

fine. Thank you for your patience and may God bless you in your work. I am inclosing three dollars, I really don't know how much I am behind but if I am still in arrears please let me know. I remain as ever your brother in the Lord.

JOHN LOVEAN.

## TEMPERANCE COLUMN

### A FUNERAL SERMON

Everybody knew Jim Hodges. He grew up in our town and not a Saturday passed after he had gotten out of short pants that the loafers down at the grocery store didn't have some new tale to tell concerning his deviltry. He wasn't exactly a bad boy; just sort of irresponsible and inclined to run around too much. That was before he started making a hog out of himself drinking liquor.

Of course, if we had known as much about psychology as folks do nowadays some one of us might have taken it into our heads to inquire more particularly into what made him act that way. But, as it was, we just put it down to the devil in him and let it go at that.

Of course, we tried to get him converted at the yearly protracted meetings. Several times, when he was about sixteen, we got him as far as the altar, but it didn't seem to take. His father was worried about him and often asked the prayers of the congregation for his "poor wayward son."

Whenever this would happen Uncle Si Hinton would snort and growl to himself, "The old goat had better be looking after the boy himself, rather than trying to put all the responsibility on the Lord and the congregation." But then, nobody paid very much attention to Uncle Si; he was always saying things like that.

The night that Jim was killed, he was out with a bunch of toughs from the Hollow. One big bully started trying to pick a fight and soon they were all tangled up in it. When the constable got there, the rest of them were gone and there lay Jim with a bullet through his head.

They made arrangements for the funeral and as all his relatives had been members of the Methodist church, they asked our preacher to conduct the service.

The parson was but a kid, just out of school, and with a lot of new-fangled notions. He could preach longer without saying an intelligent word than any man I ever heard. He just spouted dictionary lingo and he'd crack a long sentence over you like a bull whip in the hands of a mule-skinner.

We all liked him, even if we couldn't find out what he was talking about and we figured that he would settle down after a spell and make a right good preacher. Somehow, we couldn't ever get around to calling him Brother Brand; we just said, "Hi, Bill," like he was one of the boys, and he liked it fine.

I saw Bill that morning. "I hear you're going to preach Jim's funeral," I said.

"Yes, I am," he answered, "and I surely dread it. I don't like funerals anyway and this one is terrible for me. I liked Jim and I believe I could have helped him if I had just known how."

The funeral was the next afternoon and the folks were coming in early as ten o'clock in the morning. By two, the church was all filled and the undertaker had a hard time getting the hearse up close to the front steps, the

crowd outside was so thick. They weren't coming in Jim's honor, or because they loved him. They were just coming to see what would happen.

When the singing was over and Bill stood up, we were all nearly dying of suspense. You could feel it in the air. Something was going to happen. Bill walked down from the pulpit and stood at the head of the coffin. It was open and I could see the pale face of the dead man lying there. Bill looked down at it for a moment, then he began to talk, just like Jim was there beside him, quietly and sort of sad.

"Jim," he said, "we're here this afternoon to say good-bye to you. Lots of us didn't pay any attention to you when you were alive, but we're very anxious to see you, now that you're dead. You have become quite a famous character, Jim. You might like that, but I doubt it. I think you're wanting to say something to us now that we will never forget. Well, Jim, if you want me to, I'll tell them what you want me to say.

"I remember when I first came here, three years ago, you were a fine kid. Got into lots of mischief, but that's to be expected of a boy whose mother is dead and whose father is too busy to bother with him. You did a lot of things you shouldn't have done, but none of us tried to help you. Of course, we talked about you and you heard it and that made you feel like everybody was against you.

"They called you a drunkard, Jim, and I suppose they were right. But they forgot to think about what made you one. They didn't say anything about the fact that your father drank like a fish and your brother did the same.

"You're dead now, Jim, and we are the ones who killed you. We made it possible for you to be so miserable that you took to drinking as the only way out. We didn't do anything to help you, Jim. Of course, we did pray for you in meeting, but that didn't help much, for we weren't really meaning it. If we had been, we'd have done something to stop you from drinking yourself to death.

"We'd have stopped putting temptation in your way. Maybe we'd have cleaned up the town and made it hard for a boy like you to get liquor. We might have stopped countenancing places like the one where you met your death.

"Jim, we admit we're guilty of your death and maybe of your damnation. I don't know what the good Lord does with poor boys who don't have a chance. I hope that He'll understand that it wasn't all your fault—that the preacher whom He sent to this town didn't do his duty, that the church folks didn't do theirs, and that poor Jim's father and brother—"

There was a shout from the front seat where Jim's Pa sat. The old man stood up and there were tears running down his cheeks. He held on to the seat in front of him like he was afraid it would get away. His voice was cracked and broken and we could hardly understand what he was saying. I managed to piece it out, being close by, and the rest of the folks got the drift all right.

The old man called out, "Hold on, Parson, you've said enough. Let me talk now. I guess I ought to be mad at you and I guess we ought to feel like running you out of town, for certainly nobody ever heard such a funeral sermon as this. But you're right, Parson, you're right. We are to blame for Jim's death. We smug citizens of this town have let him kill

himself before our eyes. I deserve the most of the blame. I didn't understand what I was doing."

And there he went, down at the altar rail by the side of Jim's coffin. And when I looked up again there was Jim's brother and half the congregation. The rest were trying to get down the aisle. I never saw such a funeral in all my life, but it was the start of a revival meeting that swept the country. Somehow we forgot that Jim's poor body was lying there in the coffin. We just remembered our sins and begged the Lord to forgive us.

That night a crowd of men went down to the "blind tiger" where Jim got his whiskey and told the men who ran it to close up. They weren't harsh about it. They didn't threaten him, but he had heard about the funeral and was already boarding up his windows. From that day to this we've never forgotten Jim's funeral.—R. P. M., in Gospel Banner.

### COFFIN NAILS

1. 50% of smokers canvassed by the Gallop Poll people said that they wished that they had never learned to smoke.

2. Dr. J. L. Myers of Kansas City says "Nicotine irritates the mucous membrane of the respiratory tract."

3. Dr. Paul Moore of Northwestern University says: "It is possible to tell whether a person smokes or not by merely looking at his throat, blood vessels are always enlarged."

4. At Yale University non-smokers increased their lung capacity 66% more than smokers during a four-year course.

5. At Yale the average non-smoker graduated 15 months younger than the average smoker.

6. At Johns Hopkins University a study was made of the life history of 7,000 men. In every number group of 100 non-smokers 66 reached 60 years of age but in every 100 smokers only 46 reached 60 years of age.

7. All ulcer victims are forbidden to smoke.

—The Stammerer's Forum,

William D. Dennison, M.P.P.  
(Toronto)

### A MINISTER'S SUCCESS

A certain minister of the gospel occupied a high place in a large city. He came from a small Canadian town. One who knew him well was asked: "How did he secure that prominent pulpit? What is the secret of his success? There are greater preachers than he—more scholarly and more eloquent."

The answer was: "He has always done what many other men knew ought to be done but neglected. He never failed to write notes of condolence to the afflicted, whether they belonged to his congregation or not. He would cross the street to speak to a burdened man. He would pen a sincere word of praise to the sheriff who did his duty; to the mayor who enforced the law; to the teacher in the public school who was faithful. Nothing that might properly receive a minister's notice escaped him. This is the real secret of his success."

—Mississippi Advocate.

If a wish is not fit to be prayed about, it is not fit to be cherished. If a care is too small to be made a prayer, it is too small to be made a burden. Be frank with God as God is frank with you, and go to His throne, keeping back nothing of your desires or of your troubles.—McLaren.