The Wise and Winsome Walk

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

The early Christian church was born in a prayer-meeting, and baptized by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; it then set upon its heaven appointed mission of converting men to Christ. Peter's pungent sermon to the Jerusalem sinners pierced their hearts with conviction, and three thousand were converted in a single day. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is largely a record of personal labors for winning souls; the Epistles are not addressed to the heathen or to impenitent sinners, but to the newly-born churches teaching them how to live. Instruction in the Christian life is the main topic of Paul and Peter, John and James. And one idea runs through them all, and that is that Christ's people are to live in such a way as not only to honor their Master, but in such a way as to attrack the outside world to him.

"Walk in wisdom towards them that are without," was one of Paul's pithy and pungent injunctions. Christ came into this world to seek and to save those who were lost. His commission to his disciples was to go after the "outsiders" and to bring them in. That commission is as binding on Christians to-day as it was eighteen hundred years ago. Every one now who enters the church of Jesus Christ enters not only into peculiar relations with Christ, but into peculiar duties toward the unconverted. "Ye are my witnesses"; "ye are the light of the world, so let your light so shine that ye may be seen of men." The outside world watches us sharply, and our Master intended that we should be watched. It is a stereotyped truth that a professed Christian is the world's Bible. He is the only Bible that the majority of outsiders ever look at. They form their impressions of Christianity, not as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, but as it is revealed in us. They do not study God's Bible, but they do study church-members. Now, if we are the world's Bible, we ought to live in such a way as not to require any commentary to explain us. If we are door keepers to the way of life and the fold of Christ, we are put there to attrack the outsiders and draw them in—not to block the door and drive them off. Every inconsistent church-member is guilty of a triple sin—first towards Christ, secondly towards his own soul, and then towards the impenitent whom he repels when he ought to be winning them.

(1.) What is a "wise walk towards them that are without?" In the first place it is such a walk as does not give the lie to our professions. We tell the unconverted that the religion of Jesus Christ will make them cheerful under trials, and then, perhaps, fall to fretting at Providence, and put on a distressing gloom as soon as trials smite us in the face. We talk about patience, and lose temper under the first provocation. In the prayer-meeting we pray as if religion was the "one thing needful," but elsewhere live as if money-grabbing or social ambition were the chief end of our lives. What is all this but belying our Christianity, and disgusting other people with it. If in walking through an orchard we pick up a fair-looking apple, but on putting our teeth in it find it setting our teeth on edge, we fling it down and try no more from that tree. So the world tastes of Christians, and if they find them sour or bitter in temper, or worm-eaten, they turn away in disgust and disappointment. "By your fruits shall men know you," says our Master. We must make our religion taste sweetly if we want to recommend it to outsiders. Very few people are made infidels by pernicious books; it is the unworthy walk of too many church members which make them sceptics. When a man of the world says scoffingly, "one of your church members cheated me in trade," I feel that the wickedest part of the fraud was that he robbed the man of his respect for the religion of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, a noble, honest, godly life is the most convincing and converting sermon that can be delivered. Christ's people have got to live the world to him, or the world is lost.

(2.) We never can win outsiders by compromising with them. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you" —i. e., when the lovers of sin shall applaud you. A minister of Christ may purchase his popularity at the dear price of losing all his influence over men's consciences. Human favor gained by connivance with wrong—in business, in politics, in social fashions—is treason to our Master. The people of the world do not expect Christians to do as they do; when we surrender our principles, they are secretly shocked and disgusted. If we would draw men out of a pit we must have a firm, strong foothold or they will draw us in. He who walks closest to Christ will have the most power to convert sinners to him. When Jesus lives in us, it is not we who move others; it is the Christ incarnated in our conduct. "I tried to be a sceptic when I was a young man," said Cecil; "but my mother's life was too much for me." It was Jesus Christ in his good mother that was "too much" for him and converted him.

