

**MEN'S MOODS OFT
BLIND THEIR EYES**

Only Rare Souls Have Capacity
of Holding Always to
the Truth

The International Sunday School Lesson
For April 12th Is "The Journey
to Emmaus." Luke 24: 13-35.

(By Wm. T. Ellis.)

Two men are walking with lowered heads toward the west. Their feet are heavy, as if weighed. Dejection is written in their face, their attitude, their tones. The fresh gray of the olive orchards by the roadside has no beauty for them. They are blind to the effulgence of the Spring flowers which carpet Judea's hills. A mood of depression is upon them, like a black cloud.

Behind them lies the city of David, where they had expected to see at this very time, the wonder of wonders, the consummation of the hopes of the nation, the assumption of kingly power by the long-expected Deliverer.

Instead they had seen Him who was their hope executed, as a common criminal. The leaders of the nation which they expected He would restore had been foremost in the dreadful deed. Their gentle prophet was dead. Through two long nights and a Sabbath between that awful reality had grown clearer and clearer. Portents in the sky had attended His death, substantiating His claims. All to no avail. He now was dead; they had seen Him laid in Joseph's new tomb.

Now nothing remained but to take up life's common round, the supreme hope extinguished. These two men belonged in the procession of disappointed ones, who nevertheless recognize the life's duties in grim fortitude and faithfulness. When all the camps of the soul have gone out. Until this third day they had remained with the company of comrades of Jesus; now they must go back to Emmaus, their village home. High hopes had been extinguished, but at least blessed routine called them. And as they walked, they talked of what might have been.

When the Mood Is Gray
It was like the ride home from the cemetery, was this seven-mile journey. The dear dead was the theme. The words, the little familiar tricks of voice and manner, the kindly thoughtfulness, the great deeds of Jesus, their crucified leader, filled their conversation. Over all hung the gray pall, "It might have been!"

Discouragement never sees clearly, the mood of those men blinded their eyes. The great gift of holding to a truth through all sorts of weather was not theirs. Only rare souls have his capacity. As I write these lines sit up in a bed of illness, and outside the rain is falling; therefore, the Easter note of jubilation does not sound so spontaneously as the lesson demands. A week hence I may forget that the sky was ever gray.

The disciples did not "feel" their obligation; as if their feelings had aught to do with the immutable love of God in the changing truth of Christ. Depression is always a foil to faith. Physical moods blind us to spiritual realities. The mental attitude of those who disciples intervened like a thick veil between them and a clear vision of their Lord.

The Talk by the Way
For the stranger who joined them in their walk, in the easy, familiar and democratic fashion of the plain people, was none other than the risen Christ Himself, though they knew it not. He slipped naturally into the talk, with a few searching questions, and they told him all—their hopes, the tragedy of the crucifixion, their despondency, and the unsettling rumors concerning those who had been buried at the grave, which they found empty.

Then, to their amazement and joy, his new-found companion began to identify their knowledge by showing them the Old Testament that it was thus the Messiah should die and rise again. These men belonged to the large company of Christians unfamiliar with the study of the Bible. Like many others, they were discussing the profundities of religion in ignorance of the teachings of religion. A little less speculation and a little more reading of the Bible, would clear up most of our spiritual perplexities. We miss a primary teaching of this particular lesson, unless we learn afresh the importance of looking into the Bible for authoritative teaching upon religious themes. Christ began His ministry by quoting Scripture; here, risen and triumphant, He still finds in the Old Testament sufficient explanation of Himself.

Hospitality and a Consequence
If the wayfarers had not hospitably pressed their companion to their home, they would never have known that the Lord Himself had walked by their side. How much we miss when we fall of hospitality! In the blessing of the frugal meal, and in the breaking of the bread, their eyes were opened. Perhaps they saw the prints of the nails in His hands; perhaps it was a familiar gesture; perhaps the new attitude at the meal gave them clearer vision. Somehow, they knew Him. Their faith established, the Easter disappeared.

The story of the lesson has been related in verse by Lily F. Ponder, with application to our daily life.

Over calm Judean hillsides, sloping slowly from the west,
The purple shadows, lengthening, gave promise soon of rest;
How beautiful the landscape lay, beneath that chastened light,
Which in the lovely Orient precedes the fall of night.

From out the fair Jerusalem, where softened splendor shone,
Upon the road to Emmaus, two men went forth alone;
With grieving hearts and voices hushed, they sadly spoke of Him whose recent death on Golgotha made even the heavens dim.

A stranger came beside the two, and as He walked their way,
With sympathy He asked what grief upon their spirits lay;
Then, wondering that He had not heard, they told Him of the cross, their Master's ignominy, and their own dismay and loss.

But their companion chided them, and showed them this must be
How Jesus thus must give His life to make His people free;
And many a passage quoted He, from prophecies of old, to prove
That all these happenings were as had been foretold.

When they had reached their destination, the stranger would have passed,
But kindly urged to enter in, He went

with them at last;
The daydust from their feet was washed, the evening meal was spread,
When, lo! they see their Master, in the breaking of the bread.
"We, too, do sometimes travel on the Emmaus road of life,
Away from hopes so lately dead, weighed down by sorrow's strife;
And mourning bitterly the loss of what our soul had loved.

