

"BECAUSE OF HIS IMPORTUNITY"

By Bishop Charles V. Fairbairn

Read Luke 18: 1-8. I thank you!

Christian faith knows that God's will is best; not better, best.

Faith, being Christian, wants only the best.

So faith is not rashly impulsive. It does not, with precipitate haste, jump to conclusions about what is best, but "proves all things," and even "tries the spirits, whether they be of God." Faith is not feverishly active, but calmly and sincerely seeking to discover God's will and way.

Yet, even so, when quite persuaded that it has discovered God's will and way, being conscious of residence in a vessel frail and faulty, knowing that erring humanity may, with full honesty, frequently be mistaken, faith gladly adds to its most sincere petition the Christ-like qualification: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!"

This does not weaken faith's petition, but maintains, in the fear of God, a properly submissive yet believing attitude. It is humbly trustful, and it is boldly sure. And in that humble trustfulness and bold assurance, faith is insistent in prayer. It will not insist beyond the will of God, but it will insist to the limit of that will. And the Holy Spirit, who inspires to prayer, inspires to a proper balance between submission and insistence, lest faith assume an appearance of submission which may be but the camouflage of lethargy or doubt, or of both, and is the foretold and forerunner of unanswered prayer.

Right in there lies a very fine line, the boundary between victory and defeat. Men already very close to victory have sometimes stopped short in defeat.

Once upon a time, lost for hours in unfamiliar country, worn, leg-weary, down-hearted, I said to my hunter companion: "Go on, Nicholas! I'll sit down and rest a while, then come on later." "Why, look!" said he. "There's the chimney on Brother Conner's house now!" It was visible above the crest of the very next hill. My head was down and I was failing in sight of home.

Even the experienced Napoleon's eye could not see victory possible. "Beat a retreat!" said he to a drummer-boy. Came the answer: "Sire, you never taught me. But I can beat a charge!" "Then beat a charge!" said Napoleon. The French rallied. The foe, equally hard pressed, broke and fled. History records that a victory was won by Napoleon; but he was but one drummer-boy away from defeat.

In 1066, at the battle of Hastings, Saxon and Norman seemed equally near defeat. The cry went up that Duke William had fallen. The Normans wavered. Duke William snatched his helmet from his head and, risking instant death, galloped along his crumbling ranks, showing his face to his troops. They rallied. The Saxons were defeated. Victory—defeat! Only a hairsbreadth between!

"Take thy bow and arrows," said Elisha to King Joash. "Open the window eastward. * * * Now shoot!" And King Joash shot. "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance from Syria!" exclaimed Elisha. "Now smite (shoot) upon the ground!" And the king shot thrice, and stayed. And Elisha was wroth with him and said, "Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it; whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice." So close was small vic-

tory to sweeping victory; but King Joash stopped too soon.

The saints of God have been praying for a great revival.

God has been answering. And greater answers are on the way.

Let not lack of importunity determine for us any shortage of victory. "Ye that are the Lord's remembrances give him no rest till * * *"

Let prayer's paradoxical submissive-insistence indicate faith's confidence that our God still answers prayer. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" I tell you," said Jesus, "he will avenge them speedily."

I know a situation well, where a man, his wife, another sister, without a pastor for years, with no regular preaching services to encourage them, prayed on, and on, and on. I visited the place, saw the field white unto harvest already, sent in two young sisters and two young men to hold a revival. Three weeks brought in one hundred seekers, and from among those, five young men were called to the ministry. I am glad they did not stop short of the prayer-goal.

"And Jesus spake a parable (Luke 18:1-8) unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint (lose heart)."

"For prayer and faith cannot be denied;

Jesus has promised, His word is sure;

Look to the hills! Pray on! Pray on!

Look to the hills! Pray on! Pray on!

—Free Methodist.

UNEVANGELIZED MILLIONS

The tragedy of the yet unevangelized millions of the world should stir the church to missionary action.

Three hundred millions are still in the befogging maze of superstition-ridden Confucianism and Taoism.

240,000,000 are still steeped in the groveling idolatry of Hinduism.

300,000,000 still in the ugly grip of sensual, loveless, woman-degrading, heart-hardening Mohammedanism.

180,000,000 still bound in the weird mysticism and depressing demon-worship of Buddhism and Lamaism.

158,000,000 still groping in the unrelieved darkness and crass superstition of Animism.

327,000,000 shadowed beneath the sinister cloak of Rome, with its Mariolatry, its saint-worship, its magic ritual of the mass in which God is carried aloft as a piece of bread, its false doctrine of purgatory, its abominable Confessionals, and its many other deceiving teachings and ceremonials.

12,000,000 Jews still turning their backs on Him who is indeed the "Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of God's people, Israel!"

150,000,000 still atheists, agnostics or unconcerned.

Oh, the tragedy of the still-unevangelized millions!

Think of it: Over 2,000,000,000 human beings on earth today, with moral accountability, intellectual activity, and immortal destiny—a mighty host marching to the grave and to a vast beyond. For their present and eternal happiness do we spare merely a passing or a passive thought? How amazingly unconcerned many of us are! Over 1,500,000,000 of the world's twentieth-century population are non-

Christians! Of the approximately 500,000,000 in so-called Christendom, including the millions of Roman Catholics and those of the Greek and Eastern churches, how many are merely nominal Christians, hypocrites, heretics, reprobates, unregenerate and spiritually unenlightened?

Missionaries are said to number in Africa only one to every 80,000; in Korea, one to every 120,000; in Japan, one to every 170,000; in India, one to every 320,000; in China, one to every 470,000. It is said that, at the present rate of missionary progress, 80,000,000 Negroes are beyond all prospect of hearing the gospel in their lifetime.

Two-thirds of India's population are yet unevangelized; and over three-quarters of the peoples in South America. One hundred and sixty thousand towns and villages in China are yet denied the gospel. In Japan, the heathen population is greater today than it was when missions first started.

Look on the fields waiting to be reaped for Christ!

While the modern churches delay, unrelenting Death—that other reaper with his wide, unsparing scythe—lays millions low at a turn. Ninety thousand die out of Christ each day, and sixty every minute.

It is time for Christian action in Christian missions!—United Evangelical Action.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FACTS

Sixty per cent of Sunday-school enrollment is composed of children.

Eighty per cent of all the Protestant churches in the United States were first Sunday schools.

Ninety-seven per cent of all Protestant preachers were first members of the Sunday school before their conversion, and through its influence were led to attend church, hear the gospel and become Christians, and eventually ministers of the gospel.

Eighty-five per cent of Protestant church members were members of the Sunday school before their conversion, and were led to be saved, unite with the church, and become Christian workers, largely through the influence of the Sunday school.

Fifty per cent of all the unsaved people who attend our churches are members of the Sunday school; hence the Sunday school is providing the church with one-half of its prospects for salvation and church membership.

It has been estimated that more than fifty per cent of our Bible knowledge was acquired through the Sunday school.

Ninety-eight per cent of all Sunday school-trained boys and girls never got into serious trouble or crime. The vast majority of criminals never attended Sunday school.—United Evangelical Action.

MY HIGHEST POSSIBILITIES

I am persuaded that I shall obtain the highest amount of present happiness, I shall do more for God's glory and the good of men, and I shall have the fullest reward in eternity, by maintaining a conscience always washed in Christ's blood, by being filled with the Spirit at all times, and by attaining the most entire likeness to Christ in mind, will, and heart. It is possible for a redeemed sinner to in this world.—M'Cheyne.