(3.) This subject has a vital bearing on all direct effort for the conversion of the impenitent. "He that is wise winneth souls"; that is the correct reading of the often perverted text. It is astonishing to observe how little common sense some good people exhibit in their well-meant efforts to bring their children or their scholars or their friends to the Saviour. A father will ask for prayers for an unconverted son, and then treat the boy so harshly or talk to him so tauntingly as only to harden him. Some good people badger their children with ill-timed and ill-tempered talk about their souls. Nothing requires more tact and gentleness and loving kindness than to converse with persons on the most vital of all questions. If we want to water a flower we don't dash a whole pailful on it and wash it out of the ground; we sprinkle it. God does not send his spirit as a water-spout, but as a rain. Let us pray for wisdom when we are trying to win souls. Paul was consumed with zeal, and yet showed wonderful sagacity in adaptation to every case he took hold of.

We must watch for opportunities, "Walk in wisdom towards them that are without," says the apostle, "redeeming the time." The literal meaning of the phrase is "buying the opportunity." Chances must be sought for to put in the right word; and when God gives us the chance we must make the most of it. Here was the secret of Harlan Page's wonderful success in winning souls. He watched for opportunities and then spoke a very plain, close-fitting truth in a very loving way. There was no can't about him. The Spirit of God helped him, as he will always help us if we undertake the conversion of souls to our blessed Master.

We must go on the principle *now or never*. This will make us eager to embrace opportunities; and in turn we must urge the impenitent to accept Christ at once. Every act of kindness we can do to the unconverted may help to give us a key to their hearts. Then let us use it to introduce our Master there. They that are wise in their walk and wise in their work may turn many to righteousness. They that are wise to win souls shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.—*The Independent.*

Hardening the Heart.

The co-operation of the human and the Divine elements, in the production of the inspired writings and oral utterance of prophets and apostles, has, in these later days, been much discussed. It is quite common, too, to read and to hear of the action and inter-action of the human and the Divine powers in conversion, and in the Christian life. But there is another aspect of the co-working of the human and the Divine agencies which the Scriptures certainly do teach, and of which we seldom hear any discussion from our pulpits.

Wicked men are often spoken of in the Bible as "hardening their hearts;" and the Bible also teaches that God hardens their hearts. One of the most striking manifestations that ungodly men ever make of this hardness of heart is found in the fact that they actually plead this charge as its own vindication. For instance: During some season of special religious interest—a protracted meeting, let us say—a devout Christian approaches some ungodly friend, who, thus far, has shown no interest in religion, and says, 'My friend, don't you think it is time you were seeking the salvation of your soul? How is it that you have no interest in this all-important matter?" And his friend coolly answers, "Well, I don't feel. If I could feel as those people do who are going forward for prayer, and seeking the pastor at his study, I, too, would act; but I don't feel at all, and I cannot be expected to act without feeling."

Now here, indeed, is a strange case. God charges men with the sin of hardness of heart (see Rom. ii. 5), and instead of being shocked and appalled at the charge, they actually excuse themselves on the plea that their hearts are so hard that they do not feel!

Suppose a man was charged with murder, and his counsel should make a defence like this: "Gentlemen, my client did kill his neighbor—there is not a doubt of it. The evidence is conclusive, and there is no denying it. But then he ought not to be hung for it, because his heart was so brimful of murder that he was bound to kill, and therefore he is not responsible." Would not any honest jury decide that the man whose heart was full of murder was the very man, of all others, for whom the gallows was made?

But men go further, and say, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he hardened my heart; so I don't feel that I can help it." Now, such a treatment of Pharaoh's case is utterly unfair and unsound argument. So far as the light of Scripture, as well as the light of our own observation and experience, can teach us, we have no reason to believe that God hardened Pharaoh's heart in any sense other than that in which he hardened the hearts of all who disobey the plain dictates of duty.

