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Book Review.—"In His Steps"

WRITTEN AND READ BY MISS GERTRUDE HARTLEY AT THE F. B. Y. P. U. LEAGUE, GIBSON, AUG. 1899.

(Published by request.)

The sermon story, "In His Steps," or "What would Jesus do?" was written in the winter of 1896, by Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, of Topeka, Kansas, and is published by the Chicago Advance Publishing Co. cloth binding 75 cents, paper 25.

The book is an intensely interesting story. It was first written as a series of sermons, and these sermons were read, a chapter at a time by Pastor Sheldon, to his Sunday evening congregation. It first appeared in print as a serial in The Advance, and the story was so well received by the readers of that paper, that arrangements were made by the publishers for its appearance in book form. Since then millions of copies have been scattered broadcast over the world, followed by the prayer of the author that it might be "a great blessing to the churches for the quickening of Christian discipleship and the hastening of the Master's Kingdom on earth."

The scene of the story is laid in Raymond, a busy railway city, quite equally divided, as such cities generally are, between the high and the low; the aristocrat and the plebeian.

The Rev. Henry Maxwell, pastor of the first church of Raymond, occupied a most enviable position. His church was the first in the city; it had the best choir. Its membership included the leading people representatives of the wealth, society and intelligence of Raymond. He himself was very popular, talented, noted for his striking sermons and dramatic delivery, altogether the feeling of Henry Maxwell regarding his church was one of intense satisfaction.

But a change came over the life of the pastor of First Church, a change which first manifested itself to the congregation on a Sunday morning, when after his sermon he made a most unexpected proposition;—that the members of his church, volunteer for a year not to do anything without first asking the question "What would Jesus do?" Each volunteer was to follow Jesus as carefully and closely as he knew how regardless of what such a course might lead or what might be its consequence. The effect of the proposition as it was met and obeyed by a number of the members of the First Church of Raymond, was so remarkable that for a time the attention of the whole country was directed to it.

Henry Maxwell was at first genuinely astonished at the response to his proposal, some of the most prominent members of his church making this promise to do as Jesus would. Among them were Edward Norman, editor of "The Daily News," Milton Wright, one of the leading merchants of Raymond, Alexander Powers, Superintendent of the Railway shops, Miss Page, one of the city's leading society heiresses and Miss Winslow, whose wonderful voice had already brought her prominently before the public. Naturally each is brought into very straight and narrow ways at times. Mr. Norman, editor of the "News," risked his entire fortune in obedience to what he believed was Jesus probable action, and revolutionized his entire management of the paper at the risk of a failure. He finally, assisted very materially by the money of Miss Page, who saw in his endeavor to conduct a paper as Jesus would, an opportunity for the use of her wealth as Jesus would use it did it belong to Him, succeeded in working up one of the most interesting and remarkable papers ever printed in the United States.

Milton Wright so reconstructed his business that no man was more beloved in Raymond. His employees became very strongly attached to him as was strikingly illustrated by the affection shown during a tedious and severe illness, many of them

begging the privilege of ministering to his wants. The business itself was carried on under a system of co-operation that was not a mere patronizing recognition of inferiorities, but a real sharing of the responsibilities and profits of the entire business, the result being that Milton Wright not only increased his business, but was respected and honored as one of the best and most successful merchants of Raymond.

Rachel Winslow rejected two very flattering offers from traveling concert and opera companies, choosing because she thought this the probable conduct of Jesus, were He in her place to give her great talent to the poor and wretched of the city. Her plans included a Musical Institute, where chorus singing and classes in vocal music were features. In connection with her friend Miss Page, she planned a course in music, which could not do otherwise than uplift and brighten the lives of the people in the dreaded Rectangle.

These are only a few illustrations of results in individual lives wrought out by obedience to the pledge.

Frequent meetings of the volunteers were held from time to time, experiences given, and opinions expressed, but in working out the details no arbitrary rules were enacted. No one was permitted to judge the conduct of another; each was to be judge of his or her own conduct. All that was required was that there should be honest and conscientious study of the problem, "What would Jesus do?" No experiences are exaggerated, what one can do is possible for all.