We wonder why our armored plans so vulnerable have proved.
"A Presence walks beside our way, we think we do not know,
Goes with us on the path we tread with saddened steps and slow;
But when we ask Him as a guest to sit beside our board,
Our eyes, no longer hidden, see it is our risen Lord."
The Immortal Hope
Through the eyes of the two Em-

maus disciples we glimpse the glorious truth of the resurrection, and that "He is risen." This is the most precious teaching of the New Testament. A contemporary essayist, E. S. Martin, has freshly expressed the place of this belief in life.
"Beliefs of great strength and influence may lie dormant in the mind, unresponsive to surface questionings, but accessible to the deep probings of great crises. So it is likely to be with the belief of mortals in their ability

to survive death. It is the natural belief of people of our race and religion. We are born to it, and unless we wholly neglect it, or have thought long and deeply to eradicate and reject it, we live with it and with it."
"And it is an invaluable item of our inheritance, an indispensable asset of our civilization. Men do not go along through life just the same, whether they believe in a future life or not. The perspective is different;

the man who counts himself immortal, or able to attain immortality, is bound to have a larger patience with earth, a somewhat mitigated appetite for earthly valuables. He is bound to care a little less for the things he must leave behind and more for what he may take with him."
"And what is true of a man is true of a race or a civilization. It is the spiritual substance that is really tough, and the race in which spirituality most persists and best tempers

the ardors of acquisitiveness and ambition is the race of greatest promise, not only for the purposes of heaven, but for those of earth. What makes Christianity the hope of our civilization is that it puts spiritual things before material things; man before his works, character ahead of all other acquisitions. We hope in it as the sole power strong enough to keep the balance in our world and to clear and soften and justify the judgments of men."

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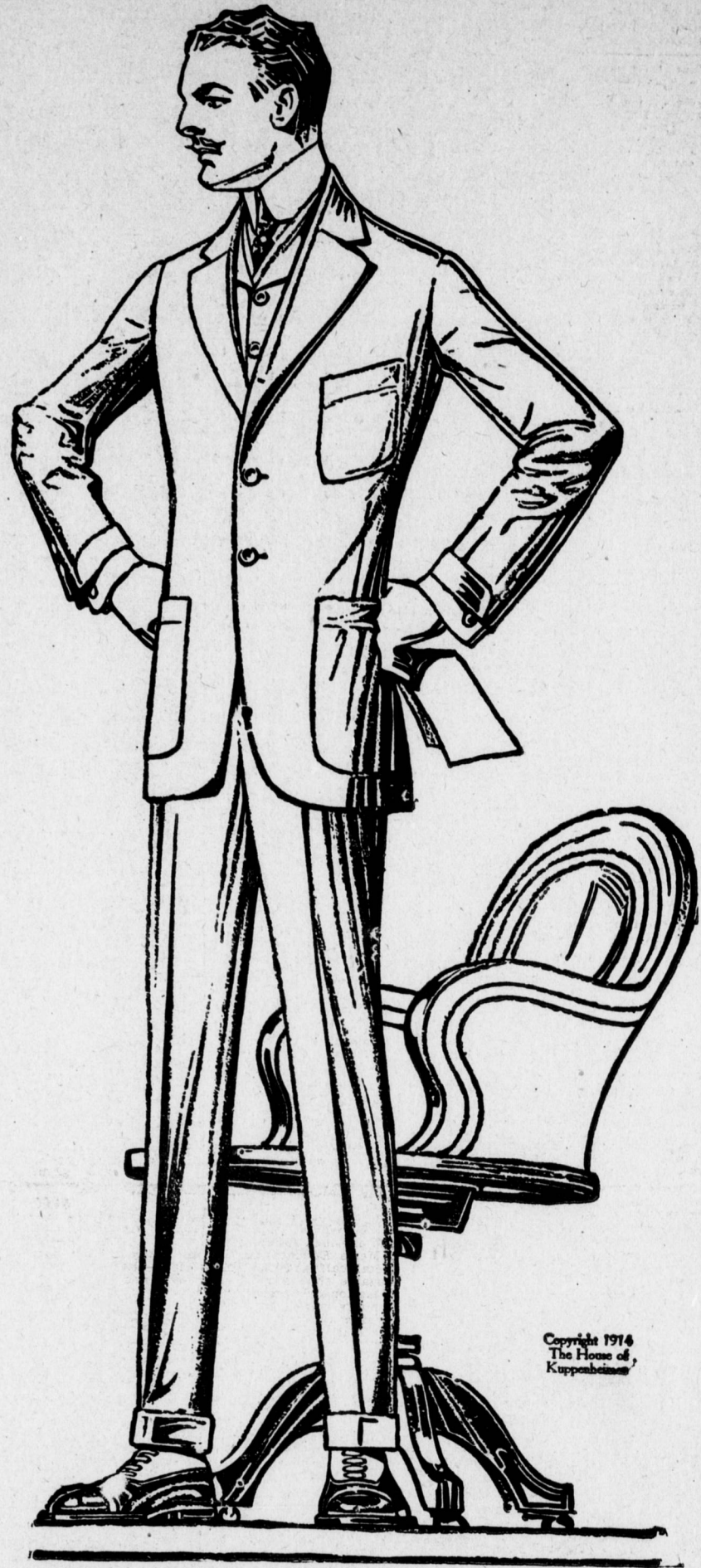
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