Pharaoh's heart was hardened under the same Divine and eternal law under which the hearts of wicked men are hardened now. The first we know of Pharaoh is that he was a cruel tyrant, wickedly oppressing a helpless and down-trodden people. And such conduct as this will harden any man's heart. It is a law of the Divine government that wicked conduct shall become easier and easier as men persist in it. And this is a merciful provision of God's moral government. Many a boy has been saved from the penitentiary by the teachings of a mother who understood this law. She would say, "My son, if you steal the smallest thing, it will become easier to you to steal something of greater value. It is the first step that must be resisted; for the path of sin becomes easier and easier to us as we walk on in it."

Here is a boy, who, only last week, swore his first oath. He heard one of the larger boys swear, and thought it very manly. But when the horrid words first escaped his young lips, he was frightened at himself. He started, turned pale for a moment, and glanced anxiously about him to see if his terrible oath had fallen upon the ear of anyone who might, perhaps, "tell mother." But in the course of one short week his heart has become so hard that he can, without a qualm of conscience, affront high heaven with his fearful oaths, calling down the vengeance of an angry God upon his own soul, and the souls of his companions.

There was once a great painter who longed to paint a picture of heaven. But he had never seen heaven, nor had he ever seen anyone who had seen heaven. One day, whilst he was deeply meditating, a little four-year old boy came near him. It was a lovely child. The light of heaven seemed to fill his laughing eye, and he looked the very picture of love, innocence and happiness. The painter gazed with rapture upon the bright young face, and said enthusiastically, "I'll paint the child, and that shall be my picture of heaven." He was not far wrong. Heaven is purity, and purity is heaven. And if there is anywhere upon this sin-cursed earth, anything left to remind us of heaven, it is a beautiful child, whose bright young life has not yet been defiled by the trail of the serpent—sin. And the painter painted the child, and under the picture he wrote that sweet word, "Heaven."

He then said to himself, "If ever I should meet a human face that shows as much of hate and wickedness as this does of love and innocence, I'll paint that, too, and call it "Hell!" Long years rolled by, and one day, in looking through a prison, in a far-off foreign land, the painter saw a creature whom it seemed grossest flattery to call a man. He was crouching, like a wild beast, in one of the darkest corners of the dungeon of condemned felons. His eyes gleamed with the fires of the pit. His whole countenance was the embodiment of malignity. The painter started back in horror; but presently recovering himself, he said, "I'll paint that face and call it "Hell." And he did paint it, and under the picture he wrote that awful word, "Hell." But what was his astonishment when he learned that the condemned felon was the identical little boy, who, forty years ago, had sat for his picture of heaven! He had hardened his heart.

Oh! fathers, mothers in Israel, take care, take care! That little one you so tenderly love, and dandle on your knee, and press to your throbbing heart, is sitting as a picture for heaven, or as a model for hell.

"Chisel in hand stood the sculptor boy,
With his marble block before him;
And his face lit up with a smile of joy,
As an angel dream passed o'er him.
He carved it then on the yielding stone,
With many a sharp incision;
With heaven's own light the sculpture shone,
He had caught that angel vision.

Sculptors of life are we, as we stand,
With our souls uncarved before us;
Waiting the hour, when, at God's command,
Our life-dream shall pass o'er us.
If we carve it then on the yielding stone,
With many a sharp incision,
That heavenly beauty shall be our own,
Our lives that angel vision."

—*J. C. Hiden, in Religious Herald.*

Jim the Savage.

"No," said Captain Bell, thoughtfully, "I don't think you'll find the people here hard to manage, except Jim, perhaps—Jim the savage, they call him—and he's the stuff o' twenty sinners in him."

The new minister looked up interestedly. A vision of the original frequenters of the magnificent forest on which they had just entered passed through his mind, and he asked if Jim was the only member of his tribe in Woodside.

"Oh, he's not a redskin!" laughed the Captain, "but he might as well be one for all the good he is. Such a quarrelin', lyin', thievin' rascal you never laid your eyes on. Lives with his grandmother in a cabin on the coast. But as I was a sayin' about that new carpet," and the Captain, thinking enough time had been wasted on Jim, turned to the more important subject of a new carpet for the church.