The winter passed, and the year was ended, the year Henry Maxwell had fixed as the time during which the pledge should be kept. Sunday the anniversary of that one year ago, was in many respects the most remarkable day the First Church ever knew. It was the more important that the disciples in the First Church realized. The year had made history so fast, and so serious, that the people were not yet able to grasp its significance. And the day itself, which marked the completion of a whole year of such discipleship was characterized by such revelations and confessions that the immediate actors in the events themselves, could not understand the value of what had been done; or the relation of their trial to the rest of the churches and cities in the country.

It happened the week before that anniversary Sunday, that the Rev. Calvin Bruce D. D. of the Nazareth Avenue church, Chicago, was in Raymond, and present at the First Church, an exceedingly attentive and interested spectator. At the close of an unusually impressive appeal to the Christians of Raymond to obey Jesus' teaching, and to follow in His Steps, regardless of what others might do, founded on the text "What is that to thee? Follow thou me!" steps were taken to secure the co-operation of all other Christian disciples in the country.

That evening Dr. Bruce went home and knelt before his God, while from his hungry soul once more rang out that cry "What does following Jesus mean?" He looked the matter fairly in the face. Was he himself ready to take that pledge? His church was full of wealthy satisfied people. The standard of their discipleship was not of such a nature as to respond readily to a call involving suffering or personal loss. Should he go back to his people next Sunday, and stand before them and say, "Let us follow Jesus more closely, let us walk in His Steps where it will cost us something, let us pledge not to do anything without first asking 'What would Jesus do?' If he should go before his people with that message it would be a strange and startling one to them. But why? Were they not ready to follow him all the way? What was it to be a follower of Jesus? What did it mean to follow him? What did it mean to walk in his steps? He had come to the parting of the ways. All night his soul wrestled before God as he asked himself these questions again and again, and tried to find an answer to them. As the morning sun flooded the city with its power it shone on the bowed head of Calvin Bruce, but he had conquered. God had helped him choose the right way. He arose calm and triumphant. In his soul the resolve had been made;—"Lord I will follow Thee wheresoever Thou goest."

The following Sunday found Dr. Bruce as usual in his own pulpit. Those who knew him best did not detect anything unusual in his manner or expression. He prayed, and the prayer was an unconscious, involuntary disclosure of the soul's experience such as Nazareth Avenue people had never heard before. A distinct wave of spiritual power moved over the congregation and when Dr. Bruce began to speak in the opening sentence of his address, which

this morning preceded his sermon, there was an answering response in the church that came back to him as he spoke, and thrilled him with the hope of a spiritual baptism such as he had never during all his ministry experienced. In the simplest, clearest way he told them the story of Raymond, and then pleaded as a man who realized what it meant, for volunteers to do as Jesus would.

That morning over a hundred of the members of Nazareth Avenue church took this pledge;—to follow in His Steps. Dr. Bruce was amazed, was humbled.

In the evening when the days, duties and privileges had gone into eternity, Calvin Bruce sat in his study thinking of the events of the day. As he sat thus lost in meditation a ring came at the door and his friend the Bishop entered. He had not come however to enjoy the usual Sunday evening chat—no, he had come to tell his friend that he, the leader of the most aristocratic, wealthy, fashionable people, not only of Chicago, but in several large cities, that he, casting personal ease and pleasure to the winds, had also firmly made up his mind to do as Jesus would. That evening as they advised together and knelt in prayer, there was forged the strongest link in the lifelong friendship of the two men.

It is noteworthy that in Raymond no one had so far interpreted the spirit of Jesus in such a way as to abandon his earthly possessions, give away all his wealth, or in any literal way imitate for example the Christians of the order of St. Francis of Assisi. However Dr. Bruce and the Bishop realized that they must not pattern after Raymond in this matter. The question to them was "What would Jesus do?"

Three months passed, and the Bishop came again one evening to the Dr's study. Their experiences during these months had been in many instances very much alike. Neither of them was entirely satisfied with the manner in which he had kept his promise, the overpowering desire of each was to decide the course he should have to pursue if he satisfied his thoughts of what it meant for him to walk "In His Steps."

There was no uncertainty in their minds as to this course. It was plain and open to them. Both men were the possessors of large independent fortunes. They had never known what it meant to be without money or its equivalent. What had they suffered for the sake of Christ? They had that in them which of late rose in overwhelming condemnation of church and social life. They saw no escape from this condemnation except to give the rest of their lives personally, to the actual, physical and soul needs of the wretched people in the worst part of the city. Into closer contact with the sin and shame and degradation of that great city, they felt they must come personally and they knew that to do that, they must sever their immediate connection with their respective churches. They had both reached the same conclusion by the same reasoning, and they were too thoughtful, too well accustomed to the measuring of conduct, to underestimate the seriousness of their position. But from the moment their decision was reached to live the life of personal sacrifice they had chosen, they suddenly felt a great uplifting, as if a heavy burden had been removed.

