distressed by disease. "Tell Jesus." If there is a mother whose child like the one of old seems under the power of evil, causing her soul to writhe in anguish over his falling into sin, choosing evil companions and learning evil ways, let her tell Jesus. Are the closet and the sanctuary and the Word and Christ and heaven as idle tales to him? Tell Jesus, cry "mercy" of him. Mind not though he answer not a word, still cry, "Help, Lord! Even the children's crumbs!"

Has trouble entered the house of any? Is there a vacant seat at the board? Has death changed to marble the little lips you loved to kiss? Has that voice been silenced that used to invoke in the family's behalf the morning and evening blessing? Has the strong arm on which you leaned been paralyzed, the heart that sent out its flow of sympathy so often for your good cheer, ceased to beat? Are you often inclined to feel lonely and wretched? Tell Jesus. No one knows so much about trouble and bereavement and loneliness as he. Is any one conscious of being a sinner, a great sinner, a worthless one, deserving the wrath of God? Is the soul all black with crime against God?

Go and tell Jesus.

His heart is full of compassion, he has the only balm for such. 'Thy sins be forgiven thee' will be the sweet assurance that will give strength and hope and joy.

Bereavement forces the soul to recognize its destiny. Tears are sometimes telescopes with which other worlds are viewed. Aching hearts feel their helplessness and then call on God for the comfort that is not within reach. They see visions, have revelations, and doors are opened the key to which is forged out of some grief. The ties of earth are loosened that we may be bound by stronger cords to heaven.

The cruelty of death imbues us with a longing for immortality. The surgeon cuts in order to save the body, and when it is all over we bless the knife. God wounds because a wounded soul needs sympathy and consolation, and can only find them in the sure faith of another life.

From genius as well as revelation, we learn that our actions can alone become harmonious with the universality and naturalness which we see in the outward world when they are made to accord with the will of our Father. From both we learn that of ourselves we can do no positive act; but have only the power given us to render of no avail that which is so—that we cannot make one hair white or black; that our seeming strength is weakness—nay, worse than weakness—unless it co-operates with God's.—Jones Verty.

THE WICKEDNESS OF THIS WORLD.

The Rev. Mr. Milburn Tells What He Saw on a Train Going out of Chicago.

The nearest J. A. Milburn ever came to indulging in a skill game was on a train coming out of Chicago some time ago. Dr. Milburn tells the story himself to illustrate the shrewdness of some of the sharks around Chicago who prey upon the unwary.

'The train was crowded,' said Dr. Milburn 'and I just settled myself to enjoy my paper. The train was slowly moving out of the depot and I was touched upon the shoulder. I looked into the face of a fine-looking man who rather impressed me by his manner. He asked me very courteously if I would like to join in a game of cards to while away the time on the train.'

'No, sir. I do not care to join in a game of cards,' I replied.

'The man apologized for the intrusion, and I followed him with my eyes. He stopped by an elderly gentleman in two seats from mine, and I supposed asked the same question and received an affirmative answer, for the old gentleman arose and followed him down the car a few seats, where two seats had been turned facing each other and were occupied by two gentlemen, one of them a young man of refined appearance, resembling a professional man.'

'I saw introductions made and the four settle themselves for their game and thought no more of the circumstances till the train was pulling up for Grand avenue station, when I noticed two men pass hurriedly by my seat out on to the platform and disappear in the crowd. As they left the car I noticed one of them was the same man who had asked me to join in the game of cards.'

'I was somewhat surprised at this, as I had inferred that the gentleman was beginning a long journey, and we had been on

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the train but twenty minutes, Grand avenue station being only about eight or nine miles out. In fact, we were still in Chicago.

'I looked back to the seats where I had seen the four settle themselves for their game of cards and saw the young man sitting there alone. He seemed to be in distress. Indeed, it was very apparent that he was in deep trouble. So pronounced was it in fact that I arose and walked back to him.'

'You are in trouble, my friend,' said I, 'what is it?'

'I have just been robbed of \$132,' said he, 'by those two men who left the car. I am sure I was robbed.'

He then told me that he had been approached by the two men the same as I had been by one of them and had agreed to join in a game of cards to pass away the time. The old gentlemen had evidently been called in just to fill up the time. It was suggested that the four play euchre and have the opposites for partners. The young man was the partner of the man who had approached me. They had played two or three hands when one of the two men, who were evidently together, remarked as he picked up his hand that he wished they were playing poker, as he had a splendid poker hand. The other remarked that he also had a good poker hand, and the young man, who knew the national game, remarked that he, too, had a good poker hand.

'I would be willing to bet \$5 just for fun that my hand is the best,' said one of the two with a laugh.

'I believe my hand is better than yours,' remarked the other in a careless, laughing way, and I will bet you a ten-dollar note that I have you beaten. Maybe my partner has a poker hand too,' looking across at the young man.

'The young man said he did have a remarkable good hand—four aces or something like that, I believe he told me—and as he wanted to be sociable and at the same time show his friends that he was a man of the world he said he would take a hand in the betting and would be willing to stake \$20 that he had both the others beaten.'

'Well, that is a coincidence,' remarked one of the two. 'Three good poker hands out all in one euchre hand. Maybe our other friend here has a poker hand, too.'

'The old gentleman replied with a shake of his head that his hand was not even a good euchre hand.'

'Well,' said the first speaker with a laugh, 'this getting interesting. We are all friends here together, and I will just bet \$30 I have you both beaten.'

'By this time each of the three was more or less excited with the fever of gambling. The second stranger said he would bet \$50 and the young man with the four aces seeing, as he thought, a chance to earn his expenses off of two plunging brokers or racehorse men, said he would be willing to stake \$75.'

'The money was called out as he said this, and the others hesitated. They said they didn't think their hands were worth that much, but what was a hundred \$100 anyway? So the first speaker said he would just bet the even hundred. The second stranger said he was not to be bluffed out in any gentleman's game, and he would bet \$125. The young man, sure now that he was with two mere plungers,

said he would just go broke on his hand, and, as he had just \$132 with him, he would bet that.

'Well, I guess you have me beaten this time,' remarked the first speaker, 'but I am going to throw you a little more money and just call you.'

'The other man did the same, remarking that he was going to see the thing through if he spent all his pocket money. There was \$396 on the grip they were using for a table.'

'I have a king full,' said the first speaker. 'Is that good?'

'No good,' said the young man excitedly. 'I have four aces.'

'King, queen, jack, ten and nine of diamonds—straight flush,' said the second stranger. The train was slowing up for Grand avenue station. The man, as he called his hand, threw the cards down, grabbed up the money, pushed the young man's grip over his lap and in five seconds the two men were gone.

'Of course, I was skinned,' said the young man bitterly, 'and I don't know how I will get home.'

'And to think,' said Mr. Milburn, 'those two sharper's approached that young man, got him into a game of cards, brought the subject up to betting, made him think he had the best of a bargain and succeeded in robbing him of \$132, all in less than twenty minutes. The were certainly adepts with a wonderful knowledge of physiognomy. I have marvelled over it ever since.'

'But,' added Dr. Milburn reflectively, 'the young man was trying to get their money, wasn't he? He just got hold of somebody smarter than he.'

Mr. Milburn won't say whether he gave the young man money to get home on, but the chances are he did.

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