But the minister did not give Jim up so readily. He evidently had a greater leaning towards this lost sheep than his predecessor, for Captain Bell felt called upon to expostulate.

"Now look here, Mr. Cresby," he said earnestly, "you're just a startin' in here, and don't know exactly how the land lays, so no harm o' my givin' you a point or two. Nobody's every been able to make a Christian out o' Jim. The minister afore you, Mr. Speer, found that out, and so he thought he'd better turn his 'tention to folks as were worth savin', and just now there's so much for you to do 'thout tryin' to convert one who says right out plain he won't be converted. We ought to have a new church, for one thing. The Meth'dists and 'Piscopals and Cath'lics have built lately, and they're all a sneerin' at the Presbyterians a cooped up in such a little hole, while they're a swellin' round so grand with their terrer cotter and pressed brick, and all the fine fixin's."

"Our worship can be just as sincere in a small building—"

"But it aint a question o' worship," cut in the practical captain, "but of a place to worship in."

"Well, I'll think of it," said Mr. Cresby, unwilling to antagonize by a direct refusal one who seemed so friendly and sincere in his desire to keep the new-comer off the social rocks of Woodside; "I'll think of it, and meanwhile I'll call—I'll call on Jim."

An unexpected shower-bath could not have taken away the captain's breath more effectually than these words, and before he recovered it the minister had said good-bye and taken his departure towards the coast.

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"It's no use, granny. I've tried till I'm tired, and I'm not goin' to try any longer. Poor folks can't suit rich ones, whatever they do—"

"But, Jim, deary, one must ha' patience—"

"So I have."

"An' not be ready to quarrel an' fight—"

"I'm not granny, but when you're set on first an' pounded, why, you have to pound back. There's Harry Bell, now; he thinks o' nothin' day or night but how he'll get me into some scrape or other that'll make folks more down on me 'n ever. So what's it matter how you act when they're all down on you?"

"It matters to God, said the old woman reverently.

Jim looked up to the blue sky, and then out upon the measureless stretch of blue water at his feet.

"I da'say," he said thoughtfully, "but it's a pity he's so far off."

The intense and natural craving for notice and appreciation which prompted these pathetic words touched the heart of an unseen listener deeply. Never before had Mr. Cresby been so strongly impressed with the solemn duties of his sacred calling. Not for the purpose of rearing magnificent and expensive structure, or of outstripping other denominations in a race for luxurious appurtenances of religion had he entered this profession, but to minister to spirits dismayed or embittered with the wearying problem of life's different phases, and to lift souls, ignorant or degraded, brutal or dull, into that high light of truth and knowledge which reflects the glories of the Promised Land.

Jim's grandmother was about to reply when she heard the sound of a step on the crisp, hard sand, and glancing up she saw the new minister.

She made a little bow and was about to ask him to enter the cottage when Jim said gruffly:

"Aren't you 'shamed now, granny, to ask a gentleman to a place old Bell said wasn't fit for hogs to live in?"

Then the lad began to whistle, and resumed his serious scrutiny of the sea.

"If the cottage is as bad as that," said Mr. Cresby, "we must see what we can do to improve it."

Jim stopped whistling and looked up. He saw a pleasant, slender man with dark curly hair, and a very thoughtful look on his mild, pale face, and kindly eyes that seemed to invite one's confidence and affection. Slowly the lad's sullen, suspicious expression passed away, and an instant after he found himself shaking heartily the minister's outstretched hand.

Glancing with much curiosity at Jim, Mr. Cresby was surprised to note that swift change of feature. Evidently he was not the untamed heathen of Captain Bell's imagination, when a few kind words had power to soothe that perturbed spirt and bring a softened look into those restless, defiant eyes.

Sitting down by Jim, Mr. Cresby began to talk to the old grandmother, and by and by she gathered courage to tell him of her troubles—how the cottage roof leaked in rainy weather, and how they suffered when the sea was too rough for the lad to venture out for fish, the sale of which was their only means of subsistence.

But you do something else when fishing's bad? You can work on the farms, can't you!"