Their plans as it finally grew into a workable fact was in reality nothing more than the renting of a brewery, reconstructing it and living in it themselves, in the very heart of a territory where the saloon ruled with power, where the tenement was in its filthiest, where the vice and ignorance, and shame and poverty were congested into hideous forms. It was not a new idea. It was an idea started by Jesus Christ when he left His Father's house, and forsook the riches that were His in order to get nearer humanity and thus be in a position to help draw humanity apart from its sin. The University Settlement idea is not modern. It is as old as Bethlehem and Nazareth, and in this particular case it was the nearest approach to anything that would satisfy the hunger of these two men to suffer for Christ. There had sprung up in them at the same time, a longing that amounted to a passion, to get nearer the great physical poverty, and spiritual destitution of the great city that throbbed around them. How could they do this except as they became a part of it, as nearly as one man can become a part of another's misery. Where was the suffering to come in unless there was an actual self-denial of some sort? And what was to make that self-denial apparent to themselves or anyone else unless it took this concrete actual personal form of trying to share the deepest suffering and sin of the city? Thus they reasoned.

(To be continued.)

Enjoy as You Go.

Some people mean to have a good time when their hard work is done—say, at fifty. Others plan to enjoy themselves when their children are grown up. Others mean to take their pleasure when they get to be rich, or when their business is built up on a sure foundation, or the farm is paid for, or the grind of some particular sorrow is overpast.

Such persons might as well give up ever having a good time. The season of delight which is so long waited and hoped for, too rarely comes. Disease, poverty, death, claim each his victims. The lives of those whom we love, or our own, go out, and what is left?

Then take your pleasure to-day, while there is yet time. Things may not be in the best shape for that visit you have been so long planning to your only sister. It might be better if you could wait till you had a more stylish suit of clothes, or till the boy was a home from college to look after the place; but she is ready now. You are both growing old—you had better go.

John drives round with the horse. "Jump in mother," he says. "It is a lovely day. You need the fresh air." Don't say, "I can't go—I was intending to make some cakes," or "My dress isn't changed." Put on your coat, tie a veil around your hat, and take your ride. If you don't take such things when you can get them, they are apt to be shy when you want them again.

Don't say, "I shall be glad when that child is grown up! What quantities of trouble he makes!" No—enjoy his cunning ways—revel in his affectionate hugs and kisses—they will not be so plentiful by and bye. Enjoy his childhood. It will look sweet to you when it is gone forever.

Enjoy the littles of every day. The great favors of fortune come to but few, and those who have them tell us that the quiet, homely joys that are within the reach of us all, are infinitely the best. Then let us not cast them away, but treasure every sunbeam, and get all the light and warmth from it that the blessing holds.—Family Friend.

The Robber who feared Future Punishment.

Here is a story a little old man in Chung wa, to the south of Peking Yang, told the visiting missionary of his experience with robbers: One night four robbers suddenly entered his home and began to help themselves to the property in the house. By the coarse, rough language they used, they were evidently very wicked men. His little girl was terrified nearly to distraction and the robbers, fearing that her loud cries would attract the attention of the neighbors, spoke to her very roughly, so that she dropped upon the floor and hid her face in her hands. As the robbers went on with their work, the thought occurred to the old man that the Bible says you must pray for your enemies. As he knew of no one who was at the present time more of an enemy to him than these robbers, he sat down upon the floor and began fervently to pray for them aloud. However, as he prayed his eyes followed the robbers, and when they came to the shelf which contained the Christian books and began to take them down, it was too much for his feelings and with tears in his eyes he pleaded with them to take everything else in the house, if they must, but just to leave him his Christian books. Thereupon one robber started with surprise and addressed to his companions the remark Why, this man is a Christian! This will never do. It would be a great sin for us to rob a Christian man and would bring upon us a fearful punishment in the future. His companions apparently agreed with him. They returned all the old man's goods to the places where they found them, reassured the little girl with a few kind words, and silently took their departure. The face of the old man as he told this story was wreathed in smiles and it was evident that his experience of God's faithfulness in answering believing prayer had made a deep impression upon his heart.—Dom. Presbyterian.