"Aye, sir, if they'd have him, but they won't. They say as Jim was left here a strange baby and no one knowed who's his folks, that he's no better'n a heathen savage. An' so Jim, havin' a temper an, bearin' these things all the time, gets kind o' soured an' don't try to suit 'em any more. An' the church members are down on him 'cause he won't 'tend, an' what with th' others refusin' him work, we're often in a bad way."

"But I takes it out in thrashin' their boys, an' smashin' the church windows," said Jim, grimly.

Mrs. Parks was speechless at this cool confession, but the minister smiled, and said, as he rose to go:

"But you won't break my church windows, Jim, will you?" and not waiting for an answer he walked away.

The new minister worked very earnestly for the good of his people, and a little too earnestly—some thought—for the improvement of one who was not of the fold.

Since their first conversation Jim had discriminated in the matter of church windows—Mr. Cresby's remaining unshattered while others were riddled and ruined.

The captain often reproached Mr. Cresby for his excessive interest in Jim, and opined that the minister's time might be better occupied in working up the project of a new church. But there was a change for the better in Jim, and the day came when the captain realized it.

Late one stormy afternoon Jim stood on the shore watching the waves toss a little boat whose occupant was crying faintly and pitifully for relief. He knew that voice, but did not stir, for the insults which the captain's son had so often heaped upon him clogged his heart with anger in that terrible hour, and the sweetness of revenge stole over his embittered senses, and soon the cry grew fainter, and then ceased.

"I could save him, but I won't," he murmured, and then turned his back upon the sea. Then a hitherto unknown emotion brought a blush to his brown face, and through the memory of his benefactor the voice of conscience spoke. In an instant he was struggling through the foaming waters, and soon reached a form that was sinking for the last time. When Jim got back to shore he found Mr. Cresby and Captain Bell, both in a speechless state.

"Dunno as I'd ha' gone for him once on a time," he said as he laid his burden in the captain's arms, but 'cause I knowed him—" pointing to Mr. Cresby—"I had to."

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Two years have passed, and though Captain Bell still worships in the same old church—and seems content to—a substantial cottage has been built for Jim's grandmother, and Jim himself has passed with credit his first year at school.

"I wish we could have had a new church in the bargain," said the captain one day, reviewing past events with Mr. Cresby, "though I'm more'n willing to have the money we collected go to Granny Parks and Jim. I s'pose it's just the same to the Lord," he added.

"Indeed it is," said Mr. Cresby, "for 'inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"—*N. Y. Observer.*

The Sweet Singer.

BY SUSAN TEALL PERRY.

It was a great privilege a few weeks since to meet face to face with the sweet singer, Miss Fanny J. Crosby. Most of my readers have seen her name prefixed to many of our most popular hymns—hymns which we have sung over and over again in our homes, in the meetings for praise and prayer, and in the Sunday school. But how many of you remember when you see that name that the owner of it is totally blind, and has been so ever since her babyhood. You would naturally suppose that such a person must be very unhappy and gloomy, but Fanny Crosby is one of the most cheerful, happy persons in the world. When we saw her, she was knitting an intricate piece of lace, which on examination was found not to have a misplaced stitch in it. Her fingers moved busily while she talked in a modest way of the talents God had given her, and what a comfort it had been to her that she had been enabled to write words that had helped other souls on to heaven. Her whole face was illuminated, with a light reflected from His face (so we thought), as she told us the story of her "Rescue the Perishing," and the satisfaction it gave her to know it had been the means of bringing many wandering ones home to God. In a mission meeting she attended one evening, the hymn was sung, and at its close a young man arose and said that that hymn brought him to Jesus. Then he told of his wanderings, and how he had wasted his time and money in drink and those other vices that are sure to follow; but passing along the street one night without a cent in his pocket, ragged, cold, and hungry, he heard some voices singing

Rescue the perishing,
Care for the dying
Snatch them in pity
From death and the grave.

He followed the sound of voices until he came to a building where there was a mission meeting. He went in and sat down in the back seat, and listened to the words of that hymn. "I was just ready to perish that night," he said, "but that hymn by the grace of God saved me." Loving hands ministered to him in Jesus' name after he had told them that he wanted to leave the evil life and become a good man. The workers for Christ "Wept o'er the erring one, lifted the fallen, and told him of Jesus the mighty to save."

When the young man finished his story, he said that he had a great desire to meet the writer of that hymn, and tell her what it had done for his soul. It was a singular coincidence that his wish was to be gratified that very night, and what a great joy must have filled the author's heart when she was led up to the speaker, and could take his hand and say, "I wrote that hymn!"

After a day's jostling through the city streets, guided by some loving hand Miss Crosby returns to her quiet room—it is not strange that she pours forth her soul in song. It was at such times as these that she wrote "All the way my Saviour leads me."

Saviour, more than life to me,
I am clinging close to thee;

and

Through this changing world below
Lead me gently as I go.

Miss Crosby says of all the hymns she has written "Safe in the arms of Jesus" is her favorite. To be

Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on his gentle breast,

must be to her, as she tries to feel her way through the darkness and amid danger, a sweet, protecting rest to look forward to. To many a sorrowing soul, whose eye of faith has become dim by the mysterious going away of some loved one, has this hymn brought comfort and light. To feel that our loved ones are "Safe in the arms of Jesus" is indeed a precious thought. Walking through a village cemetery a few months since, I heard some sweet voices singing that hymn. It was beside a baby's new-made grave. Just as the young mother was turning away with tearful eyes from the resting-place of her little one, these sweet words burst upon her ear.

Out of her own loving arms but safe in the arms of Jesus. How many other hearts have found comfort in that assurance and in the thought that by and by

There by his love o'ershaded
Sweetly my soul shall rest

How many there are whose eyes are opened to all the beautiful things in the world who do not walk in the light of God's countenance.

Our blind singer cannot see any of the world's beautiful things, or look into the faces of loved ones, but the Father gives his sightless child a light that illumines her soul with a radiance that shines not only for herself, but is reflected into the souls of all those who sing her sweet hymns.—*New York Evangelist.*

—An English magazine tells an anecdote of the new Emperor of Germany which shows his kindness of heart towards those in humble life. Passing one day through Bornstedt, a little village on his own estate, near Potsdam, he went into the school house there to hear the children recite their lessons. Presently a telegraph messenger came with a dispatch for the teacher, announcing that his mother was dangerously ill, and wanted to see her son before her death. Immediately Frederick, who was then Crown Prince, bade the teacher hasten off, and he himself took charge of the school the rest of the forenoon. By afternoon a substitute had been found, but the prince would not give up his friendly office, and stayed till after the funeral of the man's mother. At court dinners, after the guests have risen from the table, he frequently calls up the little pages who help at the service, and, after chatting with them awhile, stuffs their pockets with sweetmeats and bonbons. One of the best evidences of the new Emperor's goodness is seen in the fact that the French, who are the natural enemies of the Germans, have been very sympathetic during his illness, and remedies for his recovery have been sent him by the French people.

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—"Great men are not great all over," wisely says *The Lutheran*. There never was a pine-board that did not have at least one little knurl. You find it, and you easily press a hole into any man's greatness. One might think that preachers, statesmen, Christians, and civilized people generally, when affronted, would be so along their intellectual level. But big men often bring their heads down to their feet, and in livid rage inspect an ant that crosses their path, while the more ordinary pass the trifle and have heads up to enjoy the the beauty of sky and mountain. We must learn in this life to be stronger than our circumstances. If people pick at you, and say all manner of evil against you, just pass it off by saying—birds always pick at the prettiest cherry. Man must die himself and no trouble or persecution dare master him.

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By Taking

three bottles of this medicine, have been entirely cured. My sight has been restored, and there is no sign of inflammation, sore, or ulcer in my eye.—Kendal T. Bowen, Sugar Tree Ridge, Ohio.

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