The bitterest cup, seasoned with faith in God, becomes sweet to the taste.

Thin or gray hair and bald heads so displeasing to many people as marks of age, may be averted for a long time by using Hall's Hair Renewer.

Will you allow a cough to aggravate your throat or lungs and run the risk of filling a consumptive grave, when, by the timely use of Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup the pain can be allayed, and the danger averted. This syrup is pleasant to the taste, and unsurpassed for relieving, healing and curing all the affections of the throat & lungs, coughs, colds, bronchitis, etc., etc.

Children's Ideals.

How to preserve high ideals in the children as they grow is a great and difficult question. The disillusioning process has infirmity; and the boy especially is tempted to-day to become cynically indifferent to those nice distinctions of right and rectitude which he thought so important for a time. Much of the mischievous transformation comes through his associations with older lads, and from books beyond his moral depth, that leads him into dangerous pace. But a greater peril is in the careless speech of the home circle; the free talk, harmless to elders, hurts often the hearts of the younger, and sometimes beyond recovery. The highest possible ideals embodied for the child in persons of parent or teacher, are in God's wise, kind providence, the child's moral salvation.

The man who is an atheist in politics is not much of a Christian anywhere else.

There are times when a horse knows more than a man; when instinct is superior to reason. The horse fights against being forced over the brink of a precipice which he can see in the dark but which is veiled from the man's eyes. It is often the same with a man's body; it fights against carrying the man over the brink of the precipice, disease. When the heart beats irregularly; when there are pains in the head, ringing in the ears, weight, indigestion, loss of appetite and lack of energy—some or all of these symptoms—the body is on the brink of danger and is crying "halt!" No man need be carried over the fatal brink of disease if he will heed Nature's warning and accept Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. This great alternative completely modifies every abnormal condition of the disordered digestive or alimentary functions. It makes the stomach strong, the blood rich and healthy, builds up the nerve centers and so regulates the functions of all the vital organs, that they co-operate perfectly for the health of the entire system. "Golden Medical Discovery" contains no alcohol, whiskey or other intoxicant.

Mr. Geo. Minter, of 227 Thompson Street, Philadelphia, Pa., writes: "Some time ago I was terribly run down. Numerous ailments had been coming upon me one by one. I decided to try 'Golden Medical Discovery' and the 'Pleasant Pellets.' The benefit derived was beyond my fondest hopes. I took five bottles of the 'Discovery' and used the 'Pellets' when necessary. During the time of taking the five bottles as directed, I gained in weight 25 pounds, weighing more than ever in my life, bringing me health and strength, and removing these ailments, viz: Palpitation of the heart, sleepless nights, pressing and splitting pains in the head, ringing in the ears, with partial deafness and throbbing, nagging cough, indigestion, depression of spirits, loss of energy, constipation, a tired feeling upon rising and through the day, appetite poor, sight defective, very nervous, etc. These golden bottles of your 'Discovery' and the 'Pellets' removed all those troubles, and more, and made me as well as fifty as I have ever been in my life."

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I am a farmer located near Stony Brook, one of the most malaria districts in this State, and was bothered with malaria for years, at so I could not work, and was always very constipated as well. I had malaria so bad in the spring, when engaged in plowing that I could do nothing but shake. I must have taken about a dozen of quinine pills besides dozens of other remedies, but never obtained any permanent benefit. Last fall, in peach time, I had a most attack of chills and then commenced to take Ripans Tablets, as friend's advice, and the first box made me all right and I have been without them since. I take one Tablet each morning and sometimes when I feel more than usually exhausted I take two a day. They have kept my stomach sweet, my bowels regular, have not had the least touch of malaria nor splitting headache commenced using them. I know also that I sleep better and was more refreshed than formerly. I don't know how many complaints Ripans Tablets will help, but I do know they will cure any one condition I was and I would not be without them at any one time. They are also the most beneficial and the most convenient to I am twenty-seven years of age and have worked hard all my life same as most farmers, both early and late and in all kinds of weather and I have never enjoyed such good health as I have since last fall, my neighbors have all remarked my improved condition and said, "Say, John, what are you doing to look so healthy?"

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